

University of Birmingham

Grading Criteria for Assessing Extenuating Circumstances

The following criteria may be used as a guide to help consistency in categorising extenuating circumstances and assessing the severity and impact.

Extenuating Circumstances Panels should also take into account whether a student was able to access an extension or follow the Fit to Sit procedure as outlined in the Code of Practice paragraph 3.5.3.

The following Categories should be used to classify cases submitted for consideration at an Extenuating Circumstances Panel:

- 1) **Minor illness** (lasting more than 7 days)
- 2) **Significant illness**
- 3) **Ongoing significant illness**
- 4) **Severe financial difficulties** (this must be long term and have caused significant stress)
- 5) **Death or illness of a close friend or relative**
- 6) **Minor adverse personal circumstances** (e.g. housing difficulties, end of a relationship)
- 7) **Significant adverse personal circumstances** (e.g. unwanted pregnancy, severe family problems)
- 8) **Illness, personal circumstances or other matters not sufficiently material to be classified**

Panels must assess the severity of the circumstances in these general categories:

- 1) **Strong** – Will have had a significant impact upon the performance of the student
- 2) **Medium** – Likely to have had an impact of some kind upon the performance of the student
- 3) **Minor** – Unlikely to have materially impacted upon the performance of the student
- 4) **No material case to take into account** – Irrelevant, and/or would not have materially impacted upon the performance of the student

Panels must assess the likely impact of the circumstances. An illness that is relatively minor could have a significant impact on a student's performance if it occurred during the examination period. The following categories should be used:

- 1) **Significant long term impact** – Likely to have significantly affected the student's performance throughout the year, in more than one module/ assessment
 - 2) **Significant short term impact** – Likely to have significantly affected the student's performance at a significant time of year, in more than one module/ assessment
- (Continued overleaf)*

- 3) **Minor long term impact** – Likely to have only slightly affected the student's performance throughout the year, in specific module/ assessments
- 4) **Minor short term impact** – Likely to have only slightly affected the student's performance at a significant time of year, in specific module/ assessments
- 5) **No material impact** – Irrelevant and/or would not have materially affected the student's performance.

Panels must make recommendations to the Examination Board on reasonable allowances for extenuating circumstances. Marks for individual modules cannot be adjusted. The following recommendations should be used:

- 1) **Allow further sit/ submit opportunity.** This would be as a first attempt so the marks will not be capped and there will be a further opportunity to retrieve failure. The Panel should specify whether this should be as an internal or external candidate. There are fee implications for internal candidates.
- 2) **Allow further re-sit/ re-submit opportunity.** This would be as a final attempt so the marks will be capped at the pass mark and there will be no further opportunity to retrieve failure. The Panel should specify whether this should be as an internal or external candidate. There are fee implications for internal candidates.
- 3) **Waive late penalties.** The penalties applied for late submission of work have been waived.
- 4) **Repeat the year in full.** This would be as a first attempt so the marks will not be capped and there will be a further opportunity to retrieve failure. The Panel should specify whether this should be as an internal or external candidate. There are fee implications for internal candidates.
- 5) **Re-sit the year in full.** This would be as a final attempt so the marks will be capped at the pass mark and there will be no further opportunity to retrieve failure. The Panel should specify whether this should be as an internal or external candidate. There are fee implications for internal candidates.
- 6) **Proceed with low credit.** This decision must be made within University and Programme regulations. Students are not permitted to proceed into the next year with less than 100 credits at the relevant level. Students must be notified of the implications this has on any future failure and the achievement of their degree.
- 7) **Mitigation carried forward.** No action was required in terms of progress decisions, but the circumstances will be considered when determining the degree classification at the relevant time.
- 8) **Award Notwithstanding Regulations.** Recommend to award a Degree (or other qualification), or award a higher class of degree than would be merited by the marks returned in light of extenuating circumstances.
- 9) **Action already taken.** The extenuating circumstances have been noted, but appropriate action has already been taken at the time (e.g. an extension to a deadline, Fit to Sit.)
- 10) **No action required.** The extenuating circumstances were not considered serious, and or had no material effect on the student's academic performance.