

Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedures

Contents

1	Introduction	2
2	Application Process for The Consideration of Extenuating Circumstances.....	4
3	Consideration of Applications for Extenuating Circumstances	4

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The policies and procedures set out in this document underpin the regulations which all staff and students are expected to follow. They provide greater details of the principles behind the regulations and the rules and processes that Goldsmiths puts in place to positively impact on the student and staff experience and to ensure compliance with external regulatory frameworks.
- 1.2 The relevant regulations appear in text boxes at the start of each section.

3.3.1 Students may experience exceptional circumstances that temporarily make it impossible for them to participate in their studies, submit assessments or attend examinations. Goldsmiths considers applications from students who believe that their work and assessments have been affected by these circumstances.

3.3.2 Before a submission or deadline: When a student knows before a submission or other deadline that an illness, the worsening of a chronic illness, or an otherwise unforeseen event is beginning, they should notify the person specified in their department to receive information on extenuating circumstances so that consideration of adjusted deadlines, deferred assessments and alternative assessments can be made.

3.3.3 After a submission or deadline: Where there is a request for the recognition of extenuating circumstances after the deadline for an assessment has passed or after an examination, the student is required to describe the circumstances. The student is also required to show why it was not possible for them to notify Goldsmiths of their circumstances before the deadline or at the time of the examination or assessment.

3.3.4 Details of extenuating circumstances must be submitted by the student to their department (or home department) as soon as possible and, unless there are exceptional reasons, no later than seven days after the assessment deadline or date of examination. Where a student is unable to contact the person specified in their department they should contact the relevant administrative staff to seek advice and support.

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1.3 Scope

- 1.3.1 The Goldsmiths regulations for taught programmes and research programmes above set out the rules for the consideration of extenuating circumstances in relation to summative assessments. This Policy does not apply to formative assessments.
- 1.3.2 This document sets out the procedures to be followed to meet the requirements of the regulations.

1.4 Principles

- 1.4.1 Students who are absent from examinations; do not submit assessments; submit work after the deadline, or believe that the standard of the work submitted has been affected by exceptional circumstances, may apply for extenuating circumstances to be considered.
- 1.4.2 The Board of Examiners can only consider extenuating circumstances that have brought into question the validity of a particular assessment as a measure of a student's achievement, and are outside the student's control.
- 1.4.3 A list of acceptable and unacceptable extenuating circumstances is detailed in "Categories of Acceptable and Unacceptable Extenuating Circumstances and Evidence".
- 1.4.4 Where extenuating circumstances submitted are accepted, they may be used in consideration of the assessments concerned allowing an adjusted deadline or deferred assessment. They may also be used in a reconsideration of a mark awarded or in relation to a borderline classification. Extenuation may not be applied more than once.

2 Application Process for The Consideration of Extenuating Circumstances

2.1 Rules for The Submission of an Application

- 2.1.1 Students must make their Extenuating Circumstances application no later than seven days after the deadline for submission of coursework or the date of the examination.
- 2.1.2 Submissions by staff or by other students on behalf of a student who has not presented a written case themselves cannot be accepted.
- 2.1.3 The student's home department will process the application, writing to the student to request further information if required. The home department will ensure that the acceptability of the extenuating circumstances is discussed and agreed with the department where the assessment is located. The home department will then communicate with the student whether or not their application has been accepted for all assessments and the reasons for making the decision. This includes decisions in relation to both Joint Degrees and modules taken outside the department on single honours or interdisciplinary programmes.

2.2 Supporting Evidence

Students must provide a self-certification statement for any EC application and does so by including it within their application confirming the detail of the extenuating circumstance(s) and how it/they has/have impacted their assessment(s). No further evidence is required when submitting an EC application. A student's home department may need to ask for additional information relating to a particular EC application where the information provided by the student is unclear. Requests for additional information are for the purposes of clarification only where needed and will not include a request for additional evidence.

3 Consideration of Applications for Extenuating Circumstances

3.1 Situations in which Extenuating Circumstances may be considered

- 3.1.1 Goldsmiths Students may apply for extenuating circumstances to be applied to:

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- an absence from a timed or practical assessment;
- non-submission of an assessment;
- an adjusted deadline for an assessment;
- extenuating circumstances which occur during a timed or practical assessment (students with severe illness are advised not to sit and to submit an Extenuating Circumstances application for a deferred assessment);
- assessments submitted on time with extenuating circumstances
- overall classification outcome where extenuating circumstances should be taken into account in the final year

3.1.2 Examiners should mark any submitted assessments from a student even where an Extenuating Circumstances application has been made, without granting any allowance for the extenuating circumstances. The mark should be reported to the Board of Examiners who will then assess the impact of any extenuating circumstances application accepted by the department.

3.2 Initial Consideration of the Application

3.2.1 The application will be reviewed with the following possible outcomes:

- If the application is sufficient, the home department will make a recommendation to the Board of Examiners (see 3.5).
- If further information is required, it will be requested from the student. If a response is not received within five days, the application may be refused. Students will be informed of the outcome as soon as possible.

3.2.2 The department will consider the statement of the student to determine if the circumstances are acceptable and what effect, if any, these circumstances have had on the validity of a particular assessment as a measure of a candidate's achievement.

3.3 Adjusted Deadlines for Assessments

3.3.1 If extenuating circumstances are presented to support an adjusted deadline a minimum extension of 10 working days should be applied wherever possible.

3.3.2 Assessments submitted with extenuating circumstances within 5-10 working days following the set deadline should be considered by the department and recommended to the Board of Examiners either to:

- accept the assessment and record the mark awarded without further concessions.; or

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- reject the application and record the student as absent from that element.

3.3.3 The student will be informed of the outcome and justification for the decision made by the department as soon as possible

3.4 Impaired Performance or Absence from an Assessment

3.4.1 Students may have a more serious unexpected illness or problems which disrupt their ability to study and which may have caused an absence from assessment or affected their performance.

3.4.2 If extenuating circumstances are presented to support impaired performance in an assessment or an absence from an examination or non-submission of an assessment, the department will make a recommendation to the Board(s) of Examiners and the student will be informed of the outcome, after the meeting of the Board concerned.

3.4.3 The department will decide, with reference to “Acceptable and Unacceptable Extenuating Circumstances”, if the extenuating circumstances have or have not:

- justified an absence from an examination or non-submission of an assessment/assessments or;
- brought in to question the validity of a particular assessment as a measure of a student’s achievement and;
- whether those circumstances were outside the student’s control.

3.4.4 In reaching the decision the department will consider:

- the application from the student;
- the student’s supporting statement;
- The student’s academic achievements in other unaffected assessments;
- the comments of the student’s personal tutor(s) and other relevant academic staff in regard to the student’s academic achievement.

3.4.5 The department will consider the provisional mark(s) for the assessment(s) and performance of the student in other elements of assessment.

3.5 Recommendations to The Board of Examiners

3.5.1 The department should consider the extenuating circumstances, and make one of the following recommendations to the Board of Examiners in each case:

- the circumstances appear to have had little or no effect upon the student’s performance, and the mark for the element of assessment can therefore be confirmed;

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- the circumstances appear to have affected the student’s performance (as evidenced by their performance in the particular elements of assessment when compared to their performance in other equivalent elements of assessment);
- the circumstances appear to have been so significant as to bring into question the validity of the assessment as a measure of the student’s achievement in the particular element of assessment
- the circumstances appear to have affected the student’s overall achievement such that the Board of Examiners should consider whether a classification outcome should be amended where a student’s classification outcome is borderline (Progression and Award for Students on Taught Programmes 9.3.7)

3.6 Appropriate Actions for Extenuating Circumstances

3.6.1 The Board of Examiners must consider the appropriate action to be taken in respect of the extenuating circumstances.

3.6.2 The following actions are possible:

Circumstance	Action
The circumstances appear to have had little or no effect upon the student’s performance, and the mark for the element of assessment can therefore be confirmed;	None – where circumstances are not acceptable or not considered to have affected the performance of the student to any extent
The circumstances appear to have affected the student’s performance (as evidenced by their performance in the particular elements of assessment when compared to their performance in other equivalent elements of assessment).	Confirm a failed mark but allow a retake without penalty (unless the module has been failed at an earlier attempt and therefore already penalised).
	Award additional marks, with the agreement of the External Examiner. No more than 2 additional marks can be awarded to the overall module mark for any affected assessment element(s).
The circumstances appear to have been so significant as to bring into question the validity of the assessment as a measure of the student’s achievement in the particular element of assessment.	Discount the mark achieved and allow deferred assessment to late summer or following year, depending on individual extenuating circumstances. Not considered to be one of the student’s permitted attempts, therefore no retake penalty is applied (providing the module was not failed at an earlier attempt).

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Circumstance	Action
	<p>Deferral for an absence. Not considered to be one of the student's permitted attempts, therefore no retake penalty is applied (providing the module was not failed at an earlier attempt).</p>
	<p>In the case of long term continued illness, recommend that the Senior Tutor discuss continued study and/or possible interruption or study with the student.</p>
<p>The circumstances appear to have affected the student's overall achievement such that the Board of Examiners should consider whether a classification outcome should be amended where a student's classification outcome is borderline.</p>	<p>Students whose final weighted average falls within 2% below the borderline between two classes of Honours but have only obtained marks in the higher classification in modules totalling at least 90 credits in value at Levels 5 and 6, may be considered for the award of the higher classification.</p>

- 3.6.3 Boards of Examiners should take care not to 'double count' extenuating circumstances, i.e. by adjusting a deadline and then compensating the student a second time by raising the mark for an individual element of assessment, or raising the mark for an individual element of assessment and then by compensating the student a second time when determining which degree classification to award.
- 3.6.4 Boards of Examiners will not receive the student's application and must not engage in any discussion on specific details of the application or of the student's circumstances. A record should be kept of all applications in accordance with the College's required procedures, and the decision recommended in each case.

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3.7 Deferred Assessment

- 3.7.1 The deferred assessments should normally be assessed in the same format as the original assessment and should normally be sat or submitted in late summer.
- 3.7.2 Students whose assessments are deferred are required to sit or submit as directed by the department. If continuing or new extenuating circumstances arise, further extenuating circumstance to cover the later assessment period must be submitted, no later than five working days after the submission date or the examination and considered as above

3.8 Appeal

- 3.8.1 Students who are dissatisfied with the outcome of their application for the consideration of extenuating circumstances have the right of appeal, following the published Goldsmiths procedures for academic appeals.