

The Academic Regulations Appendix 7: Procedures for the Submission of Exceptional Mitigating Circumstances

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Edge Hill
University

The Academic Regulations

Appendix 7: Procedures for the Submission of Exceptional Mitigating Circumstances

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Purpose

In determining assessment recommendations, the University will consider properly submitted claims from students who believe their performance has been adversely affected by extended or exceptional mitigating circumstances which have not been (fully) addressed through the extension scheme.

This appendix details the process in place for the University to consider claims from students who believe their performance has been adversely affected by exceptional mitigating circumstances and outlines how applications are considered.

Regulations

Principles underpinning the scheme

1. Assessment

Assessment is the key element of the learning process through which your performance and overall grades are determined. Assessment can take a variety of forms such as coursework, examinations, timed assessments, oral presentations or supervised practice placements. Whatever form your assessment takes you will be given full details of the requirements at the beginning of your programme or the individual modules you are undertaking. **It is your responsibility to ensure that you submit work or present yourself for assessment in line with published deadlines/examination timetables/presentation start times.** Planning and organising your work so that you can meet deadlines is one of the key skills we expect you to develop during your time as a student with us.

2. Failure to submit an assessment/attend an examination or presentation

Because we expect you to plan and organise your work appropriately, failure to hand in work on time or present yourself for an examination or timed assessment can only be accommodated where there are **exceptional circumstances which you could not have been expected to know about or plan for in advance**¹. In general, this will relate to illness or sudden changes in your personal circumstances over which you have no control. In the first instance you must contact your Programme/Module tutors, or other appropriate staff member, to discuss your situation. All Programmes operate local procedures for the consideration of justified mitigating circumstances and will accommodate you wherever possible either through extending submission deadlines or making alternative arrangements for local tests for example so that you are not disadvantaged. Details of these procedures are included in Programme/Module handbooks and it is your responsibility to make yourself familiar with them and to use them appropriately.

¹ If you are experiencing difficulties in preparing for assessment or you have other study – related issues which might affect your ability to submit, you should discuss these with your tutors at the earliest opportunity so that appropriate study support can be provided.

3. The Exceptional Mitigating Circumstances Scheme

Formally, your performance in a module is determined by a Module Assessment Board² which meets at the end of the session in which the module was delivered. It is essential that the Board has a clear understanding of your position in order to confirm your marks and determine the appropriate action if elements of your assessment are incomplete. The Exceptional Mitigating Circumstances Scheme exists for those occasions where, even with the use of the local procedures described above, you are unable to complete assessment because of exceptional circumstances.

4. What is classed as Exceptional Mitigating Circumstances

It is not possible to draw up a definitive list of what may or may not be considered valid. As a general guide however, exceptional mitigating circumstances will usually relate to:

- circumstances which have arisen which are outside your control such as illness or bereavement
- sudden events which could not be planned for such as accidents or emergencies, especially in relation to caring responsibilities
- significant changes in your circumstances since you began your course such as the diagnosis or worsening of a chronic medical condition

Circumstances which will not be accepted as valid will generally relate to things you could have planned for or situations which arise through your own carelessness or negligence.

² Or equivalent assessment board for students undertaking non-modular programmes

The following table indicates the circumstances that are likely to be accepted, and those which are not³:

Examples of circumstances likely to be accepted	Examples of circumstances unlikely to be accepted
<p>Serious short-term illness or injury</p> <p>Worsening of an ongoing illness or disability, including mental health conditions</p> <p>Symptoms of an infectious disease that could be harmful if passed on to others</p> <p>Death or significant illness of a close family member or friend</p> <p>Unexpected caring responsibilities for a family member or dependant</p> <p>Significant personal or family crises leading to acute stress</p> <p>Witnessing or experiencing a traumatic incident</p> <p>A crime which has had a substantial impact on the student</p> <p>Accommodation crisis such as eviction or the home becoming uninhabitable</p> <p>An emergency or crisis that prevents the student from attending an exam or accessing an online assessment</p> <p>A technical problem that prevents the student from accessing online teaching or assessment</p> <p>Safeguarding concerns</p>	<p>Holidays, house moves or other events that were planned or could reasonably have been expected</p> <p>Minor illness such as common colds or hay fever, unless the symptoms are particularly severe</p> <p>Assessments that are scheduled close together</p> <p>Misreading the exam timetable</p> <p>Poor time management</p> <p>Minor transport disruption</p> <p>Computer or printer failure where the student should have backed-up their work</p> <p>Normal exam stress</p> <p>Minor life events, unless the circumstances have had a disproportionate impact</p>

If you are a full-time student, standard work commitments are not accepted as valid exceptional circumstances.

³ These are taken from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator's [Good Practice Framework](#)

Students who require special arrangements in relation to assessment because of a disability or learning difficulty are not covered by these arrangements for the purposes of making reasonable adjustments. A separate procedure is available to address your needs and you should seek advice from Student Services as soon as you register for your Programme.

5. Evidence

It is important that you submit evidence in relation to your claim **so that we can ensure that we treat all students fairly.**

In all cases we expect students to provide a factual statement detailing the reasons for an EMC claim. The statement should provide context on how your circumstances have impacted your assessment submission.

Where possible, statements should be supported by independent evidence such as:

- Doctor's letter or fit note
- Statement from a counsellor
- Hospital appointment letter
- Crime reference number
- Eviction notice
- Bereavement evidence (eg notice of service, obituary, news report, letter from personal tutor, family member or friend)
- Letter from domestic violence services
- Letter from Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) programme
- Letter from Edge Hill mental health advisor
- Letter from Edge Hill Disability advisor
- Letter from personal tutor

We understand that in some cases it may not be possible for you to obtain supporting evidence. For example, if you have had a short illness that had a significant impact on your exams or assessment but did not require medical intervention. In these cases you should provide the details in your factual statement.

Please note: we retain the right to check the validity of all EMC applications submitted, with or without evidence. You may wish to ensure any evidence from an external party is provided on headed paper and includes the relevant contact details.

If your submission is found to be fraudulent you may be referred to the University's student disciplinary procedures.

6. When and how to submit an application

Applications should be submitted no later than **10 days after the submission/examination date** for the piece(s) of work your claim relates to.

Applications should be submitted via an online form available at the Academic Registry webpages. In completing the form you will need to provide the following information:

- Your name, student ID number and details of the assessment the EMC applies to
- The reason for your application
- A factual statement explaining how your circumstances have impacted on your ability to complete/submit an assessment; or how your circumstances have prevented you from performing to your best ability
- Any evidence to support your application

When your online EMC form has been submitted, you will receive an email confirming receipt. It is your responsibility to keep this email as proof of your submission.

7. How EMC applications are considered

All applications are initially considered by designated Assessment Officers in the Academic Registry. If an application and supporting evidence clearly meet the requirements set out in this policy⁴, the application will normally be approved at this stage.

If the circumstances do not meet those normally accepted by the University and/or where there is no supporting evidence, or where there is a concern about a pattern of applications from an individual student, the application will be referred to an EMC panel for a decision.

Institutional EMC Panels convene on a monthly basis to consider student applications from across the University. The panel comprises:

- Senior and Assistant Registrars (Academic Registry)
- The Faculty Assistant Registrar from each of the three faculties
- A representative of Student Services

⁴ See sections 4 and 5

In addition to making decisions on EMC applications, panels will consider whether students require additional support because of the circumstances. In doing so, panels will have due regard to the patterns of applications from individuals. Where an individual makes repeated applications, the University may ask to meet with the student to discuss their support needs, before or after approving an application.

8. Confidentiality

As previously described, your claim is considered by an individual or small Panel, acting on behalf of an Assessment Board. It is not discussed in detail by the Assessment Board itself. Members of the Panel are bound by the rules of confidentiality and you can be assured that your circumstances will not be discussed with others unless you agree. You are not required to provide lengthy details of your situation but you must provide enough information to allow the University to make a judgement of the impact on your studies.

9. Outcomes

You will be informed of the decision of the Assessment Officer/Panel. If your application is accepted as valid, you will not be penalised for the non-submission of work or absence from an examination/timed assessment but you may need to wait for a meeting of the appropriate Assessment Board to find out how to make up the outstanding requirement.

Based on recommendations from the Assessment Officer/Panel, Assessment Boards will seek to provide the most appropriate way for you to recoup your position. Irrespective of your circumstances, you will be required to demonstrate that you have met the learning outcomes of the module(s) concerned and you should note that **Assessment Boards are not authorised to and will not change marks on the basis of Exceptional Mitigating Circumstances**. The possible outcomes of a successful claim are summarised below:

- Allowing an additional examination sitting without penalty
- Allowing a further extension for the submission/resubmission of coursework
- Proposing an alternative form of assessment
- Allowing a module to be repeated in full
- Condoning a failed module mark (where Professional/Academic regulations permit)⁵

⁵ If you are offered a condonement in relation to a failed module mark, you have the choice to accept this or to redo the work/examination to improve your mark.

- Recommend interruption of study or a Repeat Year

A successful EMC application will only cover the dates of submission/attempt indicated on the application form. All students who have an application accepted will be expected to complete the assessment/examination at the next scheduled point as detailed following the Assessment Board.

Where a claim relates to an element of work which has been referred by an earlier Assessment Board, any marks achieved will be capped at the appropriate pass mark irrespective of the outcome of the EMC. A successful EMC application will, however, ensure that students still receive the full number of assessment attempts as permitted within the Academic Regulations.

If you pass a module but have made a valid submission in relation to your overall performance, it is for you to determine whether to accept any offer of deferral in order to improve your mark(s). If you choose to redo the work/examination and your mark is lower than the original mark achieved, the higher of the two marks will stand.

10. Late submissions

The deadlines for submitting claims are clearly identified by Academic Registry and you should adhere to these. Deadlines are set so that claims can be considered before the meetings of the Assessment Boards which have responsibility for determining your final grade for a module or your progression/award status.

If, **for good reason**, you are unable to submit an application on time you may submit an EMC once the Assessment Board has met. In these circumstances, the University operates a limited window for EMC's to be considered swiftly after an Assessment Board has met. Full details and the relevant deadlines will be provided in your results notification letter.

Whilst the University will consider all late applications on a case by case basis, it is likely that a case would be upheld where it is clear a student was unable to submit their circumstances on time, for example because the student was in hospital at the time of the original deadline, or was experiencing very serious circumstances meaning it would not be reasonable for the University to expect an application to have been made at the time.

However, the University is unlikely to accept a late request where this is because a student did not know about the process or had not realised that their performance had been affected until after seeing their results.

11. Part-time and Postgraduate students

These procedures apply to all students. We do understand that part-time students may experience some conflicts in relation to work commitments and these will be considered sympathetically.

12. Appeals

Students that are dissatisfied with the outcome of an EMC Panel may use the standard Appeals procedure where the grounds for appeal are met. All students will be made aware of the process for submitting an appeal when receiving the outcome of the Panel's decision.

13. Misuse of the Scheme

It is a serious offence to misuse the EMC scheme. Any applications which are proven to be false or include falsified evidence, before or after the application is considered, may lead to disciplinary action.

Annexes

There are no annexes to this policy.

End matter

Title	Appendix 7: Procedures for the Submission of Exceptional Mitigating Circumstances
Policy Owner	Senior Registrar: Assessments and Awards
Policy Contributor	Director of Governance and Assurance
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