

EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES - Guidelines for Boards of Examiners

Extenuating Circumstances are circumstances relating to a student's health and/or personal life that are of a sufficiently serious nature to result in her or his being unable to attend, complete, or submit on time an assessment. The Regulations relating to Extenuating Circumstances and the Criteria by which they will be judged are reproduced in the current "Examination and Assessment Regulations".

Problems with course management that have affected student performance, either individually or as part of a group, should be remedied as a result of students following the student complaints procedure. The Department may also anticipate the effect of such problem and through the Head of Department, acting in consultation with the Academic Registrar, regard these as "generic extenuating circumstances", which may require some proposed remedy. These processes may result in the Board of Examiners being asked to endorse or consider proposed remedies.

Boards of Examiners will be informed by Extenuating Circumstances Officers whether a student has valid extenuating circumstances, and if so, which assessment artefacts may have been affected or have not been completed, attended or submitted on time (by assessment artefact the University means an individual examination, coursework, essay, laboratory report, presentation etc). They will also be informed of decisions made by Unit Assessment Boards in respect of these valid extenuating circumstances. Boards of Examiners will not be informed of the details of the extenuating circumstances.

Students cannot submit extenuating circumstances for deferred First Attempt Assessments or Second Attempt Assessments. They can only submit extenuating circumstances for the first attempt in an academic year. There should be no cases of extenuating circumstances to consider for the Boards to consider Second Attempt Assessment Unit Assessment and Deferred First Attempt Assessments.

Where a student has missed an examination type assessment, the BOE normally will confirm the UAB decision, which, in turn, will normally be to allow the student another attempt (a Deferred First Attempt) at any missed examination type assessment and to record a decision of DEFER against the unit. Chairs should make sure members of the BOE understand that under the University's extenuating circumstance policy, a student with a valid extenuating circumstance has a right to another attempt at any missed examination, and may choose to exercise that right, within a specified period of time, regardless of any decision reached by a Board of Examiners.

Where a student has missed the submission date of a coursework type assessment and it has not yet been received when a BOE meets, the BOE will normally confirm the UAB decision of PENDING and Chairs Action will need to be taken once the assessment has been received and marked.

Students are not allowed to trail any units (including deferrals) into the next academic year.

The BOE also has the power, at the award stage, to offer an "Aegrotat" award. This is an unclassified award, derived from the Greek for "he is unwell". Many employers and professional bodies do not recognise an "Aegrotat" award. Educational establishments will not recognise it as meeting the requirements for postgraduate study or research. The Chair must ensure that any offer of an "Aegrotat" award to a student brings these matters to the student's attention and allows them to accept or decline the award. If the student accepts the "Aegrotat" award, they cannot change their mind and apply for further assessment for the award. The Chair must also ensure the student is aware of this limitation.

The above decision requires the BOE to offer the decision to the student as an alternative to the Deferred First Attempt Assessments that is their right. All students with a valid extenuating circumstance shall be sent a letter giving details and timing of any Deferred First Attempt Assessments and any discretionary “offer” recommended by the Board as described above. The letter must also include a deadline for the student’s response. If the student fails to respond by the deadline, the default decision becomes that the student declines the offer of a deferred assessment. It is the Chair’s responsibility to ensure the student is sent such a letter.

All decisions taken by a Board of Examiners in respect of valid extenuating circumstances made known to it have to be recorded in the minutes, together with a reason for the decision reached.

George Allison, Assistant Academic Registrar, Assessments & Student Regulations
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Links to Useful Documents

[Extenuating Circumstances – Guidance for Unit Assessment Boards](#)

[Extenuating Circumstances – Criteria](#)

[Extenuating Circumstances – Guidance for Students](#)

[Extenuating Circumstances – Guidance for Boards of Examiners](#)

[Extenuating Circumstances – Guidance for Extenuating Circumstances Officers](#)

[Extenuating Circumstances – Procedures](#)

[Extenuating Circumstances](#)

[Unit Assessment Boards](#)

[Coursework](#)

[Examinations](#)

[Boards of Examiners](#)