

HE Extensions, Extenuating Circumstances, Interruption to Studies & Deferrals Policy

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This policy and procedure is subject to The Equality Act 2010 which recognises the following categories of individual as Protected Characteristics: Age, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex (gender), Sexual orientation, Disability.

Alternative Format

This policy is available in alternative formats, to request this, please email marketingcampaigns@mkcollege.ac.uk

Version Control

Version Number	Author	Approver	Date approved	Next review date
1	Group Director HE, Adult & IoT	Group Leadership Team	3/12/25	Nov 27

Change log

Version Number	Summary of changes
1	New policy

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1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 Meeting deadlines is an expectation of students at the degree level (you). It is, however, acknowledged that unexpected situations may occur that affect your ability to study, take an examination or submit other forms of assessment.
- 1.2 The Higher Education Extensions, Extenuating Circumstances, Interruption to Studies & Deferrals policy and procedure are intended to enable you to report circumstances and apply for a deadline extension to a coursework/non-examined event assessment, or consideration of extenuating circumstances with possible interruption to study or deferral options.
- 1.3 This document should be considered alongside the HE Reasonable Adjustments Policy and procedure and is written in accordance with our legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

2. Scope

- 2.1 The Higher Education Extensions, Extenuating Circumstances, Interruption to Studies & Deferrals policy and procedure are applicable to Higher Education students studying on taught programmes at Milton Keynes College (us) which are validated by the Open University. They will also be applicable to Higher Education students of our associate Awarding Bodies who require that our Extensions, Extenuating Circumstances, Interruption to Studies & Deferrals policy and procedure are used.
- 2.2 This policy and procedure also are applicable to staff who are responsible for administering and actioning the procedure.

3. Purpose

- 3.1 This policy and procedure are aimed at Higher Education students who want to inform the institution of any matters beyond their control, which may have affected their ability to study, take an examination or submit other forms of assessment.
- 3.2 This policy and procedure provide Higher Education students at Milton Keynes College with the ability to apply for Extensions, Extenuating Circumstances, Interruption to Studies & Deferrals.
- 3.3 The policy:
- sets out the available options;
 - explains what extenuating circumstances are;
 - gives examples of valid reasons for an application;
 - outlines the support provided to students.
 - It also gives the avenues for appeal or complaint should you not be satisfied with the outcome.
- 3.4 The procedure outlines how to apply for extensions or extenuating circumstances, interruptions to study & deferrals, and how your request will be assessed in an equitable and clear manner.
- 3.5 This policy and procedure can be found on our website (Higher Education Policies). You will be informed of this policy and procedure during your programme induction and reminded of this policy and procedure prior to assessment deadlines.

4. Policy Principles

- 4.1 If you are facing unforeseen and/or unavoidable circumstances that are impacting your ability to study, submit an assessment, or take an exam/event assessment, there are several pathways available to you, depending on your circumstances. Please see Table 1 below for examples:

Table 1: Extensions and Extenuating Circumstances

Situation	Action	Decision Maker	Timescale for response
You require a short extension to submit your coursework/complete a non-examined event assessment (e.g., presentation, other practical assessed assignment) due to an unforeseen and/or unavoidable circumstance.	Apply for a short extension using the Extension and Extenuating Circumstances Form. Short extensions are for 5 working days and do not require supporting evidence. Rescheduled in-person assessments may take place after the 5 working day extension period depending on staff availability and a date will be agreed with you.	Course Team Leader	2 working days from Extension application being submitted.
You require a longer extension to submit your coursework/complete a non-examined event assessment (e.g., presentation, other practical assessed assignment) due to an unforeseen and/or unavoidable circumstances.	Apply for a long extension using the Extensions and Extenuating Circumstances Form Extensions will be for longer than 5 working days and will be proportionate to the circumstances declared. Supporting evidence must be submitted.	Extenuating Circumstances Panel	6 working days from Extension application being submitted.
You wish to postpone an examination/examined event assessment due to an unforeseen and/or unavoidable reason.	Apply for extenuating circumstances using the Extensions and Extenuating Circumstances Form. Supporting evidence must be submitted.	Extenuating Circumstances Panel	6 working days from Extenuating Circumstances application being submitted.
You wish to resit a missed examination/examined event assessment/ non-examined event assessment due to an unforeseen and/or unavoidable reason.	Apply for extenuating circumstances using the Extensions and Extenuating Circumstances Form. Supporting evidence may need be submitted, depending on the individual circumstances (please see clause 4.41 for exceptions)	Extenuating Circumstances Panel	6 working days from Extenuating Circumstances application being submitted.
Your performance and/or ability to study has been adversely impacted due to an unforeseen and/or unavoidable reason.	Apply for extenuating circumstances using the Extensions and Extenuating Circumstances Form.	Extenuating Circumstances Panel	6 working days from Extenuating Circumstances application being submitted.

- 4.2 The information below sets out the core principles for coursework/non-examined event assessment extensions (short and long), extenuating circumstances requests, and when evidence is required.
- 4.3 A valid reason for the extension or extenuating circumstances request must be given on the request form. Examples of valid reasons are given in the “Examples of circumstances likely to be accepted” section below.
- 4.4 Where possible, documentary proof must be supplied at the point of application, but no later than 7 calendar days after the application for:
- a coursework/non-examined event assessment extension of longer than 5 working days, or
 - extenuating circumstances.
- 4.5 Evidence supplied later will only be considered if provided with a valid reason why the evidence could not be supplied within the 7-calendar day timeframe.
- 4.6 Late applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Extenuating Circumstances Committee.
- 4.7 You are responsible for submitting accurate information and evidence.
- 4.8 Intentionally submitting a dishonest claim for an extension or extenuating circumstance is viewed as academic malpractice. This will result in a referral to the HE Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure.

Coursework/ Non-Examination Event Assessment Extensions

- 4.9 If an unforeseen and/or unavoidable circumstance means you are unable to meet a given coursework/non-examination event assessment deadline, you can apply for an extension.

- 4.10 Non-examination event assessments may include, but are not limited to, presentations or practical assessments. They do not include formal examinations or other types of examined assessments.
- 4.11 If the impact of your unavoidable and/or unforeseen circumstance is likely to be short term, you can apply for a short extension of 5 working days.
- 4.12 An extension of 5 working days does not require documentary proof. Self-certification will be strictly monitored. Repeated requests for self-certified extensions for different assessments may result in a referral to a Readiness to Learn support discussion with your Course Team Leader. Please see the HE Readiness to Learn Policy.
- 4.13 Rescheduled in-person assessments may take place after the 5 working day extension period depending on staff availability and a date will be agreed with you.
- 4.14 If the impact of your unavoidable and/or unforeseen circumstance is likely to last longer than 5 working days, you can apply for a long extension.
- 4.15 If you need an extension of more than 5 working days, you will need to supply documentary proof.
- 4.16 Extensions of longer than 5 working days will be reviewed and decided by the Extenuating Circumstances Committee. The extension will be of a duration proportionate to the circumstances, decided on an individual basis. It will be expected that all work is completed by the end of the academic year.
- 4.17 If you are still unable to submit your assignment/s after having the maximum allowed extension, we will have a discussion with you about the best course of action. This may include, but is not limited to, creating a support and assessment plan, which would detail how and when you are expected to complete the assessment/s, and/or if you will need to retake credit. You will also be informed of any fees or funding implications as part of the discussion.

- 4.18 You may decide, after a discussion with your Course Team Leader, that an interruption of your studies or deferral is your best option. For further information, please see the HE Withdrawal Or Suspension of Studies Policy.
- 4.19 An interruption of your studies is a temporary academic withdrawal for a defined time period. During an interruption of your studies, you will still be a student of Milton Keynes College, but you won't be on programme nor attend lectures. Your access to our facilities, resources and student services will be removed during your interruption of study. You will still be able to consult, take employment advice and obtain references from the Careers team. There may be financial implications to an interruption of study, for more information please see the HE Withdrawal Or Suspension of Studies Policy.

Applying for an Extension – Principles

- 4.20 You can apply for an extension (for multiple assessments simultaneously if required) using the online Extensions and Extenuating Circumstances Form. Should you need an alternative format of the form, please contact Quality@mkcollege.ac.uk
- 4.21 You must provide a reason for the extension that meets the criteria as detailed in the "Examples of circumstances likely to be accepted" section below.
- 4.22 The circumstances will be expected to be:
- Unforeseeable, in that you could have had no prior knowledge of the event concerned; and/or
 - Unavoidable, in that you could have done nothing reasonably within your power to prevent or avoid such an event.
- 4.23 Applications for extensions should be made no later than the coursework/non-examination event assessment submission date.
- 4.24 If you are unable to submit your application for an extension ahead of your assessment deadline, you must provide a reason why. This will be reviewed by the Extenuating Circumstances Committee on a case-by-case basis.

Supporting Evidence:

4.25 You do not need to supply documentary proof for extensions up to and including 5 working days.

4.26 You must supply documentary proof for extensions beyond 5 working days (e.g., hospital appointment letter, crime reference number, jury service letter, order of service). Evidence should ideally be submitted at the time of the application, but no later than 7 calendar days after the application. If evidence cannot be submitted within this timeframe, you will need to notify us in writing of the reason why via Quality@mkcollege.ac.uk and this will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Extenuating Circumstances Committee.

4.27 The nature of the evidence will vary depending on the circumstances, but it must:

- confirm the existence of the unavoidable/unforeseen circumstance;
- cover the relevant timeframe;
- be comprehensible for the panel.

4.28 Depending on your personal circumstances, and the nature of your unforeseeable/unavoidable circumstances, we recommend that you should continue working on your assessment/s whilst a decision is being made in case your extension request is denied. Late submissions due to a declined coursework extension request may incur a penalty as outlined in the Late Submission section below.

4.29 The decision will be emailed to your Milton Keynes College email address within:

- 2 working days from your application, for an extension of 5 working days.
- 6 working days from your application, for an extension of more than 5 working days.

4.30 If your application is successful, the decision outcome email will contain your new submission date. If your application is

unsuccessful, your Course Leader will discuss what options and support are available to you.

- 4.31 If you are granted an extension the full range of marks will be available to you, provided you submit/attend the assessment by the agreed extension date.
- 4.32 If you fail to submit/attend your assessment by the agreed extension date you may incur a penalty as outlined in the Late Submission section below.
- 4.33 If you fail to attend a postponed evaluation event/resit, you may incur a penalty as outlined in the Late Submission section below.

Extenuating Circumstances

- 4.34 An extenuating circumstance is an exceptional situation outside your control, which you feel:
- affected your performance in any of the assessed tasks, and/or
 - means you may need to postpone or resit an examination/event assessment.
- 4.35 Extenuating Circumstances can be used for different assessment types which have been placed into 3 broad categories:
- Deadline assessments (Coursework) – assessments not taken under controlled and timed conditions such as essays, assignments, and placements.
 - Non–examined event assessments - assessments taken under controlled and timed conditions such as tests, presentations, and practical's (but not formal examinations which are covered below)
 - Examined event assessments (Exams) – formally examined assessments taken under controlled and timed conditions, such as exams.
- 4.36 You may apply for consideration of extenuating circumstances if a health/personal circumstance:
- has caused your performance to be adversely impacted; and/or
 - has caused you to miss or fall ill during an examination/examined event assessment/non-examined event

assessment which you will need to resit (if permitted by the Awarding Body); and/or

- means you will need to postpone an examination/examined event assessment (if permitted by the Awarding Body). [Please note, you can apply for an extension if you need to postpone a non-examined event assessment].

4.37 It will be explained in a conversation with your Course Leader what options are available if your extenuating circumstances request is approved.

4.38 You can apply for extenuating circumstances using the Extensions and Extenuating Circumstances Form. If you require an alternative format of the online form, please contact Quality@mkcollege.ac.uk

4.39 Applications should ideally be made as soon as you become aware of the extenuating circumstances, but within 5 working days of missed:

- exams/event assessments, and/or
- postponed evaluation events/resits. If your extenuating circumstances only become apparent to you after you have completed all your assessments, your extenuating circumstances application should be submitted before your results are confirmed at the end of the year.

4.40 Applications must be supported by evidence, except in the cases of falling ill during an exam/event assessment or missing an exam/event assessment due to a sudden, short-term illness (please see 4.41 below). Evidence should ideally be submitted at the time of the application, but no later than 7 calendar days after the application. If evidence cannot be submitted within this timeframe, you will need to notify us in writing of the reason why via Quality@mkcollege.ac.uk and this will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Extenuating Circumstances Committee. The nature of the evidence will vary depending on the circumstances, but it must:

- confirm the existence of the extenuating circumstances;
- cover the relevant timeframe;
- be comprehensible for the panel.

4.41 We are aware that in cases where you fall ill during an exam/event assessment or miss an exam/event assessment due to a sudden, short-term illness (e.g., stomach bug), it may not be possible to supply documentary proof and you will have to self-certify.

- If you fall ill during an exam/event assessment you must notify the invigilator or assessor. They will then record this on the examination invigilator or assessor report.
- If you become ill with a sudden, short-term illness on the day of an exam/event assessment (e.g., stomach bug) and will miss the exam/event assessment, we expect you to contact your Course Leader before 9.00am. For all other reasons for missing an exam/event assessment, documentary proof is required.

4.42 Late applications for extenuating circumstances will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Extenuating Circumstances Committee. Late applications must contain a valid reason why it could not be submitted within the deadline.

4.43 If you are able to, we recommend you should continue working on your assessment/s whilst a decision is being made in case your request is denied. Late submissions due to a declined Extenuating Circumstances request may incur a penalty as outlined in the Late Submission section below.

4.44 Your extenuating circumstances application will be reviewed by the Extenuating Circumstances Committee. You will receive an initial response within 6 working days of submitting your application via your Milton Keynes College email address to confirm if your application has been successful or unsuccessful.

4.45 If successful, the response will outline potential courses of action for your consideration and timescales if applicable (e.g., if further consultation is required with the HE Board of Examiners).

4.46 If your application is unsuccessful, your Course Team Leader will discuss what options and support are available to you.

4.47 If your extenuating circumstances occur during the academic year, the Course Team Leader will decide the best course of action, in

collaboration with you. This may include, but is not limited to, providing you with a support plan and/or reasonable adjustments to assist with your future studies, or to postpone or resit an examination/examined assessment event if permitted by the Awarding Body. For further information on reasonable adjustments, please see the HE Reasonable Adjustments policy and procedure.

- 4.48 You may decide, after a discussion with your Course Leader, that your extenuating circumstances are impacting you in such a way that an interruption to studies, deferral, or permanent academic withdrawal is the best option for you. In this case, please refer the interruption to study and deferral section below or to the HE Withdrawal and Suspension of Studies Policy.
- 4.49 If your extenuating circumstances only become apparent after you have completed your assessments, your application will be passed onto the Extenuating Circumstances Committee for review, who will submit their recommendations to the HE Board of Examiners. If you are dissatisfied with the decision of the HE Board of Examiners after the formal publication of results, please refer to the Complaints and Appeals section below.
- 4.50 If you wish to claim for extenuating circumstances for a taught module after the formal publication of results at the end of the year, this will be dealt with as an appeal against the decision of the Higher Education (HE) Board of Examiners. Please refer to the Complaints and Appeals section below.

Examples of circumstances likely to be accepted:

- 4.51 Below are examples of circumstances which would likely be accepted for an extension or extenuating circumstances application. This list is not exhaustive:
- Health conditions, including COVID-19, accident or injury, hospitalisation, or those affecting study.
 - Diagnosed mental health conditions for which you may be receiving treatment.
 - Worsening of an ongoing illness or disability, including mental health conditions.

- Pregnancy-related conditions and childbirth (including a partner in labour).
- Bereavement or significant illness of family member or close friend, causing an impact on you.
- Separation/divorce between yourself and your spouse/partner.
- Being a victim of crime, for example burglary, theft, or violence.
- A forced house move (unplanned relocation due to external factors e.g., flooding, eviction)
- Jury service which cannot be deferred.
- For part-time students in full-time employment, exceptional pressure of work or permanent change of employment circumstances.
- Late diagnosis of, for example, dyslexia, meaning you have not had the appropriate support for assessment, including provision in exams.
- Fixed interview dates and/or placement requirements that cannot be changed.
- A significant change to your financial circumstances after enrolment, such as withdrawal of Student Finance England (SFE) funding or its equivalent mid-year.
- Significant life events of close family members, where you can show that no alternative arrangement, such as the date or your attendance, is possible.
- Unexpected caring responsibilities for a family member or dependant, where alternative care arrangements cannot be made.
- Significant personal or family crises leading to acute stress.

Examples of circumstances unlikely to be accepted:

4.52 Below are examples of circumstances which are unlikely to be accepted for an extension or extenuating circumstances application. This list is not exhaustive:

- You slept in or your alarm clock did not go off.
- Poor time management.
- Minor travel delays.

- Minor accidents or illness affecting relatives or friends, unless you are a carer and alternative care arrangements cannot be made.
- Computing problems, unless caused by Milton Keynes College.
- Family celebrations, holidays, planned house moves, or similar events, in which you have input to, or control over, the date or may choose not to participate.

5. Extenuating Circumstances Panel

5.1 The Extenuating Circumstances Committee operates and makes decisions on behalf of the Higher Education (HE) Board of Examiners. The Exceptional Circumstances Committee has the following remit:

- To review all extension requests for longer than 5 working days and extenuating circumstances applications.
- Determines and approves all extensions of longer than 5 working days and extenuating circumstances requests that meet the published criteria.
- Provides a written explanation to students if an extension for more than 5 working days or an extenuating circumstances application has been rejected.
- Be the first point of appeal if the applicant feels that the determination was in error or further evidence becomes available for consideration.
- To review late extension or extenuating circumstances applications on a case-by-case basis.
- Inform the HE Board of Examiners of extenuating circumstances for students for consideration in the boards.
- Inform the HE Board of Examiners of the outcome following a successful extenuating circumstances claim.
- In complex cases the Panel can pass the case to the HE Board of Examiners for review.

5.2 All applications for extenuating circumstances will be considered by the Extenuating Circumstances Committee which will meet as needed, within 5 working days of a request being submitted.

- 5.3 The Panel is a standing sub-committee of, and reports to, the HE Board of Examiners.
- 5.4 The Panel will consist of the Deputy Director for Quality (campus) (or a member of the HE Quality Academic Staff nominated by the Deputy Director for Quality) who will act as the Chair and at least one other member drawn from the HE Academic Staff.
- 5.5 Where the Panel is unable to reach a consensus the view of a third member will be sought. The third member will be drawn from HE Academic Staff.
- 5.6 Additional members may be co-opted by the Chair as they deem necessary to deal with complex cases. Where there are an even number of members the Chair shall have the casting vote.
- 5.7 The Panel may liaise with programme teams regarding appropriate deadlines and appropriate outcomes.
- 5.8 There is a minimum panel attendance (quorum) requirement for decisions to be agreed. The Panel will require a minimum of two members present to make decisions.
- 5.9 The decisions are recorded (and, if applicable, reasons for nonacceptance explained). This information is stored electronically on the secure HE Board of Examiners Microsoft Teams site and stored in line with our Information Privacy policy.
- 5.10 A collated summary of all decisions made by the Panel will be passed to the HE Board of Examiners each term as part of our quality control process.

6. Late Submission

- 6.1 Late submission is the submission of academic work after the deadline for submission has passed.
- 6.2 If an application for an extension and/or extenuating circumstances is not received by the deadline, the coursework submitted will be

considered a late submission and may incur a penalty as outlined below.

Penalties for Late Submission:

- 6.3 We will consider these on a case-by-case basis via the Extenuating Circumstances Committee.
- 6.4 Where an extension or extenuating circumstances request has not been submitted or approved, work submitted late will incur a penalty. These penalties will be outlined in your Programme Handbook.
- 6.5 In the case of Open University (OU) validated programmes, late submissions will incur a deduction of marks, with the following penalties in place:
- Submission within 6 working days: a 10% reduction deducted from the overall marked score for each working day late down to the 40% pass mark (for Undergraduate awards) and 50% pass mark (Postgraduate awards) and no further.
 - Submission that is late by 7 or more working days will be refused and will receive a mark of zero [0].

Missed Exam/ Event Assessment

- 6.6 If you miss an exam or other event assessment due to an unforeseen/unavoidable reason, you have 5 working days to submit an application for extenuating circumstances.

Penalties for Missed Exam/ Event Assessment:

- 6.7 If you do not submit an extenuating circumstances request within the above timeframe, you will initially be recorded as a zero or missing mark unless a resit is permitted by the Awarding Body and undertaken by you. (Please refer to the Assessment Examinations Policy and Procedures) The outcome is considered and confirmed by the HE Board of Examiners and you will be advised of the decision, through the publication of results.

- 6.8 If your extenuating circumstances are accepted, you will be given the opportunity to sit the missed exam/event assessment as though for the first time and the full range of marks will be available to you.
- 6.9 The date of the exam/event assessment will be confirmed with you and may involve a delay to you completing your programme. Your Course Team Leader will explain what support options are available to you and any potential fees, funding, or visa implications.

Non-Attendance of Rescheduled Event Assessment/Resit

- 6.10 If you fail to attend a postponed evaluation event or resit due to an unforeseen/unavoidable reason, you have 5 working days to submit an application for extenuating circumstances.

Penalties for Non-Attendance of Rescheduled Event Assessment/Resit:

- 6.11 If you do not submit an extenuating circumstances request within the above timeframe, you will initially be recorded as a zero or missing mark unless a further attempt at rescheduling the event assessment/resit is permitted by the Awarding Body and undertaken by you. (Please refer to the Assessment Examinations Policy and Procedures) The outcome is considered and confirmed by the HE Board of Examiners and you will be advised of the decision, through the publication of results.
- 6.12 If your extenuating circumstances are accepted, you will be given the opportunity to sit the missed exam/event assessment as though for the first time and the full range of marks will be available to you.
- 6.13 The date of the exam/event assessment will be confirmed with you and may involve a delay to you completing your programme. Your Course Team Leader will explain what support options are available to you and any potential fees, funding, or visa implications.

7. Support

- 7.1 We have a responsibility to monitor the progress of students throughout their studies so that we can provide support where progress is not being made at the expected rate.
- 7.2 If you are not moving through the levels of your studies as expected, because you need to make multiple applications for extensions or extenuating circumstances, we are likely to refer you to support areas for additional support needs. These may include, but are not limited to, a referral to Student Welfare, Learning Support, and a support plan.
- 7.3 A support option may be to undertake a Readiness to Learn discussion with your Course Team Leader. Please note, if your Course Team Leader is concerned for your welfare, they may initiate a Readiness to Learn discussion with you to put appropriate support in place. Please see the Readiness to Learn Policy for further detail.
- 7.4 You may feel that you are not currently able to study and may wish to discuss with your Course Team Leader about available options. Following a collaborative discussion with your Course Team Leader, you may decide that temporary interruption to studies, deferral or permanent withdrawal from study is your preferred option (please see Interruption to study & Deferral below, or Withdrawal and Non-Completion Policy). We will arrange a discussion with your Course Team Leader to discuss the possible impact of this decision with you (e.g., fees and funding implications of a temporary deferral/ withdrawal etc.)

8. Interruption of Studies & Deferral

- 8.1 An *Interruption to Study* is defined as a temporary pause or suspension of a student's academic studies after they have already commenced their programme.
A *Deferral* refers to the postponement of a student's academic programme until the following academic year.

- 8.2 It is the responsibility of Milton Keynes College learners to proactively communicate with their Course Team Leader at the earliest opportunity if they might be considering an interruption of studies or Deferral, to seek relevant advice, and to ask for clarity and support if required to help them make a well-informed decision.
- 8.3 We recognise that students who wish to apply for interruption of studies or deferral are often experiencing challenging circumstances and would encourage all students to contact staff (such as the Well-being Team, their Course Team Leader, their lecturers, or the HE Student Support Team) to seek support, to understand if there is support available that might allow them to continue with their studies and / or to understand the policies and regulations surrounding interruption of studies or deferral.
- 8.4 Steps to be taken if a student wished to apply for interruption of studies or deferral:
- 8.4.1 If a student wishes to apply for interruption of studies or deferral, they should first read through the information contained in this policy carefully to understand the considerations and potential consequences. Students can access support, as outlined in above, to understand the information contained in this policy and potential consequences. Students wishing to apply for interruption of study or deferral must read section 8.10 carefully to identify whether their circumstances would meet the criteria.
- 8.4.2 If, after considering all of the relevant information in this policy, a student does wish to apply for interruption of study or deferral, they must first speak to their Course Leader. This will allow for exploration of other options that could be considered first to support a student to succeed in their studies (e.g. extensions to deadlines, using the Readiness to Learn Policy, or a student moving from full-time to part-time study, where this option exists).
- 8.4.3 If, after speaking with their Course Leader, a student still wishes to apply for interruption of study or deferral, they must inform Milton Keynes College, via email to their

Course Leader and quality@mkcollege.ac.uk using the template in Appendix 1.

8.5 If a student has requested to interrupt their study or defer:

- 8.5.1 A student wishing to interrupt their study or defer should complete the Interruption of Study/ Deferral form (Appendix 1) and submit it to their Course Team Leader and Quality@mkcollege.ac.uk. Students must note the importance of completing the form fully and accurately, providing all relevant details and any appropriate supporting evidence. Section 3 of the Request Form (Appendix 1) suggests evidence a student might choose to submit, however, students may submit other relevant documentation to evidence their circumstances if appropriate. Incomplete forms or missing evidence may cause the process below to be delayed.
- 8.5.2 Milton Keynes College Centre Administration will call an Interruption of Study/ Deferral Panel to meet to consider the application. This panel meeting should ordinarily be called within one working week of receipt of the student request, however, exceptional circumstances (such as annual leave periods) may mean this period is extended, and the panel should be called as soon as possible thereafter. The panel shall include at least one Group Director, at least one Head of School and the Course Leader. Typically, although not exclusively, staff who are linked to the curriculum area in which the student is studying, as well as a minute taker. Where appropriate, additional staff within relevant expertise may be invited to join the Panel.
- 8.5.3 The Panel will consider the application and decide whether a student will be offered the opportunity to interrupt their study or defer.
- 8.5.4 The outcome of the panel meeting will be communicated to the student within 10 working days of the panel meeting.

- 8.5.5 If a student wishes to appeal the outcome, they should do so using the Academic Appeals process, and should note carefully the timescales to make an initial appeal.
- 8.5.6 Once all relevant information has been collated, the student will be issued with a letter formally confirming their Interruption of Study or Deferral, including their last date of attendance, tuition fee liability, and intended return date.
- 8.5.7 Milton Keynes College will communicate to inform relevant parties, such as the relevant Awarding Organisation and the Student Loans Company, of a student's Interruption to Studies/ Deferral.
- 8.5.8 The next Examination Board to meet will formally ratify the student's academic outcomes, including confirmation of any applications for Exam Board Consideration (if appropriate). Any ratified marks our outcomes would then be communicated to the learner appropriately.

8.6. Protocols & Implications in a student interrupts study or defers:

- 8.6.1 Last Date of Attendance
- 8.6.2 If a student interrupts their study or defers, their last date of attendance will be recorded as whichever is the later of (a) the last date they are registered as having attended a timetabled class, or (b) the last date where they submitted assessment or sat an examination.
- 8.6.3 For the avoidance of doubt, a student's last date of attendance is not recorded on the basis of the date they notified us they wished to interrupt their study or defer, or the date of their interruption of study/ deferral.

8.7 Tuition Fee Liability

- 8.7.2 A student's tuition fee liability may be affected by when in the academic year their last date of attendance falls, in line with the Fees Policy.

- 8.7.3 We advise all students to look at the Fees Policy to understand their fee liability at the point of interruption to studies/ deferral.

8.8 Maintenance Loan Implications

- 8.8.1 If a student is in receipt of Maintenance Loan, interruption of study or deferral may affect their maintenance loan payments, including having to repay some maintenance loan to Student Finance England.
- 8.8.2 We advise any student in receipt of Maintenance Loan who is considering interrupting their study or deferring to read the guidance from gov.uk for more information.
- 8.8.3 Student Finance are separate from Milton Keynes College, and students should consult with Student Finance England if they want further information on the Maintenance Loan implications.

8.9 Examination Boards and Ratification of Academic Achievement and Outcomes

- 8.9.1 If a student interrupts their study or defers, their academic profile will be taken to the next appropriate Examination Board for consideration. Dependent upon the point at which a student interrupts their study or defers, various outcomes may be considered.
- I. If a student has not yet commenced studying a unit / module then the Examination Board will not ratify any outcome, and the student will not be deemed to have 'attempted' the unit / module.
 - II. If a student has begun studying a unit / module, but none of the assessment points (i.e. deadlines) have yet occurred, they will not be deemed to have 'attempted' the unit / module.
 - III. If a student has completed a unit / module (all of the relevant assessment points have passed, regardless of whether the student submitted work and / or passed the assessment), the Examination Board will ratify their outcome for that unit / module.

IV. If a student has begun studying a unit / module and at least one of the assessment points (deadlines) for that module has passed, they will be deemed to have 'attempted' the unit / module. If a student interrupts their study or defers before completing all of the necessary assessment to successfully pass the unit / module, they will be deemed to have attempted but not achieved that unit / module. Depending on the awarding organisation, they may have the right to repeat that unit / module; however, most awarding organisations have a limit to the number of times a student can attempt a unit / module, and there may be a mark cap applied (dependent upon the awarding organisation's regulations).

8.9.2 It is worth noting that in an instance where a student has had an extension to deadline approved under the HE Extensions and Extenuating Circumstances Policy, it is this bespoke deadline date that would be considered when determining which of the categories above a learner falls within.

8.9.3 If a student in circumstance (iii) or (iv) above is interrupting their studies or deferring their studies due to an extenuating circumstance, and believes they should not have been deemed to have 'attempted' the unit/module owing to their extenuating circumstances, they are entitled to also apply for Exam Board Consideration (in line with the HE Extensions and Extenuating Circumstances Policy). All cases of Exam Board Consideration would be assessed in line with the principles of the Extensions and Extenuating Circumstances Policy.

8.9.4 It is not possible for a student's academic profile or the outcome of an application for Exam Board consideration to be ratified outside of a formal Examination Board. This may therefore mean that students will need to wait for the next appropriate Examination Board to meet (which for many programmes will be at the end of the Summer Term) to hear their outcome.

8.9.5 All Examination Boards will be conducted in line with both Milton Keynes College Policy and the regulations of the relevant awarding organisation. Student outcomes will be determined in line with these regulations.

8.10 Interruption to Study or Deferral

All students should review the regulations of their awarding organisation.

8.10.1 Circumstances in which a student may request an Interruption to Studies or Deferral:

If a student experiences extenuating circumstances during their period of study which cannot be adequately mitigated through existing mechanisms such as extensions to deadlines, additional academic or pastoral support, moving from full-time to part-time study (where appropriate), or a Readiness to Learn plan, students are entitled to request an Interruption to Study or Deferral of either one semester (Interruption to Study) or to the next academic year (deferral). For more information on the circumstances that would be deemed 'extenuating circumstances', please see section 4.50. Any request for Interruption of studies or Deferral would be subject to the suspension not taking a student outside of their maximum period of registration with their awarding organisation.

8.11 Exceptional circumstances which may affect Interruption of studies or Deferral

In some instances, regulatory, procedural or awarding body processes or requirements, beyond the control of Milton Keynes College, may prevent an Interruption of Studies or Deferral from being possible. This may include, for example, if the programme a student is studying, or the version of the specification they are enrolled on, is discontinued. In these cases, alternative options will be explored, such as using the Assessment APL-RPL procedure to allow a student to resume their studies on a new version of the specification upon return.

8.12 Resumption of studies post interruption to Studies/ Deferral: point of return

If a student interrupts their study or defers, they must be aware that they will not necessarily simply be able to resume studying at the same calendar point in a future year. Depending on when a student interrupts their study and whether any unit(s) / module(s) are partially completed and / or not achieved at this point, they may be required to either retake or restart unit(s) / module(s) in a future year, which may necessitate a suspension period which does not fall neatly within a semester or specific period.

8.12.1 Depending upon the circumstances that surrounded a student's interruption of study or deferral, it may be appropriate for Readiness to Learn Policy to be used to support the process of returning to study.

8.13 Resumption of studies post Interruption to Studies/ Deferral:
attendance pattern

Students should also note that there is no guarantee that attendance patterns are consistent between academic years. For example, a student studying on an evening-only basis, or only attending one day per week, is not guaranteed to be offered the same attendance pattern post-interruption to study/ deferral. The attendance pattern will depend on the unit(s) / module(s) a student has to sit upon their return, and cohort sizes and timetabling arrangements for the future cohort(s) they will in-fill with.

8.14 Resumption of studies post Interruption to Studies/ Deferral:
module availability

Milton Keynes College may change its module offer between academic years, in response to awarding body changes, student feedback, sector changes, or staff specialism. Whilst changes to modules between years are rarely widespread or significant, it is not possible to guarantee that the same modules will be available to a student who interrupt their studies/ defer, upon resumption.

8.15 Resumption of studies post Interruption to Studies/ Deferral:
tuition fees

In line with the Fees Policy, students will be charged tuition fees for the unit(s) / module(s) they study post Interruption to Studies/ Deferral. Where a student returns post Interruption to Studies/ Deferral on a part-time basis (i.e. they are studying fewer than 120 credits in their bespoke academic year), they will be charged for the

credits they study in line with the Fees Policy and the college's Office for Students approved fee limits.

9. Data Protection

- 9.1 Personal information submitted by you as part of an extension or extenuating circumstances claim will be stored on your Individual Learning Plan (ILP).
- 9.2 Access will be restricted to staff who need to be aware of any disclosure of circumstances that have been made.
- 9.3 Data will be stored, retained and managed in line with our Data Protection Policy.

10. Complaints and Appeals

- 10.1 You may formally appeal the decision of an extension or extenuating circumstances application following the outcome being communicated to you. This will follow the process and time constraints set out in the Academic Appeals Policy.
- 10.2 Academic Appeals must be made within ten working days of the date of the email communicating the extension or extenuating circumstances decision.
- 10.3 If you wish to claim for extenuating circumstances for a taught module after the formal publication of results at the end of the year, this will be dealt with as an appeal against the decision of the HE Board of Examiners. In such a case, you must submit your appeal by the deadline specified when the results are published.
- 10.4 To submit an appeal, you must complete the Academic Appeals Form and submit it, with any documentary proof, to XXXXXXXXXX. If you require an alternative format of the appeal form, please contact XXXXXXXX.
- 10.5 Any academic appeal against the decision of the HE Board of Examiners which is raised based on extenuating circumstances,

must contain a valid reason to explain why information could not have been submitted at the time. Please see the HE Academic Appeals Policy.

10.6 If you wish to complain about how your extension or extenuating circumstances application was processed, please refer to the Complaints Policy and Procedure.

11. Review of Policy and Procedure

11.1 The policy, procedure and associated outcomes will be reviewed annually in the light of operational feedback.

11.2 The review is undertaken by the Higher Education Academic Board (HEAB) or a delegated sub-committee.

11.3 Recommendations for changes, clarifications and enhancements will be made in a report to the HEAB. If approved by HEAB the recommendations will be submitted to the Milton Keynes College Quality and Standards Committee for ratification.

11.4 The approved revised policy will be published on the Milton Keynes College policy webpages. This will include a change log identifying what has been changed since the last version of the policy. HE Staff will have attention drawn to the change(s) by a group email.

Appendix 1: Student Request for Interruption to Study or Deferral Form

1 – Personal Details

Name	
Student ID Number	
Course	
Year/ Level	
Programme Leader	
Interruption to Study or Deferral	

2 - Outline of the reason for requesting to Interrupt you studies or Defer.

Please clearly explain the extenuating circumstances you have experienced and why you feel you need to interrupt your studies or defer. Please clearly outline why other mitigations, such as extensions to deadlines, application for exam board consideration, moving from full-time to part-time study (where appropriate), or seeking additional study or pastoral support are not adequate to support you to continue with your studies, and you need to request an interruption to your studies or deferral. You can go onto another page if needed.

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3 - Please tick which type of supporting evidence you are providing

	Medical Certificate (GP note / Consultant Letter / Discharge Note)
	Letter from a qualified counsellor
	Death Certificate or Order of Service
	Letter from a Solicitor, Social Worker or other qualified professional
	Other independent evidence (please give brief details):

4 – Outline below the period of interruption to study or deferral you wish to request.

To be clear, even if permission for interruption of studies or deferral is granted, it may not be possible to offer suspension for precise periods students request, owing to term dates and module sequencing. However, please indicate when you believe you would wish to return.

	Please tick
Deferral (to next academic year)	
Interruption to study (please specify dates)	

5 – Previous interruptions to studies or deferrals.

If you have previously requested and / or been granted an interruption of studies or deferral whilst studying at Milton Keynes College, please give details below.

Dates from & to:	
Brief description of circumstances:	

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6 – Declaration and signature

I understand that applying for this Interruption to Studies / Deferral is a serious matter and that by submitting this declaration I am confirming that the information I have provided, including any supporting evidence, is truthful. I understand that academic integrity is taken extremely seriously, and this submission will be reviewed by the Milton Keynes College Team. I understand that suspected breaches of Academic integrity will be investigated and may result in disciplinary action.

Signed (student):		Date:	
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**Please return this form along with your supporting evidence to
Quality@mkcollege.ac.uk. The Milton Keynes College team will acknowledge
receipt.**