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UCFB/GIS

Extenuating Circumstances Policy

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UCFB/GIS Extenuating Circumstances Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide information on how the Extenuating Circumstances procedure is intended to support students if they experience exceptional, unforeseeable, short-term circumstances which affect their ability to study or take assessments. UCFB/GIS's expectation is that students will usually make all reasonable efforts to submit their work by the submission deadlines but this policy provides for support for students experiencing difficult circumstances that make this impossible.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all undergraduate and taught postgraduate students, studying with UCFB/GIS for an award of the University of East London (UEL) whether studying at any UCFB campus or by distance learning.
- 2.2 For students studying with UCFB/GIS for an award of the Buckinghamshire New University (Bucks), the Bucks' Mitigating Circumstances Policy must be followed <https://www.bucks.ac.uk/current-students/registry-helpdesk-and-academic-advice/exceptional-circumstances/mitigating>
- 2.3 The UCFB Quality Team can advise on the application of both policies, quality@ucfb.com

3. Equality impact

- 3.1 This policy is neutral in terms of equality-related issues.

4. What are Extenuating Circumstances?

- 4.1 Extenuating Circumstances are circumstances which
- impair the performance of a student in assessment or reassessment
 - prevent a student from attending for assessment or reassessment
 - prevent a student from submitting assessed or reassessed work by the scheduled date
- 4.2 Such circumstances would normally be
- unforeseeable - in that the student could have no prior knowledge of the event concerned
 - unpreventable - in that the student could do nothing reasonably in their power to prevent such an event

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- expected to have a serious impact
- 4.3 Students are expected to make reasonable plans to take into account commonly occurring circumstances that might impact their assessment performance, even those which, on occasion, may have been unforeseeable and unpreventable. Where students submit their work within 24 hours of an assessment deadline it will be accepted and subject to the following: a deduction of 5 marks, or a mark of 40% (undergraduate assessment)/50% (postgraduate assessment), whichever is the greater.
- 4.4 There are two methods for students to use where exceptional circumstances impact upon their ability to submit their assessments on time beyond this point. They can apply for
- i. an **extension**, which will give the student an additional **7 working days** to hand in, which, **if accepted**, will allow them an uncapped mark, or
 - ii. **extenuating circumstances** which, if accepted will allow them to re-take for an uncapped mark (if applicable) at a new date set by the Module Leader and the Administration Manager.
 - iii. Note: if a student is granted an extension and then feels unable to engage with the assessment during the extended timeframe, they remain eligible at that point to apply for extenuating circumstances. An approval of extenuating circumstances will override the grant of an extension, but if extenuating circumstances are not approved, the rules around extension remain in force.

5. Procedures for submission of Claims for an Extension

- 5.1 Students should submit their form to the UCFB/GIS Registry on:
- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| wembleyadmin@ucfb.com | (all Wembley students) |
| administration@ucfb.com | (all Etihad students) |
| onlineadminteam@ucfb.com | (all blended and on line students) |
- accompanied by the relevant documentary evidence.

- 5.2 The form must contain:

- Details of the assessment, including the module name, code and assignment task (this should be found on the assessment brief)
- Reasons for the extension request, including a full account of the circumstances claimed with sufficient detail of dates and times and how these have impacted upon the assessment
- Documentary evidence supplied.

Students wishing to apply for an extension have to submit an application up to 2 working days before the deadline. Once the request has been submitted the student must receive a decision within 5 working days. Work submitted after any agreed extension date will receive a zero grade and fail.

6. Procedures for the Submission of Claims for Extenuating Circumstances

- 6.1 For an extenuation claim to be considered, it is the student's responsibility to inform UCFB/GIS as early as possible of any difficulties they have encountered which will affect their ability to submit coursework or attend exams and ensure that for each component affected:
- they submit details of the circumstances via the standard pro-forma
 - details are submitted as soon as possible but, in any event, by the designated date and time
 - details are submitted with accompanying documents and evidence
 - all relevant sections of the form have been completed
- 6.2 Claims can be submitted before the scheduled date and time for the submission of the assessed work, no earlier than 15 working days before the hand in date. Students may also submit claims no later than 15 working days after assessment date. Where possible, the assessment should be submitted at the same time that a claim is made.
- 6.3 However, it is recognised that there may be cases where a student is unable to submit a claim for extenuation (and submit the assessment) within the above time period (e.g. emergency in-patient hospital treatment occurring during the examination period). In this case, submission of the claim at the earliest opportunity, should be made.
- 6.4 Claims must be complete and accompanied by evidence at the time of submission. Incomplete claims, including those without evidence, cannot be considered and students will be advised to submit the form once it is complete. Claims will not be considered unless submitted on the standard UCFB/GIS pro-forma by the designated date and time with accompanying evidence. Claims should be submitted to Quality@UCFB.com
- 6.5 Any claim for extenuation which is found to be in any part fraudulent will be considered as a matter of serious misconduct and dealt with under the student disciplinary procedure.

7. Procedures for Consideration of Extenuating Circumstances

- 7.1 Claims for extenuation will be considered by a panel consisting of a Chair who must be at least be Course Leader rank or higher, one Senior member of Registry and a member of Quality staff who have the necessary expertise to make an informed decision on claims. The UEL Link Tutor will also be invited to be a member of the panel.

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- 7.2 Where extenuation for more than one component is sought by a student, extenuation will be considered on a component by component basis.
- 7.3 The Extenuation Panel will normally meet monthly but can convene more frequently as necessary to deal with the volume of claims in a timely manner. Meetings can take place remotely or in person.
- 7.4 Students will be informed of the outcome of their claim via email from Quality.
- 7.5 Where necessary, new assessment dates will be confirmed by email from the Module Leader with agreement of the relevant Administration Manager.
- 7.6 The decision of the Extenuation Panel is binding on Exam Boards. If claims raise sufficient concerns about a student's ability to manage their studies UCFB/GIS reserves the right to refer the student to the Fitness to Study process.

8. Extenuation Outcomes for assessed tasks (examinations or coursework)

i) Outcomes for examinations and other tasks at which attendance is required:

If extenuation is granted by the Extenuation Panel at the first assessment opportunity (including those students repeating a full year of study at undergraduate level); if the student does not attend the assessment or fails, they will be allowed to go to a resit and any mark achieved for the relevant extenuated component(s) at resit, will be awarded. If the resit mark is lower than the original mark, the original will be used for any calculation purpose.

ii) Assessed tasks (e.g. coursework) to be submitted by a scheduled date:

a) Work submitted by the published deadline:

A claim for extenuation may be submitted. If the assessment is passed, then the pass component mark is retained and the extenuation submission ignored. If the assessment is failed, then the extenuation decision is upheld (accepted or rejected).

b) Work submitted late, but within one calendar week of the published deadline: A claim for extenuation may be submitted, the submitted work will be marked and the mark will be released;

c) **Work submitted later than one calendar week after the published deadline, or not submitted:**

A claim for extenuation may be submitted. The submitted work will not be assessed and the mark awarded will be zero;

However, where extenuation is granted for the component mark, a student may not be allowed to attempt that assessment again due to the overall progression decision and not achieving sufficient credit to progress.

9. Student response to Extenuating Circumstances findings

- 9.1 If a student is unhappy with the Panel's first decision, then they will be invited to explain why they believe the decision is incorrect, and can request a meeting with the Chair of panel, and Quality representative.
- 9.2. If a student is still unhappy with the decision, they can be offered the opportunity to discuss their concerns with UEL Student Union. The UCFB/GIS Quality Team will provide contact details. The student will be instructed that any communication from the UEL Student Union that supports their position must be provided in writing to UCFB/GIS.
- 9.3 If the UEL Student Union request a review of the UCFB/GIS panel decision, another panel will be convened for a review. If that panel reaches the same conclusion, then further discussions will take place with UEL for a final decision.

10. Behaviour whilst making a claim

- 10.1 UCFB/GIS has zero tolerance towards those whose behaviour is considered to be unacceptable and will take action in this respect. Unacceptable behaviour includes communicating with UCFB/GIS in a malicious, vexatious or aggressive manner for example:
- a. Making frivolous claims, or multiple claims regarding the same subject
 - b. Acting in a threatening manner either verbally, through an e-mail or by letter
 - c. Making claims that are knowingly false or unfounded.
- 10.2 If the behaviour of a student is unacceptable UCFB/GIS will normally tell the student why their behaviour is considered unacceptable and give them an opportunity to amend it. If the behaviour continues, UCFB/GIS will take action as defined in UCFB/GIS's Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policies.

11. Additional key information

- 11.1.1 Where a student submits an application for extenuation that has been considered by the Extenuation Panel the application cannot be withdrawn at a later date.
- 11.1.2 Where extenuation is sought, this will be recorded on the student record (so that the student is aware that the extenuation claim was considered).
- 11.1.3 Once a module has been capped, extenuation does not uncap the module.
- 11.4 Where a component consists of more than one element, and the circumstances of extenuation apply to one element, the extenuation granted is for the whole component in its entirety.
- 11.5 Extenuating circumstances does not overrule a penalty of academic misconduct.

Examples of circumstances which constitute grounds for extenuation may include:

- Illness at the time of an examination or in the period preceding coursework submission
- Death of a family member or close friend
- Severe unforeseen personal or psychological problems
- Flare-up or exacerbation of a chronic condition
- Complication of an existing condition
- Additional impact of a disability
- Complications in pregnancy e.g. premature labour

Indicative examples of circumstances which will not normally be considered as grounds for extenuation include:

- Paid employment, although exceptions may be made where an employer makes additional and unforeseen demands on an employee e.g. sending an employee overseas at short notice
- Misunderstanding of the policy and procedures e.g. not knowing an examination date or coursework deadline
- Transport problems e.g. missed bus or train, lateness of lift
- Computer or printing problems
- Holiday
- An inability to effectively manage time
- Group coursework tasks – failure by one member of the group to submit work or undertake the tasks assigned by the group; this will be taken into account in the marking guidelines
- A back-dated claim for reasonable adjustments completed prior to the release of a formal assessment by the disability service e.g. retaking an examination with extra time.

Type of evidence

Evidence must be from an independent source.

It is the student's responsibility to provide sufficient independent and documented evidence in order for a decision to be made. Claims will be rejected if:

- No evidence is provided to support the claim
- Inappropriate evidence is submitted which does not support the claim
- The claim does not meet the definition of Extenuating Circumstances
- The claim is a repeat request using same evidence from prior claim.

Indicative examples of documents which may be acceptable include

- Medical certificates which cover the appropriate period of time.
- Letters from medical specialists.
- Letters from professional counsellors/advisers, which should refer to the appropriate period of time. This may include Support Services.
- Relevant legal documents
- Death certificate
- Letters from legal professionals
- Letters from church or spiritual leaders
- Self-certification forms