

Extenuating Circumstances (Research Programme Assessment) - 2023/24

1. Purpose

1.1 The University recognises that a student may experience temporary personal difficulties outside of their control, which may have a detrimental effect on their ability to study for and/or complete an assessment [1] by the set deadline. Such situations are also referred to as "extenuating circumstances" (ECs).

1.2 The Regulations specify the University's core principles relating to ECs, a definition of extenuating circumstances, and the procedural framework within which extenuating circumstances which relate to Research Degree Programmes shall be managed, where those extenuating circumstances relate to assessment components managed by a Board of Examiners or by a course team on behalf of the Board of Examiners.

Research degrees in this category are currently the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (ClinPsyD), the Doctor of Education (EdD, MEd), the Professional Doctorate (ProfD) and the Doctorate in Educational Psychology (EdPsyD). All other extenuating circumstances (i.e. affecting the student's general registration and/or thesis element) should be handled via the postgraduate research student concessions process.

Details of that concessions process are available in the **Concessions, Appeals and Complaints** section of the PGR Pages on MyUEA.

FOOTNOTES

[1] The Regulations only apply to summative and not formative assessments. A summative assessment is defined as work that is taken into account by a Board of Examiners for the purposes of progression and/or for an award. Formative coursework is defined as work that is not taken into account by a Board of Examiners for the purposes of progression and/or for an award. Extension requests for formative assessments are at the discretion of the Module Organiser.

2. Principles

2.1 The following principles underpin the Regulations on and management of extenuating circumstances (ECs):

- (a) That any student who has demonstrated ECs relating to either 'Deadline' or 'Event' [2] summative assessments should not be unfairly disadvantaged;
- (b) That the remedies associated with ECs maintain the University's integrity and academic standards and do not disproportionately advantage the affected student over the rest of the student body;
- (c) That the treatment of ECs across the University should be equitable and consistent;
- (d) That it is the responsibility of the student to apply for a remedy or adjustment based on an EC (including the provision of supporting evidence) at the earliest

opportunity possible and no later than any EC-reporting deadline specified by the Programme.

- (e) That students seeking to gain an advantage or benefit through the provision of false or misleading information relating to ECs are liable to action being taken against them under the University's Disciplinary Procedures;
- (f) That consideration of ECs will be treated confidentiality with disclosure of details only made to the smallest number of people necessary to progress the application [3];
- (g) That all EC processes will be expedited as quickly as possible;

FOOTNOTES

[2] 'Deadline' assessments include Coursework, Written Assignments, Dissertations, and Projects. 'Event' assessments include Laboratory Demonstrations and other forms of practical, Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCE), Objective Structured Pharmacy Examinations (OSPE), Presentations, Course Tests and Examinations.

[3] The Student Privacy Notice explains what to expect when the University collects and uses your personal information: <https://www.uea.ac.uk/about/university-information/statutory-and-legal/data-protection>

3. Definition of Extenuating Circumstances

3.1 For the purposes of these Regulations, an extenuating circumstance (EC) is narrowly characterised by the negative impact of the reported event or state of affairs on the student's capacity to perform to the best of their ability with respect to an individual assessment or assessments rather than the effect on other aspects of the student's life.

3.2 To qualify as an EC each of the following conditions must be met:

- a) The situation must have been unforeseeable, i.e. untypical of customary day-to-day experience, and/or beyond the student's control;
- b) The situation must have been such as to be reasonably judged to have had a significant negative impact on the student's ability to undertake the assessment(s) to the best of their capabilities;
- c) The situation should normally have occurred at a time close enough to the assessment(s) Deadline submission or Event date such that there was insufficient time to resolve the impact of the experienced difficulties. The precise length of this time will depend upon the nature and severity of the ECs and the type of assessment but would usually be expected to be no longer than 3 weeks before the assessment Deadline submission or Event date;

d) The reporting of the situation must, where it can be reasonably acquired, be corroborated by independent evidence provided by appropriately qualified individuals.

3.3 The University shall follow the recommendations and guidance contained in the Academic Registrars' Council's (ARC) A Reference Document on Academic Appeals and Extenuating Circumstances for University Practitioners (2011) [4]. This list shall serve as a formal guide to the range of acceptable extenuating circumstances.

FOOTNOTE

[4] <https://curo-arc.triadclients.com/storage/documents/OSCRorCCa9JdL2NAlnQjgkW0PMwpFcGZjUVJJbZ.pdf>

4. Extenuating Circumstances

4.1 Extenuating circumstances may be considered for assessment components managed by or on behalf of a Board of Examiners in relation to:

4.1.1 Extension requests for those items of assessment classified as 'Deadline' (i.e. Coursework, Written Assignment, Dissertations, and Projects);

4.1.2 Requests for Delayed Assessment/Reassessment for those items of assessment classified as 'Event' (i.e. Course Tests and Examinations, Objective Structured Clinical Examination, Objective Structured Pharmacy Examination Laboratory Demonstrations and other forms of Practical, Presentations).

Decisions about progression and/or final classification

4.2 There shall be an Extenuating Circumstances Panel (ECP) for each Board of Examiners covering research degree programmes in the School of Study.

4.3 Each ECP shall consist of a pool of 4 academic members (one of whom will act as Chair) appointed by the Head of School.

4.4 The Chair of the ECP shall be a member of the relevant Board of Examiners within the School of Study.

4.5 Chairs of Boards of Examiners shall not be permitted to act as the ECP Chair for the Board of Examiners of which they are the Chair, but may be a member of the ECP.

4.6 A minimum of 2 members of the ECP are required to engage in the consideration of cases, with the exception of the pre-Board ECP meeting, where at least 3 members must be in attendance.

4.7 The consideration of extenuating circumstances need not involve a physical meeting of members of the ECP if alternative methods of discussion and mutual deliberation are available.

4.8 There shall be time limits for the reporting of extenuating circumstances by students that will vary according to the type of adjustment being sought.

4.9 Students should report any circumstances affecting their study as soon as possible and no later than the deadlines detailed below.

4.10 Students must report any circumstances that they wish to be considered to the PGR Service.

4.11 Where a student is unable to supply all relevant evidence at the point of reporting the extenuating circumstances, the student shall normally provide any outstanding evidence within 10 working days of application.

4.12 The Chair of the relevant ECP may grant further time (beyond 10 working days) to obtain evidence where good reasons for needing the additional time are provided.

4.13 Where a student believes that the relevant circumstances are of a highly confidential nature, they may report the circumstances to the Director of Student Services. The Director shall either:

(a) Confirm the confidential nature of the circumstances and provide the Extenuating Circumstances Panel with a statement of their severity and the date(s) of their likely impact. The substantive detail of the circumstances shall remain confidential to the Director of Student Services; OR

(b) Determine that the nature of the circumstances does not merit confidentiality of treatment and advise the student that they should report their ECs in the normal way.

5. Consideration of Extenuating Circumstances

5.1 Extension Requests (Deadline assessments)

5.1.1 Extensions of 7 working days shall be approved automatically on receipt of an Extenuating Circumstances Report Form on one occasion in an academic year [5] per student. There shall be no requirement for supporting evidence and the student may treat the request as approved on submission of the form.

5.1.2 The restriction to one occasion in each academic year may include a single request relating to a single extension period of 7 working days but applying to more than one item of assessment, where a student has multiple coincident submission deadlines.

5.1.3 Students may only use self-certification in support of the first extension request in any academic year. Where students request more than one extension

within an academic year, any additional applications must be supported by acceptable evidence.

5.1.4 Additional applications that meet the ARC criteria may be approved by the member of PGR Service staff acting as Secretary to the Board of Examiners.

5.1.5 Additional applications that cannot be mapped to the ARC criteria, are complex, or where rejection is recommended, shall be considered by the relevant ECP.

5.1.6 ECPs shall reach a decision and advise the student of the outcome, normally within 3 working days of the request being received by the PGR Service. In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to extend this deadline and the student shall be advised in writing where this is the case.

5.1.7 Where an extension will impact on the dates of Period of Study/Registration or the order in which placements are taken, the ECP may need to additionally recommend that the student applies for a concession and follows the postgraduate research student concessions process.

FOOTNOTE

[5] The dates of the academic year for each of the research programmes specified can be found in the relevant programme handbook and/or webpages.

5.2 Delayed Assessment/Reassessment (DA/R) Requests (event assessments)

5.2.1 Students may be permitted to repeat an 'Event' assessment due to circumstances beyond their control that affect performance or attendance at the Event.

5.2.2 Students may be offered a Delayed Assessment (where circumstances affected the initial assessment), Delayed Reassessment (where circumstances affected the reassessment attempt) or Further Reassessment (where circumstances affected the assessment or reassessment but are not deemed sufficient for a Delayed Reassessment).

5.2.3 A Delayed Assessment or Delayed Reassessment cancels the assessment that it replaces and the mark, if any, originally awarded. The recorded mark shall be the mark received for the Delayed Assessment and not the better of the two marks achieved. A Further Reassessment provides an additional opportunity without cancelling the original reassessment attempt.

5.2.4 In the case where a Delayed Assessment/Reassessment is approved at a student's request, but the initial assessment has been attempted and passed, it will be assumed that the delayed attempt is no longer required and that the student will keep the mark unless they request otherwise. If a new attempt is requested then 5.2.3 applies.

5.2.5 Where a student had not requested a Delayed Assessment/Reassessment but this is recommended by an ECP, a student may choose whether or not to attempt the Delayed Assessment/Reassessment. If they elect not to take the Delayed Assessment/Reassessment the original mark obtained will stand.

5.2.6 Once a Delayed Assessment (including Reassessment) has been taken, the student cannot void the attempt and request to record the original mark.

5.2.7 A Delayed Assessment (including Reassessment) may be considered where:

- a) the student reports, prior to the Event, that they are not fit to undertake, or are prevented from undertaking, the assessment;
- b) the student failed to attend;
- c) the student attended the assessment but believes that they did not have a fair attempt due to the effects of their extenuating circumstances;
- d) the delivery of the programme has hampered the ability of students to be assessed fairly.

5.2.8 Where the request for Delayed Assessment/ Reassessment rests on medical circumstances, students must seek medical evidence in advance or on the day of the assessment, unless they are reasonably prevented from doing so.

5.2.9 A request for a Delayed Assessment/ Reassessment must be submitted no later than 48 hours after the assessment Event.

5.2.10 All relevant supporting evidence, including, where appropriate, explanations of any failure to obtain medical evidence in accordance with 5.2.7 above, must normally be submitted not later than 10 working days after the request for Delayed Assessment/ Reassessment is received by the PGR Service.

5.2.11 The Chair of the ECP may approve a later deadline for the provision of supporting evidence where good reasons for needing the additional time are provided.

5.2.12 Delayed Assessment/ Reassessment requests shall be considered by the member of PGR Service staff acting as Secretary to the Board of Examiners in the first instance with reference to the ARC guidance noted above.

5.2.13 Cases which do not meet the ARC criteria, are complex or where rejection is recommended shall be referred to the relevant ECP.

5.2.14 Where an extension will impact on the dates of Period of Study/Registration or the order in which placements are taken, the ECP may need to additionally recommend that the student applies for a concession and follows the postgraduate research student concessions process.

5.3 Pre-Board ECP Meetings

5.3.1 The purpose of a Pre-Board ECP meeting is to consider extenuating circumstances that may impact on decisions about progression or classification.

5.3.2 All extenuating circumstances and associated adjustments shall be reported to the Pre-Board ECP.

5.3.3 Where extenuating circumstances have already been considered and adjustments made (previous extension and/or Delayed Assessment/ Reassessment requests), the ECP shall consider whether any additional adjustments may be appropriate.

5.3.4 Students must report extenuating circumstances to the PGR Service not later than 10 working days prior to the meeting of the Pre-Board ECP.

5.3.5 Dates of Pre-Board ECP meetings will be publicised to students.

5.3.6 ECPs shall determine the severity of impact and make a recommendation to the Board of Examiners on how the impact of the extenuating circumstances should be accommodated.

5.3.7 Recommendations may include:

- a) Permission to progress within the constraints of the relevant Regulations for the award;
- b) Where progression requirements have not been met, permission to retake the year or a part of the year, with or without a period of interruption;
- c) Assessment, reassessment or further reassessment;
- d) That a student applies for a concession following the postgraduate research student concessions process;
- e) That a student be transferred to an alternative course.

5.3.8 The actual adjustment shall be determined by the Board of Examiners.

5.3.9 When making decisions regarding appropriate adjustments, the Board of Examiners shall demonstrate that it has fully considered the recommendations of the Pre-Board ECP.

5.3.10 Adjustments must comply with PSRB (Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body) requirements (e.g. maximum length of registration), where applicable.