

Illness, Absence, Coursework and Assessment Deadline Extensions, Deferred Consideration and Personal Mitigating Circumstances – HE Procedures

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1. Illness

If you are ill, you are advised to contact your personal tutor and the module leader by e-mail to explain your absence from the module sessions. This is regarded as common practice.

2. A leave of absence

If you feel that you are entitled to study leave, e.g. for personal reasons, this needs to be authorised IN ADVANCE by your PROGRAMME LEADER.

If you experience personal difficulties then you may be able to extend a coursework submission deadline, defer an assessment or claim mitigating/extenuating circumstances. For example:

- If you are taken seriously ill just before or during an exam or submission deadline;
- If you are involved in an accident or serious incident that prevents you attending the College just before an exam or assignment deadline;
- If you experience a bereavement or family illness.

You will need to provide evidence to verify your personal difficulties. Depending on your particular circumstances, examples of evidence could include:

- Death certificate;
- A medical certificate - Post-dated medical certificates will not normally be accepted. If you are ill you are strongly urged to visit a doctor and request a medical certificate at the time of your illness, not after the event;
- Counsellors letter;
- Police Crime Reference Number or other independent verification of an incident.

Not all of your personal difficulties are considered valid reasons to extend a coursework submission deadline, defer an assessment or claim extenuating circumstances. For example, if you:

- Sleep in and miss your exam/coursework submission;
- Turn up at the wrong time or venue for an exam/coursework submission;

- Miss a submission deadline because you didn't manage your study time properly;
- Have a cold or other minor illness;
- Have lost work on laptops, PCs and USB drives, etc. This is because you should save all of your work on your designated drive;
- Have time management issues.

3. Assessment and Coursework deadline extensions

Where illness or other verifiable cause will prevent you from completing an assessment/coursework you should contact your year tutor at the earliest opportunity – BEFORE the coursework deadline.

The programme leader may, on receipt of appropriate evidence (which you must provide), extend a coursework deadline up to a maximum of five working days (Saturday and Sunday not included).

A mitigating circumstances application form with a request for extension (available on the VLE HE student handbook page or from your programme leader) is required as official proof that the extension has been granted and, if the coursework is to be submitted, the form must be submitted with the coursework. If the coursework is to be submitted electronically then you must submit the extension form separately to your module leader by the extended submission deadline (mark for the attention of the module leader). Please note that retrospective extensions will not usually be granted. In exceptional circumstances, as identified by the programme leader, on a case-by-case basis your module leader may set an alternative assignment.

Please note that assessment submission deadlines are not automatically extended according to the number of days lost due to illness or personal circumstances. The length of any coursework extension is decided on by the module/programme leader based on how long it should take you to complete the coursework (irrespective how well you will perform in the assessment).

Assessment submission deadlines will NOT be extended if you are able to complete the assessment, but feel that your performance in the assessment will be affected. If you feel that illness or other verifiable cause will affect your performance in the assessment, then you must make an application for mitigation/extenuating circumstances.

4. Request for Deferred Consideration

Exceptionally, if a scheduled event will prevent you from attempting a module assessment event, you may request that consideration of your performance is deferred until the subsequent assessment opportunity. Examples of circumstances where this procedure applies could include events such as: jury service, medical treatment, military service etc. To make this request you must complete the mitigating circumstances application form and request for Deferred Consideration of Module Assessment.

Independent, verifiable and impartial evidence MUST be provided with the application, which should be approved by the programme leader normally no later than two weeks prior to the assessment event. The programme leader will liaise with the Assessment Board Chair (Academic Manager) to determine whether reasonable grounds have been presented. If accepted, the Assessment Board would be advised that consideration of the module attempt is to be deferred until the next assessment opportunity. If not accepted, you would be advised that the module assessment will not be deferred.

5. If you are prevented from attending your scheduled assessment event /exam

You should submit a mitigating/extenuating circumstances form when timely, severe, acute and unexpected circumstances have prevented you from attending an assessment event, or have impacted severely on your ability (performance) in the assessment, and where the possibility of alternative actions is inapplicable or inappropriate.

It is your responsibility to submit the application within the required timescale (no later than 5 working days after the event) and to provide appropriate supporting documentation. Documentary evidence must be submitted with your form. If no evidence is included, your request is likely to be rejected. You are strongly advised to discuss any application for mitigation/extenuating circumstances with programme leader tutor BEFORE submitting it; this will help ensure that valid claims are accepted by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel.

The Panel will consider the Extenuating Circumstances application presented by the student. The decision of the panel will be reported to the Assessment Board. Please note that a claim for extenuating circumstances cannot be considered for an assessment for which you have had the submission deadline extended.

In case of a valid Extenuating Circumstance application the assessment is deferred to the next appropriate opportunity, but only when a pass mark or grade for the module overall has NOT been achieved. Where the student achieves a pass mark or grade for the module, then the mark will stand and the consideration of the Extenuating Circumstances application is ended. Deferred assessments are marked out of 100%.

A student may be deferred following an Extenuating Circumstances application once only per module attempt, save for extraordinary circumstances in which case the Assessment Board may exercise a reserve power to award a subsequent deferral, provided the minutes record the justification for such exceptional action.

Where the Panel do not accept that the student has experienced timely, severe, acute and unexpected circumstances, this ends consideration of the extenuating circumstances application.

Exceptionally you may be unable to make an Extenuating Circumstances application within the five working days' time frame. All applications made after this deadline are deemed to be late. Late applications must be submitted to your programme and module leader via e-mail with a justification for your inability to submit within the established timeframe. Late Extenuating Circumstances applications will not be considered after the Extenuating Circumstances Panel has met. The Panel will determine whether the justification for late submission is valid or not. If the reason for late submission is accepted as valid, then the standard extenuating circumstances process will apply. Where the School does not accept the justification for late submission this ends consideration of the application.

Evidence submitted to an assessment board of a student's personal mitigating or extenuating circumstances will be regulated by the policies and procedures of the programme qualification awarding body. Where the regulations of the programme qualification awarding body prescribe a stage 1 local submission to the College, the following procedure will apply:

- The student will submit a claim for personal mitigation or extenuation to the college designated member of staff (normally the Programme Leader).

- The College designated person (normally the Programme Leader) will present the application for mitigation to the College **HE Academic Practice Panel** at its next available meeting.
- The HE Academic Practice Panel will consider the application for mitigation and make a recommendation to the relevant assessment board.