

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/or ability to study, 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, physical injury or mental health condition, or accident which is not a permanent condition.
 - A sudden deterioration in a long-term medical or mental health condition or disability.
 - Childbirth or pregnancy complications.
 - The serious illness of a family member or friend.

 - Bereavement of a family member or friend.
 - Significant and immediate change in working conditions e.g., redundancy, major projects, workplace training.
 - Sudden or unforeseen circumstances beyond the reasonable control of the student.

Examples of evidence and supporting statements are available within the Appendix.

6. The following reasons are not considered acceptable as grounds for extenuating circumstances (this list is not exhaustive):
 - Normal workplace commitments which lie outside of the above.
 - Lack of 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 seek advice from a member of the Student Support team for an initial check on whether both criteria have been satisfied before the claim is formally submitted.
16. Claims for extenuating circumstances will be considered initially by a designated member of the Quality Team to determine whether the claim meets the approval criteria. Where the request is incomplete, or where there appears to be missing information, a member of the Quality Team may contact the student and invite them to provide further information or evidence. Straightforward claims will be processed by the designated Quality Team member and an outcome will be issued accordingly.
17. Claims that are deemed to be more complex will be presented to the Extenuating Circumstances Review Panel for consideration. The Extenuating Circumstances Review Panel should comprise of a minimum of three attendees including a member of the Quality team and two representatives from academic Schools.
18. Meetings of the Extenuating Circumstances Review Panel will be scheduled by a member of the Quality team at regular points each month to ensure that students receive prompt outcomes.
19. Students should be notified of the outcome of their claim within ten working days of receipt of the request (or receipt of any additional information required, see paragraph 16).
20. The constitution and terms of reference of the Extenuating Circumstances Review Panel is set out in Arden University's Academic Committee Structure document.

Consequences

21. 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 Assessment 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 the module for a determined period of time.

[In cases relating to non-submission]:

- A deferral is granted. 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 Assessment 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.

22. Late claims for extenuating circumstances, where the evidence has not been provided to explain the late request are considered by the Extenuating Circumstances Review Panel.
23. The Extenuating Circumstances Review Panel 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.
24. If the Extenuating Circumstances Review Panel believes that no valid reason (supported by documentary evidence) has been provided to explain the late submission of a claim, it is rejected.
25. If the Extenuating Circumstances Review Panel is satisfied that a valid reason for the late submission of the claim has been provided (and supported by documentary evidence), the Review Panel considers the detail of the claim for extenuating circumstances itself.
26. 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 paragraph 21 above.
27. A late claim for extenuating circumstances, once formally submitted, cannot be withdrawn.

Policy Name:	Extenuating Circumstances
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Approval Authority:	Academic Framework, Regulation and Policy Committee
Last Approved:	May 2024
Responsible SMT Lead:	Academic Registrar
Responsible Department:	Academic Affairs
Policy Contact:	Joanne Walker, Head of Quality (jwalker@arden.ac.uk)
Review Frequency:	3 years

Appendix

Circumstance	Examples of Acceptable Evidence	Supporting statement guidance
A serious personal illness, physical injury or mental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical certificate (GP) /hospital report/report from qualified medical practitioner or 	The statement should explain the illness/accident and the impact on the student’s studies.

<p>health condition, or accident which is not a permanent condition.</p>	<p>professional with dates to support assessment period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement for fitness to work. • Other evidence from official parties that support the reasons for Extenuating Circumstances if evidencing referral for treatment, i.e., physiotherapy, counselling etc. • Prescriptions. • Appointment cards for treatment/counselling. 	<p>Minor illnesses such as colds, sore throats, headaches etc. would not normally be considered as acceptable grounds.</p>
<p>A sudden deterioration in a long-term medical or mental health condition or disability</p>	<p>A flare-up of a declared condition does not need to be re-evidenced if previously disclosed and evidence provided to Arden University.</p> <p>New or undeclared conditions or recently declared conditions, should be referred to the Inclusion team for appropriate support including reasonable adjustments.</p> <p>Acceptable evidence includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DSA report. • Medical certificate (GP) /hospital report/report from qualified medical practitioner or professional with dates to support assessment period. • Statement for fitness to work. 	<p>The statement should explain how the flare-up has impacted the student.</p>
<p>Childbirth or pregnancy complications</p>	<p>Students are encouraged to agree a Pregnancy, adoption, and family leave support plan with Arden University. In the absence of a plan, acceptable evidence includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical certificate/hospital report/report from qualified medical practitioner. • Statement for Fitness to Work. • MATB1. • Birth certificate. 	<p>The statement should explain how the illness/accident and the impact on the student's studies.</p>
<p>The serious illness of a family member or friend.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical certificate (GP) /hospital report/report from qualified medical practitioner or professional with dates to support assessment period. 	<p>The statement should explain the illness/accident and the impact on the student's studies.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement for fitness to work. • Other evidence from official parties that support the reasons for Extenuating Circumstances if evidencing referral for treatment, i.e., physiotherapy, counselling etc. • Prescriptions. • Appointment cards for treatment/counselling. 	Minor illnesses such as colds, sore throats, headaches etc. would not normally be considered as acceptable grounds.
Bereavement of a family member or friend	Suggested evidence may include a copy of a death certificate or coroner's report. Where evidence is not available, a statement should be provided with a brief context to the relationship of the family member or friend and the impact of the illness or bereavement on the student and their studies.	Students are directed to the Arden University Student Hub, for bereavement support.
Significant and immediate change in working conditions e.g., redundancy, major projects, workplace training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence from employer detailing the change in working conditions and timescale of advance notice given to employee (student). • Call up papers for military deployment. 	The statement should provide the change in working conditions and the change has impacted on the student's ability to study.
Sudden or unforeseen circumstances beyond the reasonable control of the student.	Evidence to verify the grounds for Extenuating Circumstances	The statement should explain the circumstances and how they have impacted the student's ability to study.