

ARDEN UNIVERSITY QUALITY ASSURANCE DOCUMENT QA 41

Extenuating Circumstances Affecting Student Assessment

1. Extenuating circumstances is the process by which allowance is made for any matter or circumstance which may seriously affect a student's performance in assessment.
2. Break in Learning allows a student to suspend their studies for a specified period of time due to serious, long-term, personal reasons (including, but not limited to, medical, personal issues, pregnancy/maternity/paternity/adoption leave).
3. If you are unsure what is most appropriate, please speak to your Student Support Co-ordinator.

EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES POLICY

Eligibility

4. Extenuating circumstances must have had a seriously adverse effect on the student's performance and have been unanticipated and beyond the student's control.
5. The following reasons are considered as acceptable grounds for extenuating circumstances (this list is not exhaustive):
 - A serious personal illness which is not a permanent condition.
 - The death, or serious illness, of a close family member, a friend or person for whom the student has a responsibility of care.
 - Sudden or unforeseen circumstances beyond the reasonable control of the student.
 - Significant and immediate change in working conditions e.g. redundancy, major projects, workplace training.
6. The following reasons are not considered acceptable as grounds for extenuating circumstances (this list is not exhaustive):
 - Family, financial or other general problems which lie outside of the circumstances identified in paragraph 5 above.
 - Normal workplace commitments which lie outside of the above.
 - Poor awareness of Arden University regulations or processes.
 - Being unaware of, or misunderstanding, a submission deadline or the date of an examination.
 - Misunderstanding the assessment instructions or submitting an incorrect piece of work.
 - Computer or technical failure in completing the assessment (students should ensure that they keep a back-up copy of their work).
 - Poor awareness of your Visa conditions

7. A disability which emerges during a student's studies may be considered under the extenuating circumstances process at the first assessment point after it emerges. Following diagnosis and assessment of the effects of the condition, adjustments may be made to future assessments to enable the student to be assessed on the same basis as other students.
8. Extenuating circumstances is considered only in sudden or unexpected circumstances. Students are strongly encouraged to disclose recurrent problems affecting their performance in assessment so that Arden University can provide appropriate help and/or make allowance with regard to the assessment process. Such recurrent problems, if disclosed by a student, are considered on a strictly confidential basis.

Claims for extenuating circumstances

9. Claims for extenuating circumstances must be submitted by the student, or in exceptional circumstances (e.g. when a student has been hospitalised) by a member of the Student Support team on behalf of the student, no later than five working days after the submission date of assessed work or the date on which an examination has been sat. Exceptionally, if the documentary evidence in support of a claim cannot be provided by the submission deadline, the claim is submitted within the deadline but without the documentary evidence. In such circumstances the evidence must be submitted within a further ten working days.
10. All evidence to support a claim for extenuating circumstances must be provided in English or, if not, accompanied by a notarised translation. Third-party supporting letters should be written in English, using letterhead paper, dated and signed.
11. A successful claim for extenuating circumstances may delay submission of subsequent pieces of work and/or progression to the next module or level. Please discuss the options with your Student Support Co-ordinator to ensure you are aware of the potential consequences.
12. A claim for extenuating circumstances, once formally submitted, cannot be withdrawn.

Consideration of claims for extenuating circumstances

13. Claims for extenuating circumstances are considered against two criteria:
 - The basis of the claim is an acceptable ground for extenuating circumstance; and
 - The claim is supported by documentary evidence (e.g.: a certificate/letter from a medical professional in the case of illness; a death certificate in the case of bereavement, etc.) which must accompany the claim wherever practicable.

14. Claims for extenuating circumstances are considered only if both the above criteria are satisfied.
15. Students are strongly recommended to ensure that claims for extenuating circumstances are submitted to a member of the Student Support team for an initial check on whether both criteria have been satisfied, before the claim is formally considered.
16. Claims for extenuating circumstances are considered by the Student Affairs Committee without knowledge (whether by staff or students) of any mark attained by students and, within the context of the Student Affairs Committee, in confidence.
17. The constitution and terms of reference of the Student Affairs Committee set out in Arden University's Academic Committee Structure document.

Consequences

18. The outcome of a successful extenuating circumstances claim is that:

[In the case of a claim for extenuating circumstances relating to the student's performance in assessment:]

- Any mark achieved for the relevant element(s) of assessment is annulled; AND
- The student is required to take either the assessment or the re-assessment in the element(s) where extenuating circumstances is claimed at a time determined by Arden University (normally the next available assessment period). In certain circumstances the student may be required to retake the module as a first attempt in order to be assessed in the element where extenuating circumstances is claimed.
[NB: To ensure that the formal decision on a student's performance for the first and final attempts at a module is made using the appropriate marks for each assessment element and at the appropriate point, the various assessment elements for an individual module must remain synchronised. For this reason, assessment in an assessment element where extenuating circumstances is claimed must be completed by the student, and considered by the Subject Board, before any re-assessment in another element(s) of the module can be undertaken]
- The module result will not be capped unless it is a further attempt at re-assessment following a previous failure.
- Suspension of study on a module for a determined period of time.

[In cases relating to non-submission]]

- A deferral is granted and the student is required to undertake a new assessment in the element(s) where there is an extenuating circumstances claim at an assessment period determined by Arden University (normally the next available assessment period). In certain circumstances the student may be required to retake the module

as a first attempt in order to be assessed in the element where extenuating circumstances is claimed.

[NB: To ensure that the formal decision on a student's performance for the first and final attempts at a module is made using the appropriate marks for each assessment element and at the appropriate point, the various assessment elements for an individual module must remain synchronised. For this reason, assessment in an assessment element where extenuating circumstances is claimed must be completed by the student, and considered by the Subject Board, before any re-assessment in another element(s) of the module can be undertaken]

- Blended learning students requesting a deferral with attendance will have the opportunity to re-engage with the module either via classroom sessions or online and take a new assessment at a time determined by Arden University (normally at the next scheduled delivery of the module).
- The module result will not be capped unless it is a further attempt at re-assessment following a previous failure.

In all cases student visa route students must discuss outcomes with an International Student Adviser, to obtain appropriate visa advice as a consequence of the decision made.

Late Claims for Extenuating Circumstances

A student may submit a late claim for extenuating circumstances (defined as a claim which is submitted after the standard deadline specified in paragraph 9 above). In such cases, in addition to the detail of the claim for extenuating circumstances and the supporting evidence, a student is also required to explain why the claim was not submitted within the standard deadline, supported by appropriate documentary evidence. Where no reason or evidence is supplied to explain why the claim was submitted late, the claim cannot be accepted.

19. Late claims for extenuating circumstances are considered by the Student Affairs Committee.
20. The Student Affairs Committee first determines if the student has provided a valid reason for why the claim was not submitted at the appropriate juncture. Poor awareness of Arden University's regulations and/or procedures, or a student choosing not to submit a claim for extenuating circumstances by the standard deadline in order to wait for the publication of results, are not acceptable or valid reasons for the submission of a late claim. This is not an exhaustive list.
21. If the Student Affairs Committee believes that no valid reason (supported by documentary evidence) has been provided to explain the late submission of a claim, it is rejected.



22. If the Student Affairs Committee is satisfied that a valid reason for the late submission of the claim has been provided (and supported by documentary evidence), the Committee considers the detail of the claim for extenuating circumstances itself.
23. The consequences of the approval of a late claim for extenuating circumstances are the same as for a claim submitted and considered in accordance with the standard deadline, as detailed in Regulation 18 above.
24. Extensions to submission deadlines will not usually be offered when the claim for extenuating circumstances has been submitted late.
25. A late claim for extenuating circumstances, once formally submitted, cannot be withdrawn.
26. A student may not submit an academic appeal which presents extenuating circumstances to explain that his/her performance in an assessment was adversely affected by illness or other factors unless evidence is provided that a corresponding extenuating circumstances claim has been duly submitted to the Student Affairs Committee but was not considered in accordance with the above procedures.

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