

Student Assessment: Recognition and Mitigation of Extenuating Circumstances

Policy and procedure

CONTENTS

1.	Introduction and Purpose	3
2.	Student Assessment	3
3.	Short-term Extension by the Programme Coordinator	4
4.	Mitigation by the Examinations Committee 4.1 Application and Determination 4.2 Mitigation Options 4.3 Dismissal of Application 4.4 Communication of Outcomes	5 6 7 <i>7</i>
5.	Appeals	7

Appendices

Appendix 1:	Flowchart for application and consideration of Extenuating Circumstances	8
Appendix 2:	Guidelines and evidential requirements on circumstances likely to be accepted as extenuating circumstances	9
Appendix 3:	Guidelines on circumstances unlikely to be accepted as extenuating circumstances	11
Appendix 4:	Short-term Extension Request	12
Appendix 5:	Application for Mitigation of Extenuating Circumstances	14

Date approved by Academic Board	November 2017
Date of (next) review	November 2019

1. INTRODUCTION and PURPOSE

- 1.1 Extenuating circumstances are defined as unforeseen, unavoidable and exceptional circumstances that adversely affect the ability of a student to comply with, and/or impair the student's performance in relation to, the assessment requirements of a course of study.
- 1.2 The policy and procedures governing extenuating circumstances at The University of Gibraltar (The University) as detailed in this policy are informed by the expectations of the UK QAA Quality Code for Higher Education, in particular chapter B6 Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning¹, and are scoped with reference to the corresponding policies and procedures of a number of UK Higher Education Institutions².
- 1.3 The policy and procedures apply to all enrolled students of The University and are discharged by Academic Board through its Examinations Sub-Committee (herein, the Examinations Committee), which is charged with the responsibility to "determine the progression and agree the outcomes of student assessment".

2. STUDENT ASSESSMENT

- 2.1 It is the responsibility of The University to ensure that all arrangements for student assessment, by coursework and/or by examination, are published in a clear and timely manner and communicated to students.
- 2.2 It is the responsibility of the student to read and understand the arrangements for assessment and to submit coursework for assessment by the published due dates and/or to attend examinations on published dates and at published times. The University recognizes that this may be frustrated by extenuating circumstances.
- 2.3 Extenuating circumstances are specific circumstances that:
 - are unforeseen, unavoidable and exceptional circumstances, including unforeseen and unavoidable significant worsening of existing circumstances;
 - coincide with an assessment or occur immediately before an assessment;
 - seriously impair the student's performance in that assessment.
- 2.4 The ways in which extenuating circumstances affecting assessment are handled are shown in Appendix 1. A comprehensive but not exhaustive list of possible extenuating circumstances and their attendant evidential requirements are shown in Appendix 2. A list of circumstances unlikely to be acceptable as extenuating circumstances are shown in Appendix 3.
- 2.5 The particular needs of students with disabilities and/or long-term health conditions are managed through individual plans that allow for authorised reasonable adjustments to be put in place to support student learning and assessment. Nevertheless, these students have resort to the policy and procedures for extenuating circumstances in the event of unforeseen, unavoidable and exceptional changes in circumstances related to the student's disability and/or long-term health condition as well as those circumstances not related to the student's disability and/or long-term health condition.

¹ http://www.gaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-b

² University College, London; University of Bath Spa; University of Gloucestershire; University of Kingston, University of Lancaster, University of Lincoln, Oxford Brookes University

- 2.6 Where a student is unable to comply with the assessment requirements of a course due to extenuating circumstances it is the responsibility of the student to advise the Programme Coordinator (or deputizing officer), verbally or in writing (including email), as a matter of urgency. Where a student is unable to advise the Programme Coordinator, a third party (e.g., parent, partner, carer) acting upon behalf of the student may advise The University.
- 2.7 The Programme Coordinator determines whether the student's inability to comply with the assessment requirements is best managed through either: a short term extension, which the Examinations Committee delegates responsibility to the Programme Coordinator to grant; or an application for mitigation of extenuating circumstances to Examinations Committee. The Programme Coordinator advises the student accordingly.
- 2.8 It is then the responsibility of the student (or a third party acting upon behalf of the student) to apply for consideration of extenuating circumstances by completing and submitting the appropriate form and supporting evidence, *viz*:
 - the form to request a Short-term Extension shown in Appendix 4, which is submitted to the Programme Coordinator; or
 - the form to apply for Mitigation of Extenuating Circumstances shown in Appendix 5, which is submitted to the Registrar for forwarding to the Examinations Committee.
- 2.9 It is recognised that extenuating circumstances may concern sensitive personal matters and as such will be managed in confidence. The details of a request for a Short-term Extension and/or application for mitigation of extenuating circumstances will be disclosed only to those directly involved in the procedure, i.e., the Programme Coordinator, Registrar and members of the Examinations Committee, all of whom are charged to manage the request and/or application in confidence.

3. SHORT-TERM EXTENSION by the PROGRAMME COORDINATOR

- 3.1 A short-term extension is a deferral by the Programme Coordinator of a published deadline for the submission of coursework for a student experiencing extenuating circumstances that impede the student's ability to submit the coursework by the published deadline; the deferral can be for first submission of coursework or resubmission of coursework.
- 3.2 Extensions can be requested where the student has or experiences:
 - a personal short-term illness;
 - the short-term illness of any person for whom they have the responsibility of a carer;
 - authorised absence during teaching weeks;
 - an enforced change in employment circumstances on short notice.
- 3.3 Extensions cannot be authorised where assessments are:
 - based on group work presentations;
 - limited by logistical constraints, such as the need to complete a task whilst on a field trip;
 - live practice assessments in a studio, laboratory or in the field;
 - the practice elements of professional practice modules;
 - designed as timed assessments, for example computer-based examinations.
- 3.4 A request for a short-term extension can be made prior to and up to 24 hours after the published coursework submission deadline; any requests made later will not be considered and specified late submission penalties will apply (subject to review in the event of an application for mitigation of extenuating circumstances).

- 3.5 The Programme Coordinator is required to discuss the case with Dean of Academic Quality and reach a mutually agreed decision.
- 3.6 The response to a request for a short-term extension must be communicated to the student by the Programme Coordinator in writing (including email) as soon as possible and within five working days and should advise the student that either:
 - the request is granted and the deferred coursework submission deadline is stated (and the short-term extension is recorded by the Programme Coordinator on the student assessment record); or
 - the request is declined and the student retains the right to apply for mitigation of extenuating circumstances.
- 3.7 A short-term extension of a submission deadline is limited to five working days from the date of the short-term extension approval. A short-term extension cannot extend beyond the next meeting of the Examinations Committee.
- 3.8 When a student granted a short-term extension does not submit the coursework on or before the deferred submission deadline, the coursework will be recorded as a fail.

4. MITIGATION by the EXAMINATIONS COMMITTEE

4.1 Application and Determination

- 4.1.1 In cases where a Short-term Extension is either not applicable or not granted, a student experiencing extenuating circumstances may apply for mitigation of extenuating circumstances to the Examinations Committee.
- 4.1.2 Application for mitigation of extenuating circumstances should be made as soon as possible and no later than five working days after the onset of the extenuating circumstances.
- 4.1.3 Where a student cannot immediately provide the supporting evidence for an application for mitigation of extenuating circumstances the student should nevertheless submit the application as soon as possible and record on the form that the supporting evidence will be made available within the next five working days.
- 4.1.4 The application for mitigation of extenuating circumstances and supporting evidence must be submitted to the Registrar for forwarding to the Examinations Committee for consideration.
- 4.1.5 In determining an application for mitigation of extenuating circumstances the Examinations Committee may reach only one of two conclusions, *viz.*, that the evidence presented either:
 - demonstrates circumstances that are unforeseen, unavoidable and exceptional and have an
 adverse effect on the ability of a student to comply with, and/or impair the student's performance
 in relation to, the assessment requirements of a course of study; or
 - fails to demonstrate circumstances that are unforeseen, unavoidable and exceptional and have an adverse effect on the ability of a student to comply with, and/or impair the student's performance in relation to, the assessment requirements of a course of study.

4.2. Mitigation Options

4.2.1. Where the Examinations Committee finds that a student's performance has been adversely affected by the described and evidenced circumstances it determines the most appropriate mitigation.

4.2.2. In the case of coursework:

- where submitted late, authorises its late submission such that the late submission penalty is revoked and the full mark confirmed;
- where not (yet) submitted, sets a specified extended deadline for its submission (which may
 be the next submission deadline for the same type of coursework) or, in consultation with the
 Programme Coordinator and subject to the approval of External Examiner(s), sets an
 alternative assessment that enables the demonstration of the same learning outcomes.

4.2.3. In the case of examination:

- authorises examination at the next examination date and defers assessment accordingly;
- in consultation with the Programme Coordinator and as approved by the External Examiner(s), sets an alternative assessment that enables the demonstration of the same learning outcomes.
- 4.2.4. In the case of coursework(s) submitted and or examination(s) sat in which the student has attained a marginal fail (i.e., a mark in the range 35-39% on levels 4,5,6 in undergraduate programmes and 45-49% in level 7 taught in postgraduate programmes) the Examinations Committee may resort to condonement provided that:
 - the Examinations Committee is satisfied that, for the study stage the student has reached, the student has met the overall learning outcomes of the programme;
 - condonement of the (parts of) module(s) in question is not precluded by University or Professional, Regulatory or Statutory Body regulations; and
 - the cumulative volume of condoned credits for the completion of an award does not exceed 45 across levels 4,5,6 in undergraduate programmes and 30 in level 7 taught postgraduate programmes.
- 4.2.5. Where the volume of marginal failure does not exceed 50% of a module, the Examinations Committee may condone the assessment of the marginally failed component(s) of the module and award a mark for it based solely on the assessed component(s) that the student has successfully passed.
- 4.2.6. Where the volume of marginal failure constitutes an entire module, the Examinations Committee may condone the module such that it is recorded as failed but the credit is recognised for the purposes of progression and/or completion of the programme of study.
- 4.2.7. In determining mitigation the Examinations Committee will take note of:
 - implications for the student's progression (i.e., from one level of study to the next, from one year of study to the next) and/or completion of the programme of study;
 - the study status of the student (part-time/full-time) and any implications for the completion of the programme of study within the specified registration period;
 - the residence status of the student (e.g., EU, non-EU) and its implications for the completion of the programme of study in accordance with any visa conditions;
 - the implications of any further financial costs to the student and/or The University (e.g., where deferred submission of coursework and/or re-examination is authorised).

4.3. Dismissal of Application

- 4.3.1. Where the Examinations Committee dismisses an application it does not necessarily imply that the student was not affected by the circumstances described, but that the application fails to meet The University's definition of extenuating circumstances (Appendix 2):
 - the circumstances were within the student's control or could have been foreseen (e.g., a surgical operation, hospitalisation, religious observance, advance public notice of transport difficulties) and appropriate provision could have been made; or
 - the circumstances did not seriously impair compliance with assessment requirements or performance (e.g., late return from a holiday, delayed journey, minor domestic disruptions).
- 4.3.2. Where the dismissal concerns coursework(s) not submitted and/or examination(s) not sat, the student will be awarded a zero mark (0) for the assessment(s) concerned.
- 4.3.3. Where the dismissal concerns coursework(s) submitted and/or examination(s) sat the student will be awarded a mark for the assessment(s) concerned according to merit and as though no application for mitigation of extenuating circumstances had been made.
- 4.3.4. Dismissal of an application does not affect the usual entitlements to reassessment as stated in The University's regulations.

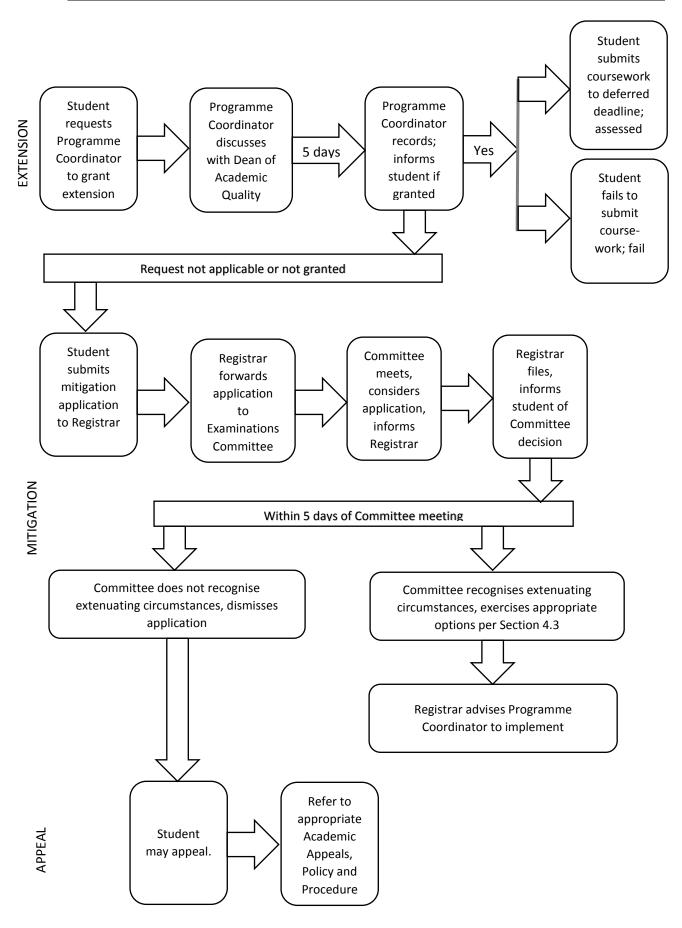
4.4. Communication of Outcome

- 4.4.1. The Examinations Committee must clearly record the reason for each decision made to ensure that decisions are comparable with precedents. Precedents will be held by the Registrar and may be used as a reference point at any stage of the decision-making process.
- 4.4.2. The decision of the Examinations Committee, and where applicable the form of mitigation, will be communicated as soon as possible by its secretary to the Registrar in writing (including email); details of the application and/or extenuating circumstances will not be included.
- 4.4.3. The Registrar will advise the student, and Programme Coordinator in writing (including email) of the outcome of an application within five working days of the meeting of the Examinations Committee.
- 4.4.4. The Programme Coordinator will implement the decision(s) of the Examinations Committee (arrange reassessments, deferred assessments, alternative assessments) in a timely manner.

5. APPEALS

- 5.1 The student retains the right of appeal against a decision made in response to an application for mitigation of extenuating circumstances.
- 5.2. An appeal can only be made on the basis of procedural irregularity; appeals cannot be made against academic judgement(s).
- 5.3. Where a student wishes to appeal the student should refer to The University's *Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure*.

FLOWCHART FOR APPLICATION AND CONSIDERATION OF EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES



Guidelines and evidential requirements on circumstances likely to be accepted as extenuating circumstances



Normally Acceptable Circumstance	Normally Appropriate Evidence	Notes and Examples	
 Serious personal accident or injury of self or close family member. Road traffic or other transport crash. Falls resultant in fractured limb(s). Victim of assault resultant in injury (physical, emotional, psychological). 	Medical certification or verification (eg: doctor's note, hospital letters, hospital appointments, crime incident number from the Police).	 Evidence must show that the incident occurred at the time of the assessment. Retrospective certification is not accepatable. It is recognised that it can be difficult to get timely verification but any claim should be submitted pending confirmation. 	
 Serious illness of self or close family member (including mental health). Unexpected onset of an illness. Unexpected or unpredictable deterioration in an ongoing illness or medical condition. 	 Medical certification or verification (eg: doctor's note, hospital letters, hospital appointments, copy of prescription medication, letter from a counsellor or other registered mental health professional). 		
Unexpected change of circumstances during the course of a pregnancy; where the change of circumstance impacts on the health of the mother and/or child and requires additional unanticipated support to complete planned assessments.	Medical certification or verification (eg: doctor's note, hospital letters, hospital appointments).		
Death of a close family member.	 Death certificate, order of service, newspaper announcement or corroboration from a family member. Where the deceased is a 'significant other' (eg: primary carers, friends, in-laws, grandchildren, grandparents) there is should be a brief explanation of the relationship. It is recognised that the anniversary of a death might impact on a student's ability to undertake assessment and a claim for extenuating circumstances may be made. The impact of the anniversary needs to be evidenced (eg: 	As well as parents, guardians, children, siblings, spouse and/or partner, 'close' may include primary carers, friends, in-laws, grandchildren, grandparents.	

			doctor's note/cousellor's note/note from student support services).		
•	Serious personal disruption. Fire, burglary, flood, relationship breakdown, court attendance, unanticipated and non-negotiable commitment to duties associated with an elected office, membership of a voluntary organisation or service with reserve forces.	•	Independent third-party evidence (eg: letter of corroboration from the relevant organisation, letter from a solicitor, letter from the court, crime incident number from the Police, letter/note from insurers, letter/note from a counsellor and/or social worker.	•	The disruptive incident must be relevant to the date of the assessment event or period leading-up to it for which mitigation is claimed. Travel problems are not normally accepted as extenuating circumstances as students are expected to plan to meet deadlines/attend exams in good time. In the case of 'relationship breakdown' examples of 'relationships' include husband/wife, partner, long-term relationship.
•	Late submission of evidence of a requirement for reasonable adjustments. Where the declaration is too late to take into account in the deadline for an assessment or the arrangements for an exam	•	Summary of Support Needs as provided by a disability, dyslexia or mental health advisor.		
•	Religious Observance and scheduled examinations. Where a student cannot attend/misses an exam due to participation in collective worship, abstinence or ritual.	•	One or more of the following pieces of evidence should be submitted: o a letter from a religious leader (giving title and role) explaining the nature of the obligation and how it impacts on adherents; o a personal statement by the student explaining the nature of the obligation and they way in which it impacts on their examination timetable, this should be supported by an independent calendar of published events showing the date, time and nature or the observance.	•	Extenuating circumstances can only be claimed in relation to exams, not in relation to coursework.

Guidelines on circumstances unlikely to be accepted as extenuating circumstances



	T Normally Acceptable cumstance	Example and Explanation
•	Alleged medical conditions without supporting evidence.	Claims will not be considered and/or accepted without certification.
•	Alleged medical conditions without contemporaneous evidence or without sufficiently detailed subsequent evidence.	If a student does not consult a medical practitioner a the time of the illness it is not acceptable for the student to obtain generic corroborative medical statements at a later date.
•	Minor ailments and other known medical conditions and/or disability.	E.g., colds, sore throats, sprains (other than the writing hand) or known conditions such as hayfever. These ailments will not be considered and/or accepted as sufficient to warrant extenuating circumstances, nor will long-standing medical conditions or disability for which special arrangements could have been made or treatment anticipated and taken.
•	Temporarily self- induced conditions. Normal examination stress.	Hangovers, recreational drug use and/or oversleeping do not consitute legitimate grounds for a claim of extenuating circumstances. Examination stress or anxiety, or stress in placement settings will not of itself be considered an extenuating circumstance. It is expected that individuals in higher education will develop the ability to deal with normal stresses and produce satisfactory work whilst meeting deadlines.
•	Non-serious domestic or personal disruptions.	Moving house, holidays, weddings, financial difficulties, failed travel arrangements, illness of pets, normal job presssure are not grounds for extenuating circumstances. In preparing for assessment and/or examination it is the student's responsibility to insure that they: o arrive at the right examination on time; submit the correct coursework for assessment by the published deadline; are available for all assessment periods (which will be published in advance) and to not arrange holiday absences that will impact on assessment preparation, the timely submission of coursework or attendance at exams; have access to suitable accommodation during any period of assessment/reassessment.
•	Study related.	Equipment failure (including computer and/or priniting difficulties – unless they occur in the exam itself); failure to take copies of or back-up work in case of possible loss, corruption or theft; bunching of deadlines/examinations; delays in the printing, photocopying and/or binding of assessed work are not grounds for extenuating circumstances. In preparing for assessment and/or examination it is the student's responsibility to insure that:
•	Examination conditions	Normally any disruption in the examination room, excessive noise, and/or the behaviour of other students will have been reported to the Faculty/School by the invigilators

APPENDIX 4 Short-term Extension Request



Before completing this form, please read carefully The University's publication "Student Assessment: Recognition and Mitigation of Extenuating Circumstances, Policy and Procedure".

Before completing this form it is recommended that you talk with your Programme Coordinator to insure that you are taking the best course of action.

The University expects students to submit coursework by the published deadline and extensions should only be made in exceptional and unexpected circumstances. The request for an extension can be made up to 24 hr after the published submission deadline has passed, any requests made after this period of time will not be considered and late submission penalties will apply.

Please note that extensions cannot be made with regard to assessments that are:

- based on group work presentations,
- limited by logistical constraints, such as the need to complete a task whilst on a field trip;
- live practice assessments in a studio, laboratory or in the field;
- the practice elements of professional practice modules;
- designed as timed assessments, for example computer-based exams

Extensions are made for a period of five days from the point of approval. If you think that your circumstances warrant a longer period of extension please talk to your course leader as a matter of urgency to consider the possibility of making a claim for extenuating circumstances or interrupting your studies.

Extensions are considered by the Programme Coordinator or their nominated deputy, and you should be aware that it cannot be guaranteed that your request will be upheld.

Short-Term Extension Request

Personal Details	<u></u>		
Family Name			
Forename(s)			
Student Number			
University Email			
Telephone Contac	ct Number(s)		
Programme of Stu			
Year of Study (1st,	2 nd , 3 rd)		
Faculty/School			
	nission(s) for which the extension is		s/assessment tasks
	ar on this form <i>will not</i> be considered		
Module Code	Module Title	Coursework type (eg: lab., report, essay, case study)	Assessment Date
Reason for the ex	tension request (✓)		
Authorised abse An enforced cha short-term notice Other: Evidence (please supporting evider)	ss of any person for whom you are nce during teaching weeks:	for which only be unsuccessful without so so note, tutor/course lead	
Declaration			
Print Name : Signature : Date : Please submit this	s form to your Programme Coordin	ator	

Application for Mitigation of Extenuating Circumstances



Before completing this form, please read carefully The University's publication "Student Assessment: Recognition and Mitigation of Extenuating Circumstances, Policy and Procedure".

Before completing this form it is recommended that you talk with your Programme Coordinator to insure that you are taking the best course of action.

This form must be submitted no later than five working days after the submission date for a piece(s) of coursework or the date of the examination(s) against which the claim is made.

Please submit your claim as soon as possible. The claim must be supported by evidence but do not delay the submission of your form while you wait for this to become available. If evidence is not immediately available state what you intend to submit, a proposed date of when it will become available and an explanation as to why it will follow later. The proposed date for the submission of evidence should be within the next five working days from the signature date you record on this form.

Please note, once formally submitted, the application cannot be withdrawn.

Application for Mitigation of Extenuating Circumstances

Personal Details				
Family Name				
Forename(s)				
Student Number				
University Email				
Telephone Conta	ct Number(s)			
relephone conta	et Harriber (5)			
Programme of Stu	udy			
Year of Study (1st,				
Faculty/School	, = , = ,			
-	nission(s) for which	h the extension is	requested (any module	s/accessment tasks
			ed for extension cover).	s/assessifient tasks
Module Code	Module Title	ii iiot be considere	Coursework type (eg;	Assessment Date
Wiodule Code	Wiodule Title		lab., report, essay,	Assessment Date
			case study, exam)	
			case study, exami	
Nature of Extenu	ating Circumstand	ces (✓)		
Serious persona	l accident or injur	y of self or close f	amily member:	
Serious illness o	f self or close fam	ily member (inclu	ding mental health):	
		,		
Unexpected cha	nge of circumstar	nces during the co	urse of a pregnancy:	
			a. 55 5. a. p. 58. a	
Death of a close	family member:			
Death of a close	iaililly illeliliber.			
Cariaus parsana	l discuption.			
Serious persona	i distuption.			
Late submission	of evidence of a i	requirement for re	easonable adjustments	
Religious Observ	ance and schedu	led examinations:		
Other:				
Please give the de	etails of the exten	nuating circumstar	ices; explain how the cire	cumstances described
~			absence from, the asses	
have listed on thi				<i>'</i>
Diagon list the ite	oo of ouidonoous	vi ana aubosittica	in accompany of commentation	/places note that
			in support of your claim	(please note that
your claim will be	unsuccessiui wit	nout some form o	f supporting evidence)	
Declaration				

I declare that this claim is true and that the attached evidence is authentic.
I have read the published guidance and understand the possible outcomes of a successful
extenuating circumstances claim and the potential consequences on my academic progression.
I note that where I have provided contact address(es)/telephone number(s) I am giving the University permission to contact the person(s)/organisation(s) cited to discuss my claim, if necessary.
Print Name :
Signature:
Date:
Please submit this form to the Registrar