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Summary available:	NO		

Extenuating Circumstances Policy (HE)

**This document can be made available in other formats,
on request**

1. Introduction and aim.

1.1 All students have a responsibility to manage their learning during their studies at Newbury College. A wide range of assessments will take place as identified in the programme specification and assignments. To meet the assessment requirements students will need to manage their workload to ensure that they meet the set deadlines. Awarding bodies publish guidelines for assessment and these must be followed in the first instance.

1.2 It is recognised that occasionally a student may encounter adverse circumstances beyond their control which may prevent them individual from meeting a set deadline or from performing at their expected level of ability.

1.3 This policy explains:

- The adverse circumstances that will be considered as 'extenuating' circumstances
- The process for applying for consideration for extenuating circumstances.
- The procedure followed to consider and agree the extenuating circumstances.
- How all extenuating circumstances are considered fairly and equally.

2. What are extenuating circumstances?

- These circumstances are normally beyond the control of the student and prevent the timely completion of an assessment by a set deadline or prevent the student from performing the assessment at the expected level.
- The circumstances may relate to the health, personal life or employment of a student and are of sufficient seriousness that they prevent the student from attending, completing or submitting the assessment on time.

2.1 The circumstances are expected to be:

- Unforeseen: the student could not know of nor anticipate the event.
- Unavoidable: the student could not have taken steps to prevent or avoid the event or circumstance.

3. Examples of extenuating circumstances:

- Bereavement: Death of a close relative or partner which would fall into the permitted compassionate leave of absence in employment.
- Serious short-term illness or accident.
- Competitor, coach or referee participating in a significant national or international sporting event or competition.
- Victim of crime.
- Deterioration or complication of a long term physical or mental health condition or disability.
- Unexpected occurrence of a serious family or work circumstance.
- Complications in pregnancy or premature labour.
- Unavoidable serious transport difficulties.
- Unscheduled technical difficulties affecting the College intranet, VLE or e-portfolio used for submission.
- Unexpected child care or care crisis.

This list is not exhaustive but provides an indication of the seriousness of the circumstances that will be considered.

4. Circumstances that cannot be considered under this policy.

- Medical circumstances that cannot be substantiated e.g. no medical note, no evidence of hospital admission, doctors note produced after the period of illness.
- Any medical, health or disability related condition where adjustments for extenuating circumstances have already been made.
- Circumstances that could be foreseen or prevented.
- Minor illness or ailment which would not normally lead to absence.

- Paid employment with the exception of unforeseen, last minute unusual employer demands e.g. to travel abroad for employment.
- Transport problems e.g. missed bus, train or lift.
- Holidays
- Financial issues
- Personal computer/printer problems.
- Poor working practice e.g. failure to back up electronic documents.
- Claim of being unaware of the submission date, time, format of assessment submission.
- Poor time management in addressing the requirements of the assignment/assessment.
- Complaints about the delivery of the unit/course as these should be addressed through the Complaints Procedure.
- Stress or panic attacks related to formal assessment that have not been diagnosed or disclosed as a condition or illness requiring additional arrangements prior to the assessment / exam.

5. **Jury Service.**

5.1 Students who receive a summons to attend jury service during the academic year are advised to request a deferral. This is to avoid missing essential teaching and assessment activities and avoid impacting other students where group activities are required. The likely impact of missed assessment activities due to jury service is likely to be a requirement to complete assessment activities at a later date such as during the summer break; or where substantial teaching is missed, having to re-sit the unit or assignment when it is taught next.

5.2 If a deferral is not approved the College will support students in carrying out their civic duties. Students should request a temporary leave of absence in writing giving the dates of the jury service. This should be submitted to the Course Leader. If the jury service is expected to extend beyond the standard 3 weeks the student should discuss the best approach to managing their absence with their Course Leader and Curriculum Manager.

6. **Application for extenuating circumstances.**

6.1 Valid evidence should be submitted to support applications for extenuating circumstances. That evidence should come from independent third-party authorities e.g. medical professionals, the police, counsellors, lawyers, police. Course Leaders may submit supporting statements but this will not be considered as the necessary evidence.

If evidence is of a highly personal or sensitive nature, support may be requested from the College Wellbeing or Safeguarding Officer who will provide guidance on how to present the evidence.

6.2 Examples of extenuating circumstances and suggested evidence.

This list is not exhaustive but indicates the types of evidence that are appropriate to support the most common extenuating circumstances:

Examples of valid extenuating circumstances,	Examples of supporting evidence.
Bereavement/ Funeral	Death certificate, obituary, order of service
Serious short-term illness or accident. Deterioration or complication of a long term physical or mental health condition or disability. Complications in pregnancy or premature labour.	Medical certificate or hospital admission letter/record.
Competitor, coach or referee participating in a significant national or international sporting event or competition.	Letter confirming registration for the event.
Victim of crime	Crime reference number, the name and number of the police officer and police station concerned. In the case of highly sensitive situations the College Wellbeing Officer or Safeguarding officer's support may be used to present evidence.

Unexpected occurrence of a serious family or work circumstance.	Medical certificate or letter from relevant professional related to the incident. Letter from employer for unexpected work circumstances.
Unavoidable serious transport difficulties.	Traffic report (website, newspaper), official report of traffic accident.
Unscheduled technical difficulties affecting the College intranet, VLE or e-portfolio used for submission.	Screen shot of notice from College intranet or letter/email from IT Services Manager, VLE or e-portfolio manager.
Unexpected child care or care crisis.	Letter from the care provider or relevant professional explaining why the care could not be provided. Where a family member was unable to provide the care service, a letter detailing why they couldn't provide the care at that point.

7. Procedure for reporting extenuating circumstances and submitting a request for extension or deferral..

- 7.1 Notify the Course Leader at the earliest opportunity of any circumstance that will affect the completion of assessments or course commitments.
- 7.2 Complete an extenuating circumstance form available from Student Information Services and Annex A of this document. Be specific about the nature of the request applied for i.e.:
- An extension to the submission deadline for assignments and coursework.
 - To defer an assessment, test or exam.
 - I). Students should be aware that many examinations are set by an external awarding body who will identify if another opportunity is available. The available opportunity may be a re-sit examination which could fall into the next academic year. Awarding bodies may consider individual circumstances and early advice should be sought from the College's exams team.
 - II). The form must be submitted as early as possible in advance of the submission deadline or exam/practical assessment date when requesting an extension to a submission deadline or a deferral to an exam or practical assessment. Submission of the form should ideally be at least 5 days prior to the event requiring extension or deferral.
 - III). Submit the completed form together with valid evidence to support the application, to the Course Leader.
- 7.3 A student's extenuating circumstances may affect more than one assessment, practical assessment or examination and therefore several requests for extension or deferral may be submitted.
- 7.4 Submission of the form does not automatically grant the requested extension or deferral.
- 7.5 An interim examination board will be convened to consider the request and supporting evidence. The student will be informed of the outcome of their request following the interim examination board.
- 7.6 The external examiner will be informed of all applications for extension to deadlines for submission or for deferral and the outcome decision from the interim examination board.

8. Reporting extenuating circumstances where the circumstance occurs at the point of submission, exam or practical assessment.

- 8.1 Where the extenuating circumstance occurs on the date of the submission, exam or practical assessment the extenuating circumstance the form and supporting evidence may be submitted up to 5 working days after the submission deadline, exam or practical assessment.
- 8.2 The examination board may request that the student submits a draft of the work completed towards the assessment where an extension to a submission deadline is requested. This will enable the examination board to make an informed decision on any revision of the submission deadline.

9. Exceptions to the procedure for reporting extenuating circumstances and requesting extension or deferral.

9.1 It is possible in certain situations that a student may be unable to submit the extenuating circumstances form within five working days. E.g. They are suffering from the medical, emotional or physical impact of a serious event without access to support to submit the required documentation.

In such circumstances they should notify the Course Leader and submit the extenuating circumstances form at the earliest opportunity giving the reasons for the delay in the submission.

9.2 Some extenuating circumstances present challenges that may require the student to take leave of absence for a period. A break in learning may be requested using the extenuating circumstances form and should also request extension or deferral for any assessments. Practical assessments or examinations that will be affected by the break in learning. A break in learning is normally up to three weeks. Longer periods of absence will be considered but are likely to lead to an equivalent deferred study period. A student intending to apply for a longer break in learning should check if there are any implications for the arrangements in place for tuition fees, awarding body registration fees or visa limitations.

9.3 Requests for Breaks in learning will be considered at an interim examination board in the same manner as requests for extension or deferral (See item 7).

10 Outcomes of requests for extension, deferral or a break in study due to extenuating circumstances.

10.1 The decisions that may be reached in considering requests for extension, deferral or breaks in learning are:

i) Extension of the deadline for an assignment or Coursework approved.

The decision will confirm the revised deadline which will be in accordance with the regulations of the awarding body. In most cases this will be a maximum of 10 days.

ii) Deferral approved for a practical assessment

The Course Leader will confirm the approved deferral and will give the date of the revised assessment.

iii) Deferral approved for a formal examination.

This can only be approved for the first sitting of an exam. The revised opportunity is likely to be a formal resit exam. The Course Leader will provide the date of the re-sit opportunity. The student will be advised that they are unlikely to have a further re-sit opportunity unless the awarding body is able to support this.

iv) Approval of a break in learning

The agreement for the break in learning will be defined, normally for a period up to 15 working days. Any associated approved extensions or deferrals will be notified at the same time.

v) Request for extension, deferral or break in learning rejected.

The reason for rejecting the request will be given:

- I). Failure to submit supporting evidence.
- II). Insufficient or unsuitable evidence to substantiate the extenuating circumstances.
- III). Failure to meet an agreed extension to provide supporting evidence.

10.2 **Notification** to students should be in writing and where the request has been rejected should briefly explain the reason for the rejection. The notification should be sent within two working days of the interim examination board. If the notification is sent by email, a delivery receipt and read receipt should be requested to confirm delivery.

11. Appeals

11.1. Students may appeal the outcome of their request for extension, deferral or a break in learning if:

- I). The examination board failed to follow the procedures outlined in this policy.
- II). The student believes that the evidence provided has not been interpreted correctly by the interim examination board.

11.2 A student may not appeal if they have previously been granted an extension, deferral or break in learning for the same piece of work and have not kept to the agreed arrangement

- 11.3 The appeal should be submitted in writing within 10 working days of the date of the notification letter.
- 11.4 The appeal request should state clearly the reason for the appeal and:
- I). Why they think the request for extension, deferral or a break in learning was not reviewed in line with the procedures or
 - II). Identify the evidence that they feel has been incorrectly interpreted and provide information to clarify the evidence.
- 11.5 Appeals will be conducted by the Vice Principal of Students and Curriculum or by an appointed Senior Manager where this enables a timely response.
- 11.6 The appeal will consider the appeal statement, the original request for extenuating circumstances, extension, deferral or break in learning and the supporting evidence, the record of the interim examination board and their conclusion.
- 11.7 Outcomes of an appeal may be:
- I). Appeal upheld: The student will be notified in writing that their appeal has been upheld and the amended outcome details as described in item 10. The student will also be notified that the internal appeals procedure has been concluded and should the student remain dissatisfied in any way with the process that they may request a Completion of Procedures (COP) letter to take their concerns forwards to the office of the Independent Adjudicator.
 - II). Appeal not upheld: The student will be notified of the outcome in writing. The reason will be given explaining why the appeal was not upheld. A COP letter will be provided to inform the student of the possibility of referring to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.
- 11.8 Further information on the Office of the Independent Adjudicator may be found on the website: www.oiahe.org.uk

12 Monitoring of Extenuating Circumstances

- 12.1 Requests for extensions, deferrals or breaks in study due to extenuating circumstances will be:
- I). Recorded in examination board minutes.
 - II). Reported to the Senior Management Team and to Governors in the Curriculum and Quality Committee:
 - The number and types of requests made due to extenuating circumstances
 - Whether the requests were upheld or rejected.
 - Any appeals and their outcomes.
 - The number of COP letters issued.
- 12.2 The purpose of reporting on requests for extension, deferral or breaks in study due to extenuating circumstances is to ensure the process is monitored for:
- Consistency and fairness of decisions
 - Timeliness in responding to requests.
 - Recurring issues that require further support, training or investigation.
 - Maintaining awareness and transparency of the process to both students and staff.
 - Maintaining accurate records of requests and outcomes available for internal or external audit and review. (Records are usually kept for 3 years in line with awarding body audit requirements).
 - Ensuring that the process is reviewed annually and updated to remain fit for purpose.

13 The Office of the Independent Adjudicator

- 13.1 The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) runs an independent scheme to review student complaints. Newbury College is a member of this scheme. If you are unhappy with the outcome of your extenuating circumstance request, you may be able to ask the OIA to review your extenuating circumstance. You can find more information about making a complaint to the OIA, what it can and can't look at and what it can do to put things right here: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students>

You normally need to have completed the extenuating circumstances procedure and appeals before you complain to the OIA. Newbury College will send you a letter called a "Completion of Procedures Letter" when you have reached the end of our processes and there are no further steps you can take internally. If your extenuating circumstance is not upheld, Newbury College will issue you with a Completion of Procedures Letter automatically. If your extenuating circumstance is upheld or partly

upheld you can ask for a Completion of Procedures Letter if you want one. You can find more information about Completion of Procedures Letters and when you should expect to receive one here: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/providers/completion-of-procedures-letters>

Approved by SMT: 30 January 2020
Next Review: January 2021

14. Extenuating Circumstances request procedure

Student submits extenuating circumstances form and supporting evidence to Course Leader or Curriculum Manager

Form submitted together with supporting evidence. (Support available from Student Services if required)

Request for extension or deferral ideally submitted at least 5 days in advance of the event.

In an exceptional circumstance a request may be submitted up to 5 working days after the assessment.

Examination Board assess the form and evidence submitted.

Exam board convenes within 5 working days to consider the request and sufficiency of the supporting evidence. Further evidence may be requested or a copy of work completed to date.

Reference may be made to Student Services or other relevant specialist for advice

The Exam Board will decide whether to uphold or reject the request.

Notification of the outcome confirmed in writing to the student.

Within 2 working days of the exam board decision a notification letter or email is sent to the student with delivery and read receipt requested for emails.

A copy of the notification letter along with the request form and supporting evidence is stored on the extenuating circumstances log.

Where a request is rejected a COP letter will be issued with the notification and reasons. This will be recorded on the extenuating circumstances log.

Annex A

Extenuating Circumstances Request Form

This form must be completed for all requests for extension, deferral or a break in study due to extenuating circumstances. A different format may be requested for accessibility.

Support may be obtained from Student Services to complete the form

Support to present evidence of a sensitive or confidential nature may be obtained from the Safeguarding Officer.

The Extenuating Circumstances Policy should be referred to before completing this form.

Part 1: Your Details

Name (Print)		Student Number	
Course title and year of study			

Part 2: Assessment, Practical assessment or examination affected.

Unit Number	Unit Name	Assessment <i>e.g. Assignment, exam, presentation etc.</i>	Date of assessment

Continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

Part 3: Details of the extenuating circumstances: *e.g. what happened and when and how this affected your work.*

Part 4: List supporting evidence submitted *(See item 6 of policy for suitable examples)*

Part 5: Reason for late submission of request if after the assessment deadline / Exam

Student signature		Date submitted	
Course Leader /CM name/ signature		Date of receipt	

Submit this form and your supporting evidence to your Course Leader or Curriculum Manager.