



**Higher Education Services
Extenuating Circumstances
Affecting Assessment**

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Higher Education Services Extenuating Circumstances Affecting Assessment

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Mitigating circumstances are exceptional, unforeseen, and unpreventable events that may have a significantly disruptive effect on your ability to study. These events are normally outside of your control and may affect your ability to attend synchronous and asynchronous sessions, prepare academic work or prepare for and submit work.

1.2 Consideration for disrupted performance will be given to students who experience significant issues that adversely impact their ability to complete assessments. Students may request academic consideration through a formal process designed to account for such circumstances. Temporary interruption of studies may be required when there is a serious or prolonged personal challenge such as health concerns, family responsibilities, or parental leave. In those instances, students may apply to pause their studies for an agreed duration. This option allows time away from academic commitments without penalty.

1.3 This policy does not include those students who are under an OPM sub-contractual arrangement, for example, Brunel University and Roehampton University and therefore those students should refer to the following.

- Brunel University (BU) [Exceptional Circumstances - Guidance for Students](#)
- Roehampton University (RU) [Mitigating Circumstances Policy](#)

2.0 Acceptable Grounds

2.1 The following situations may be considered valid reasons for requesting academic consideration (this is not an exhaustive list):

- A serious illness or injury that is temporary in nature.
- A sudden worsening of an existing long-term health condition or disability.
- Complications related to pregnancy or childbirth.
- Bereavement or serious illness affecting a close relative, friend, or someone under the student's care.
- Unexpected events outside the student's control.
- Immediate and significant changes in employment, such as redundancy or mandatory training.

3.0 Grounds Not Typically Accepted

3.1 The following circumstances are generally not considered sufficient for academic consideration (this list is illustrative, not exhaustive):

- Routine work obligations not covered under the criteria above.
- Lack of familiarity with institutional policies or procedures.
- Missing deadlines or exam dates due to oversight or misunderstanding.
- Misinterpreting assignment instructions or submitting incorrect work.
- Technical issues during submission (students are expected to maintain backup copies).
- Lack of awareness regarding visa requirements.

4.0 Emerging Disabilities

4.1 If a disability is identified during a student's course of study, it may be considered under this process for the first affected assessment. Once formally diagnosed and evaluated, appropriate adjustments will be made for future assessments to ensure equitable treatment.

5.0 Ongoing Issues

5.1 This process is intended for sudden or unexpected events. Students experiencing persistent challenges that affect their academic performance are encouraged to disclose these issues early. FutureLearn will treat such disclosures confidentially and may offer tailored support or adjustments to the assessment process.

6.0 Submitting a Request for Extenuating Circumstances

6.1 Students must [submit their request](#) for consideration of exceptional circumstances through to the Student Support team within five working days following the due date of the affected assessment or the date of the examination. In rare cases such as hospitalisation a Student Support team member may submit the request on the student's behalf.

6.2 All supporting evidence must be presented in English. If the original documents are in another language, a certified translation must be included. Letters from third parties (e.g. medical professionals or employers) must be:

- Written in English
- Printed on official letterhead
- Dated and signed

6.3 Examples of evidence include, albeit not limited to: medical certificates, fitness to work, prescriptions, appointment cards, DSA report, MATB1, birth certificate, medical report for a family member, order of service for a funeral, letter of employer changing worked hours/responsibilities, and call up/military papers.

6.4 An approved request may result in delays to future submissions or progression to the next module or academic level. Students are advised to consult their Student Support Officer to fully understand the implications and plan accordingly.

6.4 Once a request has been formally submitted, it cannot be withdrawn.

7.0 Evaluation Process

7.1 Requests for consideration of exceptional circumstances are reviewed based on two essential conditions:

- The reason provided must fall within the scope of acceptable grounds for exceptional circumstances.
- The claim must be supported by appropriate documentation (e.g. a medical certificate for illness, a death certificate for bereavement), submitted wherever reasonably possible.

7.2 Claims will only be considered if both criteria are met.

7.3 Students are strongly encouraged to consult a Student Support Officer before submitting their claim. This preliminary check helps ensure that the necessary conditions and evidence are in place.

7.4 The review process includes:

- A member of the Academic Quality team initially reviews claims to determine whether they meet the approval requirements.
- If a submission is incomplete or lacks sufficient evidence, the student may be contacted and asked to provide additional documentation.
- Clear and straightforward cases will be processed directly by the designated Academic Quality team member, and a decision will be issued accordingly.

7.5 Claims requiring further scrutiny will be referred to the Exceptional Circumstances Review Panel. This panel must include at least three members, comprising one representative from the Academic Quality team, one academic and one student support representative. The Academic Quality team will schedule panel meetings at regular intervals throughout the month to ensure timely review and decision-making. Students will be informed of the outcome of their claim within 10 working days of submission or from the date additional requested information is received.

8.0 Outcomes: Assessment Adjustments: Extensions, Deferrals, and Impaired Performance

8.1 Extensions for first attempt and resit submissions

If the request for an extension is approved and the student submits their work within 14 calendar days of the original deadline, the grade will be unaffected and marked as normal. If the extension request is denied:

- Work submitted within 14 calendar days of the deadline will be accepted but the grade will be capped at the minimum pass mark.
- Work submitted after 14 calendar days will not be marked and will be recorded as a non-submission or receive a grade of zero.

8.2 If a deferral is approved for a first attempt, the student will typically be allowed to complete the assessment during the resit period, with no impact on the grade. If a deferral is approved for a resit, the student will usually be permitted to retake the assessment in the next academic year, again without penalty. No additional resit opportunities will be offered within the same year due to the carousel module running order. If the deferral request is rejected:

- Work submitted by the original deadline or exam sat will be marked and the actual grade will be used in the module calculation.
- Work submitted by an extension deadline will be marked but pass grades will be capped at the minimum pass mark.
- Failure to submit by the extension deadline or attend the exam will result in a non-submission or zero grade.

8.3 If the claim is based on impaired performance and is accepted, and the student passes the assessment, the Subject and Award Board will determine whether another attempt is warranted. If the result aligns with the overall performance and does not significantly affect the award classification, a retake may not be offered. If the claim is accepted but the student does not pass, the student will normally be given another opportunity to complete the assessment, without a cap on the grade. The timing of this attempt will be decided by the Subject and Award Board and may occur during the resit period or in the following academic year. If the claim is rejected:

- Work submitted by the original deadline or exam sat will be marked and the grade will be used in the module result.
- Work submitted by the extension deadline will be marked but pass grades will be capped.
- If no submission is made by the extension deadline or the exam is missed, the assessment will be recorded as a non-submission or assigned a zero.

9.0 Right to Appeal

9.1 A student has the right to seek appeal of a decision if it falls under the [Academic Appeals Procedure](#).

10.0 Monitoring

10.1 The policy will be kept under review and formally reviewed every three years by the Academic Registrar.

Appendix

Extenuating Circumstances Form

To be completed with supporting evidence attached to studentsupport@futurelearn.com.

Name:	
Student Number:	
Email Address:	
Programme:	
Please explain the extenuating circumstances:	
Please explain how these circumstances have impacted your recent academic performance:	
List the modules affected:	
Name of the Student Support Officer spoken to:	
List the supporting evidence attached:	
Date submitted:	
Signed:	