

Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedures

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Related Regulations from the Academic Manual are shown in boxes like this.

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1 Introduction

- 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.

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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 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", included in this Policy.
- 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.

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 (EC) application no earlier than fourteen working days in advance or no later than seven working 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 College¹ will process the application, writing to the student to request further information if required. In doing so, an assessment will be made as follows:
- whether the student has identified an acceptable category of extenuating circumstance(s)
 - whether the assessment type would permit an extension or deferral (where these are requested)
 - whether an EC request for that assessment has been made previously on the same basis and extenuation has already been applied for this student's assessment
 - whether the impact (as described in the student's self-certification statement) demonstrates the student was unable to engage with the assessment at the appropriate time (in the case of extension or deferral requests), or that where a student did engage with the assessment the circumstances described would have prevented the student from performing fully (where a request is made to discount an assessment attempt), or that the circumstances affecting a final year student across completed assessments should be taken into account when determining a final classification (where a student is requesting a possible classification consideration)

¹ The College is used to refer to central Professional Services teams. They are not named in this Policy to avoid the need to make minor amendments to the College Policy if a team name should change.

- 2.1.4 Once a decision has been reached, the College will communicate it to the student and the reasons for making the decision. The decision will also be communicated to the student's home department and that of the department in which the assessment is being submitted. The College will also be responsible for updating information held in related systems for assessment submission, marking and moderation

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. They should confirm 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. The College 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 if 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 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

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- overall classification outcome where extenuating circumstances should be taken into account in the final year

3.1.2 Not all forms of extenuation are possible for all assessment types, for example, an extension cannot be granted for a timed examination. The College and the department in which the assessment is being taken can advise students where necessary prior to an application being made. Advice and guidance is also provided to students on the College's website.

3.1.3 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 College will make a decision and confirm this to the student and relevant departments. This is then recommended for confirmation 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 College will reject the application and confirm this to the student, and no extenuation will be applied

3.2.2 The College will consider the statement provided by 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 College will 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 original set deadline should be considered by the College 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 an 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 College will make a decision and confirm this to the student and the relevant department(s). This decision will then be recommendation to the Board(s) of Examiners and the student will be informed of the final outcome,.
- 3.4.3 The College 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

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3.4.4 In reaching the decision the College will consider:

- the application from the student
- the student's self-certification statement
- the student's academic achievements in other unaffected assessments

3.5 Recommendations to The Board of Examiners

3.5.1 Decisions on EC applications will be recommended to programme boards of examiners who will confirm the decision and the application of extenuation.

3.6 Appropriate Actions for Extenuating Circumstances

3.6.1 All decisions taken under this Policy must consider the appropriate action to be taken in respect of the extenuating circumstances.

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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 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 and/or possible referral to the College's Fitness to Study Procedure. |
| 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. |

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3.6.3 The College and its 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.

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 at the next available assessment opportunity (and 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.

4 Categories of Acceptable and Unacceptable Extenuating Circumstances

Students self-certify any extenuating circumstances by providing a written statement in the EC Application to explain their circumstances, as well as the impact of those circumstances on the affected assessment(s).

These categories should be used by the College in reaching a decision on an EC application. Where an EC application is submitted with an unacceptable category of ECs set out in this document, the application should be rejected.

| | A - Acceptable Reasons within Regulations | B - Reason that may be considered | C - Unacceptable Reasons within Regulations |
|----------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Serious Medical Condition | Serious personal injury or medical condition, normally occurring for the first time, preventing attendance or completion of assessment or submission of work. | Serious injury or illness of a child, partner or close relative (parent) but not extended family. Serious worsening or acute episode of pre-existing and ongoing medical condition or physical disability. | Ongoing medical conditions, disabilities, learning difficulties or mental health conditions. Minor illnesses or injuries (such as colds, headaches, hay fever). Normal pregnancy. Stress related to undertaking assessments including written examinations. |

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| | A - Acceptable Reasons within Regulations | B - Reason that may be considered | C - Unacceptable Reasons within Regulations |
|--------------------|---|---|---|
| Bereavement | Death of parent (including stepparents and legal guardian), child, siblings, spouses or partners. | Death of a close relative (not identified in 'Acceptable') or friend. | |
| Trauma | <p>Victim of serious crime (e.g. rape, assault, mugging).</p> <p>Theft of work required for assessment.</p> <p>Direct experience of a terrorist incident or natural disaster.</p> <p>Major fire in a residence.</p> | <p>Family breakdown (such as the divorce of parents or student's relationship, but not extended family).</p> <p>Enforced eviction from housing.</p> | <p>Minor crime.</p> <p>Financial problems or employment issues.</p> <p>Minor accommodation problems or choosing to move house.</p> <p>General domestic/family problems.</p> |

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| | A - Acceptable Reasons within Regulations | B - Reason that may be considered | C - Unacceptable Reasons within Regulations |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Racial Trauma | Racial trauma, or race-based traumatic stress (RBTS), refers to the mental and emotional injury caused by encounters with racial bias and ethnic discrimination, racism, and hate crimes. | | |
| Caring Responsibilities | | Unexpected caring responsibilities caused by sudden death or illness or worsening of ongoing medical condition to child, partner or close relative. | Caring responsibilities for minor illnesses, accidents or injuries. |
| Court Attendance | Jury service or attendance at court or tribunal as a witness, defendant or plaintiff. | | Acting as a supporting friend or relative at Court or Tribunal. |

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| | A - Acceptable Reasons within Regulations | B - Reason that may be considered | C - Unacceptable Reasons within Regulations |
|----------------------|--|---|---|
| Miscellaneous | | Serious disruption caused by a terrorist incident or natural disaster | Any circumstances which have not clearly impacted on academic performance or do not clearly relate to the timing of the assessment. Visa problems. Misjudging preparation or revision time. Misreading the timetable. Multiple assessments required in a short period of time. Private or public transport failure, holidays or booked travel arrangements, attendance at family occasions such as weddings. |