



# EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURE 2023/2024

<b>Title:</b> Extenuating Circumstances Regulations				
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## PART A: REGULATIONS

### SECTION A1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Extenuating Circumstances Regulations and Procedure apply to:

- Students whose study falls under the Regulations for Taught Courses, including Professional Doctorate candidates who are completing the taught element of their postgraduate research programme. All other postgraduate research students should refer to the Research Degree Regulations [Resources | University of South Wales](#).
- Students studying at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama (RWCMD<sup>1</sup>).  
(NB Any reference made to 'faculties' or 'faculty' should be read as 'the College'.)
- Students studying university courses with the University's partner institutions.
- Students studying on work placements or engaged in work-based learning.
- Apprentices.  
(NB Any reference to 'student(s)' should also be read as 'apprentice(s)'. Information on the receipt and outcome of extenuating circumstances for apprentices will be provided to the Dean of Faculty (or nominee), who will inform the apprentice's employer.)

1.2 The University definition of extenuating circumstances is as follows:

*Exceptional circumstances that are unforeseen, unavoidable and outside the control of the student and which have prevented, or will prevent, them from performing in assessment at the level expected or required of them.*

### SECTION A2: GENERAL PRINCIPLES

#### Key principles and aims

- 2.1 The key principle of these regulations and procedure is to provide equality for all students in relation to the assessments they are required to undertake during their course. In order to implement this principle, **students have a responsibility to notify the University of any circumstances which may affect their assessments as soon as they arise, using the Extenuating Circumstances Claim Form.**
- 2.2 The University aims to ensure that a student, who has proven extenuating circumstances as defined above, is not unfairly disadvantaged as a result; at the same time, students with extenuating circumstances will not be disproportionately advantaged over other students.
- 2.3 Eligible claims will be considered based on the evidence and information provided and the decision will be based on whether the circumstances impacted on the

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<sup>1</sup> RWCMD manage their own extenuating circumstances procedures and operate their own panels.

student's ability to study.<sup>2</sup>

- 2.4 Sensitive personal, family, or cultural reasons may not be accepted as good reason why a student did not submit a claim within the specified deadlines.
- 2.5 While there is not a limit on the number of times a student is able to submit a claim or self-certify, this will be monitored and any concerns may be raised through other procedures, including Support to Study, Student Conduct and Fitness to Practise as appropriate.
- 2.6 If a student has an Individual Support Plan in place then we will allow a further five working days to submit work without penalty; this includes work that is being undertaken as a referral or work submitted as a first attempt during a resit period (see sections 75 and 76 of the Regulations for Taught Courses).
- 2.7 Students are still required to meet the learning outcomes of their course and assessments. So, if an assessment or examination is deferred to a later date, this may impact their progression or course completion date.
- 2.8 Whilst deadline extensions can be useful in the short-term, repeated extensions can create a backlog of work, which can have a negative impact on progression. Where possible students are therefore encouraged to aim to complete their work within the usual deadlines.

### Stages

- 2.9 The University has three stages to its Extenuating Circumstances Procedure:
  - **Straightforward claims** - the nominee of the Advice Zone Manager will review the claim and make a decision in line with published guidelines.
  - **Complex claims and claims for a long-standing condition that is subject to flare-ups** - claims will be referred to the Extenuating Circumstances Panel if there is any doubt about the validity of the claim, where the claim is complex or if the claim is for a long-standing condition that is subject to flare-ups. If a claim is for a long-standing condition that is subject to flare-ups the University may, at its discretion, request the involvement of an appropriate professional (either internal or external to the University), who will advise the Panel.
  - **Review** - students are entitled to submit a request for review of the outcome of an extenuating circumstances or interruption of studies claim provided they meet certain grounds.
- 2.10 All claims for extenuating circumstances, other than where a student is self-certifying or if the student has a disability or long-standing condition whereby evidence has previously been provided, must be supported by independent evidence. It is a student's responsibility to provide this evidence when submitting the claim. Claims that do not provide such evidence will not be accepted. The only exception to this is group/cohort extenuating circumstances, such as a fire alarm going off during an examination, in which case the University will provide the evidence.

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<sup>2</sup> Consideration of whether the circumstances impacted on the student's ability to study will be in line with the balance of probability. This means that the circumstances were more likely to have affected a student's ability to study than not.

### **Fit to Sit Policy**

- 2.11 The University operates a Fit to Sit Policy whereby all students, in submitting or presenting themselves for assessments<sup>3</sup>, in person, online or on site, are declaring that they are fit to sit the assessment. When a student signs the attendance slip, accesses the examination or online assessment, or indicates they are present on an attendance register, a student is declaring themselves fit to sit.
- 2.12 Students cannot subsequently claim that their performance in that assessment was affected by existing circumstances or illness other than where there are additional conditions or events that arise, for instance where a student is taken ill during an examination and cannot continue to sit for the exam, or where their judgement was impaired and they were unable to make a rational decision about being fit to sit. This would be a 'withdrawal of fit to sit'.
- 2.13 A 'withdrawal of fit to sit' would ordinarily require evidence, examples of which are given in Part B: Procedure.

### **Interruption of Studies**

- 2.14 If the extenuating circumstances are so severe that the student is temporarily unable to continue to study, the student may apply for an interruption of studies for a full period of study/the remainder of the period of study. Students will not be able to return to study midway through a period of study and there must be a possibility that they will be able to resume studies on the same course at the date of enrolment for the following period of study.

## **SECTION A3: MONITORING**

- 3.1 A sample of all claims will be reviewed each term by the Advice Zone Manager to ensure consistency across the University. A report will be provided to the Student Casework Group on an annual basis. (See also sections 8.6-8.8)

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<sup>3</sup> This regulation applies to examinations, in-class tests, presentations, clinical practice appraisals, practical tests, coursework assessments and projects but not to stage performance assessments/assessed performances in music.

## PART B: PROCEDURE

### SECTION B1: EXAMPLES OF EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

1.1 The following is a non-exhaustive list of what the University would usually consider as extenuating circumstances that could have affected your performance and which could not have been remedied in advance of the assessments:

- bereavement - the death of a close relative/person of significance;
- serious short-term illness or injury;
- the significant worsening of an on-going health condition;
- pregnancy-related illness or childbirth, but not pregnancy itself (but see also section B5 5.6);
- significant adverse personal/family circumstances, including unexpected caring responsibilities for a family member or dependant;
- significant financial problems, eg, bankruptcy;
- being a victim of, or witnessing, a crime, which has had a substantial impact;
- competing at an international level, for example in a sport or drama competition;
- fire alarm going off in an examination;
- a technical problem that prevents access to online teaching or assessment;
- safeguarding concerns, for example a person under the age of 18 or a vulnerable adult who is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect;
- other exceptional factors which have caused significant stress.

1.2 The University will not accept as extenuating circumstances any situations that you could reasonably have been expected to avoid or to have made arrangements in advance to address the issues or taken action to limit their impact. The following are examples of what will not be considered as extenuating circumstances:

- study related circumstances, including but not limited to
  - equipment failure including computing/printer difficulties (unless they prevent access to online teaching or assessment) and failure to have taken back up copies for work stolen or corrupted<sup>4</sup>
  - bunching of deadlines/examinations
  - missing books
  - poor time management
  - misreading the examination timetable and not being aware of dates or times of submission of coursework assessment<sup>5</sup>
  - taking the wrong examination
  - submitting the wrong assessment
  - normal examination stress
- non-serious domestic or personal disruptions, for example: moving house, change of job, holidays, weddings, normal job pressure, failed travel arrangements (unless these are as a result of a major incident), oversleeping;
- general financial issues;
- alleged statement of a medical condition without reasonable evidence to support it;

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<sup>4</sup> Students should allow sufficient time to submit electronically or print any assessment submissions by the required deadlines to avoid any difficulties.

<sup>5</sup>The faculty will provide clear information on such dates and times, but students also have an individual responsibility for seeking clarification of all deadlines and examinations.

- medical circumstances outside the relevant assessment period or the learning period;
- any circumstances which were foreseeable and/or preventable;
- minor illness or ailment, such as a common cold, unless the illness is an infectious disease that could be harmful if passed on to others;
- late disclosure of circumstances on the basis that students felt unable to or did not feel comfortable in confiding in a member of staff about their circumstances without good reason (students should contact the Advice Zone and/or Students' Union, if they need support in conveying specific circumstances which may affect their assessments);
- holidays, house moves or other events that were planned or could reasonable have been expected;
- minor life events, unless the circumstances have had a disproportionate impact on the student which will be determined by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel;
- minor transport disruption;
- religious observances – the University will not alter assessment deadlines or examination periods around religious festivals of the various faiths of students. If an assessment deadline coincides with a religious festival, you should plan your time accordingly and submit any assessments prior to the submission date. Although examination periods will not be moved, there are a series of activities undertaken to support students, should religious observances (e.g. Ramadan) coincide with the examination period. You are expected to participate in any religious observance before or after any scheduled examination.

## **SECTION B2: SUBMISSION OF CLAIMS AND TIMESCALES**

- 2.1 You are advised to seek information and guidance on how to submit a claim from the Advice Zone and/or Advice Zone Online. The Students' Union is also available to provide support and guidance.
- 2.2 All claims must be submitted via the Advice Zone or Advice Zone Online, using your student ID number, prior to, or within, five working days of the deadline for submission of coursework/date of the examination/assessment. The only exception is for group/cohort extenuating circumstances, such as a fire alarm going off during an examination, in which case a member of University staff will bring the case to the attention of the Advice Zone for consideration.
- 2.3 If you are so incapacitated that you are not able to complete and submit an extenuating circumstances form at the time the circumstances occur, you should where reasonable and possible to do so, contact the Advice Zone to outline the circumstances or arrange for a friend or relative to do so.
- 2.4 Extenuating circumstances claims will not normally be considered more than four weeks ahead of an assessment deadline/examination date. Exceptions to this are where you have evidence, in advance, of specific circumstances that will impact for a specified period. For example, a hospital admission or where the assessment deadline relates to submission of a dissertation or major project.
- 2.5 The only exception to the timescales set out in section 2.2 is in making a late request for extenuating circumstances, where you have evidence that circumstances or illness prevented you from submitting the extenuating circumstances form on

time. Examples may include but are not limited to being hospitalised or otherwise unable to engage with the process due to ill health (including mental health).

- 2.6 There are two types of extenuating circumstances that can be submitted after the normal deadlines in 2.2. 'Late extenuating circumstances' are those submitted prior to your results being considered by an Assessment Board, and 'Post-Board extenuating circumstances' are those which are submitted after an Assessment Board has met and determined your results.
  - 2.6.1 Late extenuating circumstances claims can be submitted up until the Extenuating Circumstances 'Late Claim deadlines', which are set in line with the relevant assessment boards and published through the Advice Zone.
  - 2.6.2 Post-Board extenuating circumstances claims can be submitted within 10 days of your results being published, where you have good reason for being unable to submit a claim prior to the published 'Late Claim deadline'. For further information, contact the Advice Zone. If you have submitted a Post-Board extenuating circumstances claim, the Advice Zone will notify you of the outcome of your claim but the assessment board will notify you of any changes to your status as a result of the claim, where appropriate.
- 2.7 If a request is made very late, we may be limited in terms of the action we can take. For example, it may be too late for your examinations to be deferred to the re-sit period and this might delay your studies.
- 2.8 If you have been discontinued but have exceptional circumstances (eg, mental health issues that were not previously understood) that you were not able to raise for good reason during your studies, you are able to re-apply and have your application considered under the Discontinued Student policy. For further information, please contact Enquiries and Admissions.

### **SECTION B3: SUBMISSION OF EVIDENCE**

- 3.1 Evidence to support a claim, must be submitted with the form or it will not be possible for the Advice Zone to consider the claim (unless you are self-certifying, or if you have a disability or long-standing condition and have previously provided evidence (see also B5) The University reserves the right to request alternative or additional evidence prior to making a decision. Claims that do not provide evidence will not ordinarily be accepted.
- 3.2 Evidence provided should be copies of originals and must be written and signed/officially stamped, where appropriate, by a suitable third party on headed paper. Documents provided or signed by family members, friends or fellow students will not normally be accepted but this is determined on a case-by-case basis according to the facts of the claim.
- 3.3 Where the original evidence is not in English or Welsh, you may be asked to arrange for translation into English or Welsh with a verification provided showing by whom and where the translation was undertaken. Where possible the University will endeavour to use services available internally to check the validity of documents if not provided in either English or Welsh.
- 3.4 The following are examples of what would be considered as acceptable evidence

(see also Appendix 1):

- In the case of serious ill health of a significant person, a statement from a health professional. For a bereavement, a death certificate, an obituary, an order of service from a funeral. For a medical condition, a medical certificate or a report from an appropriate professional which must be specific and contain a date which is relevant to the claim. You must have visited a medical/appropriate professional during the course of any illness and certificates issued must contain verification of the date of the visit. A medical certificate or report from an appropriate professional in retrospect or post-dated will not be accepted. In relation to medical conditions there must be sufficient evidence of the impact of the illness/situation on the assessment to which the extenuating circumstances claim relates.
- Evidence from external support services, including but not limited to domestic violence services, psychological services or from internal sources of support such as mental health advisers/disability advisers.
- In exceptional circumstances, where evidence cannot be obtained, consideration may be given to accepting a statement from you detailing the impact the circumstances have had.

- 3.5 The University has the right to check or verify any evidence submitted. If you submit any evidence which turns out to be false, an investigation under the Student Conduct Regulations and Procedure will commence.
- 3.6 When submitting a claim supported by evidence you are able to request an extension of up to a maximum of 20 working days or a deferral to the next assessment point without further penalty<sup>6</sup>.

#### **SECTION B4: SELF-CERTIFICATION**

- 4.1 Self-certification is for short-term illnesses that do not require medical intervention and excludes minor illness or ailment, such as a common cold or hay fever, unless the symptoms are particularly severe and will have a significant impact on your examinations/assessments, or unless the illness is an infectious disease that could be harmful if passed on to others.
- 4.2 You are able to self-certify for a period of seven calendar days or request a /deferral to the next assessment point without penalty for on the day assessments
- 4.3 The illness must have occurred within seven days prior to the assessment deadline/time.
- 4.4 Students are not able to self-certify retrospectively, for an assessment already submitted or once they have presented for an examination/assessment, or for any claims which are submitted late.
- 4.5 The Advice Zone may contact students when they submit more than two self-certification claims.
- 4.6 You are not able to self-certify retrospectively once you have submitted or presented for an examination/assessment.

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<sup>6</sup> For example, first attempts remain as first attempts, referred work remains as referred work.

## **SECTION B5: CLAIMS FOR STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY/LONG-STANDING CONDITION**

### **Claims for students with a disability/long-standing condition**

- 5.1 The University recognises that some students have disabilities and/or long-standing conditions; for example, certain mental health conditions, fibromyalgia, and Crohn's disease, which can affect a student's ability to effectively manage their studies and submit academic work that demonstrates their learning, within the standard time frames.

### **Students who have an Individual Support Plan (ISP)\***

- 5.2 Students who have an Individual Support Plan (ISP) in place are permitted to submit coursework within the 5 working day late submission period, and the work will not be capped. The five-day grace period does not apply to examinations, in class tests, presentations, clinical practice appraisals, performances or group work.
- 5.3 If you have concerns about individual assessment deadlines, which are not addressed by the above anticipatory adjustment, you should discuss your circumstances with a Disability Adviser. If appropriate "flexibility around deadlines" will be added as a reasonable adjustment to your Individual Support Plan (ISP).
- 5.4 You will then be able to request an extension of up to a maximum of 20 working days or a deferral to the next assessment point without further penalty for assessments impacted because of your disability/long standing condition.<sup>7</sup> You will need to complete an extenuating circumstances form and identify that your ISP supports your claim. No additional evidence will be required.

### **Students with disabilities and/or long-standing conditions who do not have an Individual Support Plan (ISP)<sup>8</sup>**

- 5.5 Students with disabilities and/or long-standing conditions who do not have an Individual Support Plan (ISP) in place can apply for extenuating circumstance and will only be required to provide supporting evidence in relation to their disabilities and/or long-standing conditions with their first claim.
- 5.6 There may be some circumstances where this Procedure could be appropriate if you have a condition that is time-limited, for example complications associated with pregnancy (see also section B1 1.1).
- 5.7 You should identify on the extenuating circumstances form that you are a disabled student/have a long-standing condition and that you do not have an ISP and are providing evidence to support your claim.
- 5.8 You must include appropriate supporting evidence - **see section B3.**

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<sup>7</sup> For example, first attempts remain as first attempts, referred work remains as referred work.

<sup>8</sup> or equivalent if studying at a USW [partner college](#)

- 5.9 You will be able to request an extension of up to a maximum of 20 working days or a deferral to the next assessment point without further penalty for assessments impacted because of your disability/long standing condition.<sup>9</sup>
- 5.10 Your claim will be considered by an Extenuating Circumstances Panel and, if approved, may be for one academic year or until you have completed your course.
- 5.11 If your claim is approved any subsequent claims due to the same disability/longstanding condition will not require supporting evidence and you should identify on the extenuating circumstances form that you have previously provided evidence that supports your claim.

## **SECTION B6: CIRCUMSTANCES THAT AFFECT A LARGE NUMBER OF STUDENTS**

- 6.1 In the case of a major event/issue affecting a large number of students, e.g. severe weather conditions, public health emergencies or strike action the Academic Registrar (or nominee) will consider the impact and will agree a university-wide or, where appropriate campus or faculty-specific 'course of action'. This will be communicated to students through appropriate channels.
- 6.2 If you have specific circumstances that mean you benefit less than others from the course of action agreed by the Academic Registrar (or nominee), you are able to use this Procedure to make an individual extenuating circumstances claim.

## **SECTION B7: FIT TO SIT**

- 7.1 In submitting or presenting yourself for an assessment, you are declaring that you are fit to sit the assessment. You cannot subsequently claim that your performance in that assessment was affected by existing circumstances or illness, other than where there are additional conditions or events. For instance, where a student is taken ill during an examination and cannot continue to sit for the exam or where their judgement was impaired and they were unable to make a rational decision about being fit to sit. Where this is the case you should submit a claim requesting to withdraw a fit to sit declaration.
- 7.2 An extenuating circumstances claim to withdraw your fit to sit declaration should be submitted, with supporting evidence, as soon as possible and in line with deadlines outlined in section B2. In the example of an examination, if this has been formally invigilated, a report of the situation recorded at the time by the examination invigilator should be submitted with the claim.
- 7.3 For technical difficulties during assessments, please follow the guidance for IT related issues through the Advice Zone<sup>10</sup> as these ensure difficulties are recorded and reported, avoiding the need for additional extenuating circumstances claims. If unsure, contact the Advice Zone.
- 7.4 Where you have submitted an extenuating circumstances claim and are awaiting the

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<sup>9</sup> For example, first attempts remain as first attempts, referred work remains as referred work.

<sup>10</sup> <https://advice.southwales.ac.uk/a2z/coronavirus-advice-and-guidance/study-information/>

outcome, any assessment<sup>11</sup> submission you make during this period will not be classed as a formal submission or fit to sit declaration if the claim is subsequently approved. Where the claim is approved, you will be given the opportunity to re-submit the assessment without penalty unless you have received a mark or feedback, in which case you will be allowed to undertake the assessment at the next assessment period as the same attempt and without further penalty<sup>12</sup>

## **SECTION B8: HANDLING SUBMISSIONS FOR EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES**

### **Straightforward Claims**

- 8.1 Where a claim for extenuating circumstances is straightforward the nominee of the Advice Zone Manager will review the claim and make a decision in line with published guidelines. The nominee of the Advice Zone Manager, in signing the form, authorises the decision.
- 8.2 A sample of all claims will be reviewed each term by the Advice Zone Manager to ensure consistency across the University.

### **Complex claims**

- 8.3 Claims will be referred to the Extenuating Circumstances Panel if there is any doubt about the validity of the claim or where the claim is complex or if it is a first claim from a student with a disability/long-standing condition where an Individual Support Plan (ISP) is not in place.
- 8.4 Complex cases will be considered by an Extenuating Circumstances Panel on a minimum of a fortnightly basis.
- 8.5 The constitution and terms of reference of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel are as set out in section B9. Where Chair's action is taken, the outcome will be reported to the next meeting of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel.

### **Monitoring and referral to other procedures**

- 8.6 The Advice Zone/Extenuating Circumstances Panel may need to take into account previous extenuating circumstances requests from you when considering any subsequent requests. Where the medical evidence provided, or the frequency of claims raises concerns about your ability to study the Panel can refer your case for consideration under the Support to Study Procedure
- 8.7 Where the medical evidence provided, or the frequency of claims raises concerns about your fitness to practise, your case may be referred for consideration under the Fitness to Practise Procedure. This only applies if you are studying a course that leads to professional registration, both initial and/or further annotation/registration and/or a license to practise in a professional context and are characterised as being service-centred/client-centred/patient-centred and directed towards the achievement of professional competence and/or professional registration. Please see the [Fitness](#)

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<sup>11</sup> This regulation applies to examinations, in-class tests, presentations, clinical practice appraisals, practical tests, coursework assessments and projects but not to stage performance assessments/assessed performances in music

<sup>12</sup> For example, first attempts remain as first attempts, referred work remains as referred work.

[to Practise Procedure.](#)

- 8.8 Where you have submitted more than two claims using self-certification, these will lead to your situation being reviewed and further action may be suggested/required.

**SECTION B9: CONSTITUTION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES BOARD/PANEL**

- 9.1 The composition of the Extenuating Circumstances Board will normally be:

- Twelve members of academic staff from across the institution (four from each faculty), nominated by the relevant Dean of Faculty (or their nominee).

- 9.2 The composition of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel will normally be:

- a Chair, who is an academic member of staff nominated by the Academic Registrar (or nominee) in agreement with the relevant Dean of Faculty;
- a further three members of academic staff, with at least one from a different faculty (one of these will be Vice-Chair).

In considering first claims from students with a disability/long-standing condition where an Individual Support Plan (ISP) is not in place, the Panel reserves the right to ask a medical professional to attend the meeting in the role of an adviser.

The Academic Registrar (or nominee) has the authority to approve amendments to the panel composition if required.

A senior member of staff from the Advice Zone will attend all meetings of the Panel to provide advice and guidance and to ensure there is an accurate record of proceedings. In addition, other staff may be requested to attend the meetings in an advisory capacity as required.

Any academic members of staff on the Panel who have been teaching, supervising or have had close connections with a student who has submitted a claim for extenuating circumstances will not be permitted to participate in the decision on the claim.

- 9.3 The terms of reference of the Extenuating Circumstances Panels are:

- a) To consider extenuating circumstances claims in line with the University's Extenuating Circumstances Regulations.
- b) To ensure that all evidence provided in support of claims is carefully considered.
- c) To make decisions on whether or not to accept a claim and the appropriate outcome for any claim which is accepted.
- d) To ensure a consistent and reasonable approach is taken in relation to all claims.
- e) To report decisions to the appropriate assessment boards.
- f) To refer students, as appropriate, to other services or regulations.

- 9.4 The Chair of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel, in signing the Extenuating

Circumstances Form, authorises the decision of the Panel.

- 9.5 Assessment Boards must accept the decision of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel.

## **SECTION B10: OUTCOMES OF CLAIMS FOR EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES**

- 10.1 The outcome of your extenuating circumstances claim will be provided to you not later than five working days after the decision has been made.
- 10.2 You will be provided with a clear explanation of the reason for the outcome. The Advice Zone will record details of the issues considered as well as the reason for the decision taken.
- 10.3 It is not possible for additional marks to be awarded to any individual student for any assessment as a result of a claim for extenuating circumstances.
- 10.4 Possible outcomes of a claim for extenuating circumstances are:
- the claim may be declined;
  - the claim may be deferred, pending a request for additional information/evidence;
  - an extension of the deadline for submission of the assessment may be granted. In this case the five-day late submission regulation (which enables you to have the assessment marked but capped at 40% (or the pass mark defined within any course specific regulation in place)) cannot also be applied;
  - you may be allowed to undertake the assessment/examination at the next assessment period as the same attempt and without further penalty;<sup>13</sup>
  - the Subject Assessment Board will take account of the grade profile of the assessment/module in the case of a group/cohort extenuating claim.
- 10.5 Tier 4 visa regulations or student route regulations may restrict the number of attempts that international or non-EU students on a Tier 4 or student route visa can be offered and may restrict the overall time duration that they may study in the UK. If you are on a Tier 4 or student route visa you are advised to seek advice from Immigration and International Student Advice in relation to how this will affect your immigration status.

## **SECTION B11: INTERRUPTION OF STUDIES**

- 11.1 If the extenuating circumstances are so severe that you are temporarily unable to continue to study, you may apply for an interruption of studies for the remainder of the period of study, providing there is a possibility that you will be able to resume studies on the same course at the date of enrolment for the following period of study.
- 11.2 If you wish to apply for an interruption of studies, you must discuss this with the appropriate course leader(s) and complete the 'Student Request to Interrupt Studies' form available from the Advice Zone.
- 11.3 Interruption of studies is not a student right and must be approved by your course leader(s) (who will advise on feasibility in terms of course delivery) and the nominee

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<sup>13</sup> For example, first attempts remain as first attempts, referred work remains as referred work.

of the Advice Zone Manager/Extenuating Circumstances Panel. You may be referred to the Student Money Advice Team/Revenue Unit who are able to offer support and provide advice regarding the financial implications. In addition, you may also wish to discuss your options with the Progression Advice Team.

- 11.4 The following are some examples of circumstances that might be acceptable reasons for interruption of studies during the current period of study:
- medical circumstances, accident, or disability (for example, debilitating illness; illness over a long period of time, ie, four weeks or more; broken limbs restricting mobility or writing for a prolonged period; mental health problems; extensive hospital treatment; pregnancy or major surgery);
  - death or serious illness of a close relative or friend, thus preventing a student being able to continue on their course;
  - childbirth;
  - bankruptcy or significant financial problems;
  - personal/family problems;
  - involvement in a prolonged legal case;
  - employment, e.g. unexpected increase in workload.
- 11.5 Poor marks and/or failure to engage with the course are not acceptable reasons for an interruption of studies.
- 11.6 All applications for an interruption of studies during the current period of study should be supported by evidence in writing from an independent source, ie, from an appropriate third party who can verify the circumstances from a position of authority. It is your responsibility to seek and provide this evidence. The following are examples of acceptable evidence:
- a medical certificate, preferably with an indication of speed of recovery;
  - a statement from a religious or community leader;
  - an official document, for example a birth or death certificate;
  - a letter from a solicitor;
  - a summons to attend court;
  - a report from a police officer;
  - a bankruptcy notification;
  - a letter from an employer;
  - a contract for work (for self-employed students);
  - a letter/medical certificate from Student Services.
- 11.7 Letters from family members, friends, tutors, or fellow students are not usually acceptable.
- 11.8 The maximum period for an interruption of studies is one academic year; applications for an indefinite period will not be permitted. Applications for an interruption of studies for a whole academic year must be received prior to the date of enrolment for that year<sup>14</sup>. Approval to interrupt studies may be renewed in exceptional circumstances only.
- 11.9 You will be informed of the agreed date of return from an interruption of studies at the time it is approved. Upon your return, you will be governed by current regulations,

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<sup>14</sup> The date of enrolment for that year refers to the date students were expected to enrol.

and not those in force when you interrupted your studies. Failure to return at the agreed time will result in withdrawal.

11.10 The nominee of the Advice Zone Manager/Extenuating Circumstances Panel, with advice from the relevant academic member of staff, will determine whether you will:

- retain the marks achieved in all modules in the academic session up to the agreed date of the interruption of studies; this may include marks for individual assessments;
- forfeit the marks achieved in all modules in the academic session even if the marks may have resulted in modules being passed.

No other option, such as retaining some but not all marks, is allowed.

The relevant academic member of staff will discuss with you your individual circumstances and the impact of the decision. In the event of a disagreement between you and the academic member of staff, the decision of the academic member of staff will be final.

11.11 Applications received within six weeks prior to the start of the assessment boards will not normally be considered; you should then apply for extenuating circumstances instead.

11.12 If you are an international non-EU student studying on a Tier 4 or student route visa, sponsorship will cease. You must leave the UK and re-apply for an appropriate visa prior to returning to studies.

11.13 In circumstances where an absence of more than 20 working days is unavoidable the University reserves the right to require you to interrupt your studies.

## **SECTION B12: REQUESTS FOR REVIEW OF AN OUTCOME OF AN EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES OR INTERRUPTION OF STUDIES CLAIM**

12.1 You are entitled to submit a request for review of the outcome of an extenuating circumstances or interruption of studies claim on the following grounds.

- a) You have evidence that there was procedural error during the consideration of the extenuating circumstances/interruption of studies claim and this has materially disadvantaged you.
- b) You have new and relevant evidence, which **for good reason** was not available at the time the initial extenuating circumstances/interruption of studies claim was submitted. *(NB Sensitive personal, family, or cultural reasons will not be accepted as good reason as they should have been drawn to the attention of the University at the time it was submitted).*
- c) You can demonstrate that the outcome was unreasonable.
- d) You can demonstrate that there was a reasonable perception of bias during the process.

This information should not have been accessible or known to you when the initial extenuating circumstances/interruption of studies claim was submitted. Information

which was available and not provided with the extenuating circumstances/interruption of studies claim will not be considered valid grounds for a request for review.

- 12.2 You are only entitled to submit a request for review once the initial extenuating circumstances/interruption of studies claim has been considered.
- 12.3 No new issues may be introduced as part of the request for review.
- 12.4 Requests for review must be submitted within 10 working days of notification of the outcome of the initial extenuating circumstances/interruption of studies claim, using the Extenuating Circumstances/Interruption of Studies – Request for Review Form, and must include appropriate evidence. The Request for Review Form is available at <https://registry.southwales.ac.uk/student-regulations/extenuating-circumstances/> and the Advice Zone Online. Requests for review will not be accepted unless they comply with the requirements above.
- 12.5 Requests for review will be considered by the Academic Registrar (or nominee) to determine whether there is a case for review, within five working days of submission of the request.
- 12.6 If the Academic Registrar (or nominee), after considering the request for review, concludes that:
- a) it does not meet the grounds above set out in section 11.1;
  - b) it was submitted outside the 10-working day deadline;
  - c) it does not include the appropriate evidence.

the request for review will be disallowed and the original decision will stand. You will be issued with a University Completion of Procedures Letter within five working days.

- 12.7 If it is decided by the Academic Registrar (or nominee) that the request for review meets one or more of the grounds, the following action may be taken:
- a) if the case is straightforward, it will be considered by the Associate Registrar (Student Casework) (or nominee); a response will be provided to you within 10 working days;
  - b) if the case is complex, it will be referred to the Extenuating Circumstances Panel. The Extenuating Circumstances Panel may be reconstituted if appropriate; if a meeting is required, this will take place within 10 working days of referral of your case. A response will be provided to you within five working days of the Panel decision.

### **SECTION B13: OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT ADJUDICATOR FOR HIGHER EDUCATION (OIA)**

- 13.1 If you are unhappy with the outcome of this Procedure you may, following issue of a University Completion of Procedures Letter, lodge a complaint with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).

- 13.2 Details of the OIA and the relevant information in relation to the Scheme can be accessed at [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk). Further information and advice can be obtained from the Student Casework Unit.

## Appendix 1

## Evidence for extenuating circumstances and requests for review submitted under ground b)

This table provides you with an indication of the types of evidence that you will be required to provide in order to support an extenuating circumstances claim. You should provide the most relevant evidence to support your claim; advice should be sought from the Advice Zone.							
	Letter from Medical professional or counsellor	Letter/ evidence from an independent professional	Death certificate	Obituary/ order of service	News/ Media report	Official witness report/police report which details information related to the offence	Letter from bank/debt letters
Serious illness/accident	✓	✓					
Serious ill-health of a significant person or bereavement	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Significant worsening of an ongoing health condition	✓	✓					
Pregnancy related illness or childbirth	✓	✓					
Significant adverse personal/ family circumstances, including unexpected caring responsibilities for a family member or dependent	✓	✓					
Significant financial problems	✓	✓					✓

<b>Victim of, or witnessing, a crime, which has had a substantial impact</b>	✓	✓			✓	✓	
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