



exeter college

Pearson HN Courses Extenuating Circumstances Policy

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CLT Sponsor: Director of Adult Education and HE
Consulted with: HE Academic Board
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1 Purpose

- 1.1 The aim of the College's Pearson HN Courses Extenuating Circumstances Policy is to ensure that no student is disadvantaged by circumstances beyond their control, whilst maintaining academic standards.
- 1.2 This policy applies to students studying a Pearson HNC or HND or any Pearson module. Students studying courses run in partnership with other universities should consult the relevant Universities website and regulations for detailed guidance.

2 Definitions

- 2.1 Extenuating Circumstances are circumstances which:
 - affect the students' ability to attend or complete assessment(s)
 - are exceptional
 - are outside their control
 - can be corroborated by independent evidence
 - occurred during or shortly before the assessment in question

3 Policy

- 3.1 If participation in an examination or assessment has been affected by an extenuating circumstance, then students can ask the College to take this into consideration. A claim for extenuating circumstances can be submitted to cover late submission of work, non-submission of work or non-attendance at a time specific assessment, such as an examination, test, presentation or performance, or field class.
- 3.2 It is not possible to lay down hard and fast rules of situations that will not be considered valid extenuating circumstances. The key issue is whether the claim meets the criteria at paragraph 2.1 of this document.

Examples of situations that are likely to be considered valid extenuating circumstances are included in section 3.3 of this document. Section 3.4 provides guidance on situations that are likely to be considered invalid extenuating circumstances.

- 3.3 What might be considered valid extenuating circumstances?

Examples of extenuating circumstances that are likely to be deemed valid:

- Hospitalisation, including operations
- Health problems
- Personal or psychological problems for which the student is undergoing counselling or has been referred to a counsellor or other qualified practitioner
- Pregnancy-related conditions and childbirth (including a partner in labour)
- Bereavement causing significant impact/effect
- Major accident or injury, acute ailments or conditions which coincide with an assessment deadline or an examination or test, or are sufficiently long-lasting to impact on a significant part of a term
- Clinical depression or other mental health problem
- Recent burglary/theft/serious car accident
- Jury service which cannot be deferred
- Representing the College at national level or the country at international level, or participation in an event that is of benefit to the College's national or international reputation.
- For part-time students in full-time employment and apprentices, exceptional pressure of work or permanent change of employment circumstances. Students must submit corroborating documentary

evidence (e.g. a letter from their employer) which confirms the particular circumstances, explains why they are exceptional and outside the students' control and formally supports their claim. If they are self-employed, they must provide independent evidence to support the claim that the pressures are exceptional and outside their control.

- Late diagnosis of, for example, dyslexia, resulting in no support or examination provision.
- Separation or divorce - student or parental (provided the facts and the effects are independently corroborated) Unavailability of the student portal prior to the deadline for an assignment or examination where it has been confirmed by the module lead that this would have had a material effect on the preparation for an assessment.
- Examination disruption (e.g. fire alarm going off; excessive noise from building works)
- A significant change to their financial circumstances after enrolment (e.g. a withdrawal of Student Finance England (SFE) funding mid-year).
- Interviews for placements, only in cases where they have asked the employer or provider to reschedule, but this has not been possible. Such claims should be evidenced by a letter from the employer or provider.

3.4 What might be considered invalid extenuating circumstances?

Examples of extenuating circumstances that are likely to be deemed invalid:

- Alarm clock did not go off
- Car broke down, train/bus delayed or cancelled, other public transport problems (unless the student can demonstrate that he or she had allowed adequate time to compensate for such problems as might reasonably have been anticipated)
- Childcare problems which could have been anticipated
- Accidents or illness affecting relatives or friends (unless serious, or they are a sole carer)
- Unspecified short-term anxiety, mild depression or examination stress
- Cough, cold, upper respiratory tract Infection, sore throat, minor viral infection, unless the illness was at its peak at the time of an examination, end-of-module test or in-class test and the corroborating evidence refers to the impact on their performance
- Financial problems (other than cases of exceptional hardship or significant changes in financial circumstances since enrolment)
- Holidays, house moves, family celebrations or other events where they either have control over the date or may choose not to participate
- Computer problems, corrupt data, disk or printer failure or similar
- Problems with postal delivery of work (unless recorded delivery or registered mail)
- Time management problems (e.g. competing deadlines)
- Appointments (legal, medical etc) which could be rearranged
- Sporting or recreational commitments (unless they are representing the University at national level or country at international level, or participating in an event that is of benefit to the University's national or international reputation)
- Atypical performance
- Close proximity of assessment deadlines to one another
- E-submission of an assessment file in an incorrect format

Full-time students may not make an extenuating circumstances claim relating to pressures of work, since they have by implication made a commitment to make available the time necessary for study. Apprentices, who wish to make claims based on exceptional pressures in their employment, must submit corroborating documentary evidence from the employer, which confirms the circumstances, explains why they are exceptional and outside the student's control and formally supports their claim. If they are self-employed, independent evidence to support the claim that the pressures are exceptional and outside their control must be provided.

3.5 What will happen if extenuating circumstances are valid;

3.5.1 For Extensions/Late submission of work;

Students will normally be permitted a maximum extension of 10 working days from the original deadline for the submission of work. A working day is defined as a day on which the College is open, so includes student holiday periods but excludes weekends, Bank Holidays and other times that the College is closed, such as the Christmas and New Year College closure. An extended deadline may, therefore, fall in the vacation period.

The extended deadline may vary with the period that academic staff teaching on the module allow for return of work and/or feedback to students, or because there is insufficient time to mark the work before a Subject Assessment Panel or Award Assessment Board. Students and Module leaders will be advised of the extended deadline by email. Coursework can be submitted earlier than the date indicated by the extended submission deadline.

If students are unable to meet the extended deadline due to Extenuating Circumstances, they must submit a further Extenuating Circumstances claim.

3.5.2 For non-submission of work

If an extension is not possible, or if students are not able to submit work within the extended deadline, for valid extenuating circumstances or because the extended deadline falls in the vacation period and they are unable to meet it, their claim may be made valid for non-submission of work. In this case, a 'fail' mark will be included in the student's profile and their extenuating circumstances will be forwarded to the Award Assessment Board which will make a decision on what action to take. Normally the Board will allow re-assessment at the next opportunity. This may be during the summer referral period or as a repeat of the whole module in the following academic year.

3.5.3 For failure to attend examination(s), test(s) or other timed assessments

A fail mark will be included in the student's profile and their extenuating circumstances will be forwarded to the Award Assessment Board which will make a decision on what action to take. Normally the Board will allow re-assessment. This may be during the summer referral period or as a repeat of the whole unit in the following academic year.

Where students are given a re-assessment opportunity as a result of valid extenuating circumstances, this will include all missed components and the opportunity to complete all criteria covered by that assessment.

3.6 What will happen if cited circumstances are invalid

Work submitted late but within 24 hours of the original deadline will be capped at a 'Pass' grade. Work submitted later than 24 hours late will receive a 'Fail'. The student will be offered the opportunity for resubmission either in the summer referral period or as a repeat of the whole unit in the following academic year, depending on the overall number of outstanding units.

A student who, for the first assessment opportunity, has failed to achieve a Pass for that unit specification shall be expected to undertake a reassessment.

- Only one opportunity for reassessment of the unit will be permitted
- Reassessment for course work, project or portfolio-based assessments shall normally involve the reworking of the original task
- For examinations, reassessment shall involve completion of a new task
- A student who undertakes a reassessment will have their grade capped at a Pass for that unit
- A student will not be entitled to be reassessed in any component of assessment for which a Pass grade or higher has already been awarded

One attempt to repeat a unit may be offered the following academic year. The unit must be studied again, must be capped at a Pass and can only be repeated once.

4 Implementation

Each extenuating circumstance claim will be considered individually, and all students will be treated fairly and equitably. The decision will take into consideration the nature, timing and severity of the problem and the impact it has had on assessment. This individual consideration of students' circumstances means that a claim approved for one student will not necessarily be approved, or lead to the same outcome, as that for another student.

Extenuating circumstances claims should be submitted either within a week before the deadline (if requesting an extension), or as soon as possible, and normally no later than ten working days, after the deadline for the submission of the work, or the date of the presentation, performance or test. Extenuating circumstances claims related to formal examinations should be submitted no later than the Monday after the test.

Forms are considered as a matter of priority and the majority are considered within 5 days of submission. However, occasionally some forms can take a little longer to assess. Students will be informed of the outcome by email (sent to their College email address). If the claim is deemed invalid, they will receive an explanation for this decision.

If you are making an extenuating circumstances claim about coursework, do not wait for a decision on your claim before submitting your work. Please submit the final version of your work within 10 working days of the original deadline.

4.1 It is the responsibility of the student

- To submit work by the published deadline
- To submit an application for consideration within 10 working days of the published deadline, if submission of work is affected by extenuating circumstances
- To provide appropriate and relevant supporting evidence
- To submit work within 10 working days of original deadline or submit a further claim for extenuating circumstances

4.2 It is the responsibility of teaching staff

- To comply with the College and Pearson HN guidelines regarding work that is submitted after the submission date, non-submission of work and work that is re-submitted following a referral decision;
- To mark submitted work 'without penalty' in the first instance
- To record the late submission and inform the student that the lateness of submission may have an impact on their grade
- To inform the student that they may wish to submit 'extenuating circumstances', if there are circumstances that have related to the late or non-submission
- To inform the Assessment Panel of all late submissions so grades can be capped if no valid extenuating circumstances

4.3 It is the responsibility of the HE Department team

- To convene an 'Exceptional Circumstances Panel' to review all applications

- To ensure that the Programme Leader is present in order for the panel to be quorate (while there are no formal guidelines regarding the membership of such a panel)
- To review the application and decide on whether the circumstances are valid or invalid
- To take and keep minutes of the panel's decisions to be made available to the Assessment Board and relevant External Examiners
- To confirm the outcome of the panel meeting, in writing to the student and the assessment tutor
- To ensure the details of the circumstances are kept confidential

5 Associated Documentation

- [Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment](#)

6 Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

- 6.1 This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure compliance with regulations set by Pearson.
- 6.2 The policy and any subsequent versions of it will be formally adopted on behalf of the College, subject to recommendations of the Senior Leadership Team, by the Board to the Corporation.
- 6.3 Copies of this policy and associated documents are available from the College portal and website.