

# Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedures

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# 1 Introduction

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- 1.1 The policy 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 College in accordance with the requirements set out in the published extenuating circumstances policy.

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 notify the College in accordance with the requirements set out in the published extenuating circumstances policy.

3.3.4 Extenuating circumstances applications should be submitted to the College as soon as possible, but no earlier than 14 working days prior to a deadline or examination and no later than 7 working days after a deadline or examination. Applications submitted outside of these timeframes will be rejected, unless the student can demonstrate they were prevented from disclosing the circumstances at the time.

## 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 College 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 a student's extenuating circumstances application is accepted, this may be used in consideration of the affected assessments only. The outcome of any accepted application is limited to allowing an adjusted deadline, allowing a deferred assessment or (where an assessment has been completed) allowing an assessment attempt to be discounted and a fresh attempt to be permitted, or (in regard to a final classification) allowing consideration of a higher classification to be awarded where the College's borderline classification criteria have been met.
- 1.4.5 Extenuation may not be applied more than once to the same assessment element, unless there are new extenuating circumstances presented by the student.

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## **2 Application Process for The Consideration of Extenuating Circumstances**

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### **2.1 Rules for The Submission of an Application**

- 2.1.1 Students must make their Extenuating Circumstances application no earlier than fourteen days in advance or 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**

2.2.1 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 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.

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# **3 Consideration of Applications for Extenuating Circumstances**

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## **3.1 Situations in which Extenuating Circumstances may be considered**

3.1.1 Goldsmiths Students may apply for extenuation to be applied to:

- 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 in accordance with the College's required procedures. The application of any extenuation will be considered and applied separately from the marking and moderation process.

### **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
- If the application is insufficient, the home department will reject the application and no extenuation will be applied

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, the home department should consider the length of any extension granted based on the impact of the student's circumstances on their ability to complete the assessment. A minimum extension of 5 working days should be applied, with longer extensions granted on the basis of the severity of the students' circumstances.

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
- 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,.

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
- 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).
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).
	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).
	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.

Circumstance	Action
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.	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.

3.6.3 Boards of Examiners should take care not to 'double count' the same extenuating circumstances, i.e. by adjusting a deadline and then allowing the attempt to be discounted.

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.

### 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 and considered in accordance with the College's requirements set out 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.