University of Birmingham

Guidance on Extenuating Circumstances 2015-16

This guidance is supplemental to the Code of Practice on Extenuating Circumstances.

During a period of study, students may encounter significant personal difficulties that impact on their ability to study for or complete academic assessment(s) including examinations. The University refers to these personal difficulties as “Extenuating Circumstances”.

Extenuating Circumstances are circumstances that are exceptional or ‘unforeseen’ and are over and above the course of everyday experience.

The University does not define what amounts to an Extenuating Circumstance, as each case should be considered individually, but the following examples indicate the types of situations which may amount to Extenuating Circumstances:

a) significant illness, accident or injury;
b) the death or serious illness of a close family member or dependent;
c) sexual harassment/assault or other assault;
d) family crisis directly affecting the student;
e) absence caused by paternity leave and jury service (deferral of which has been denied by the Court);
f) exceptional and unforeseen financial hardship.

Circumstances that will not normally be considered as Extenuating Circumstances include:

a) minor illnesses (such as coughs and colds);
b) minor computer problems or inadequate planning preventing completion or submission of coursework;
c) stress and panic attacks, that are caused by examinations, but are not diagnosed as an illness or documented in a Student Support Agreement;
d) assessments or examinations scheduled close together;
e) personal or domestic events, such as moving house or attending a wedding;
f) holidays or travel arrangements;
g) consequences of paid employment;
h) sports activities.

These are not intended to be exhaustive lists, and the facts and circumstances of each application must be considered on a case-by-case basis.