

## **HE Extensions & Extenuating Circumstances**

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<b>Version:</b>	1
<b>Effective Date:</b>	January 2026
<b>Date of next review:</b>	January 2028
<b>Equality Impact Assessment completed:</b>	
<b>Reviewed and recommended by:</b>	HEAB 24/10/25
<b>Approved by and date:</b>	Group Leadership Group 19/11/25
<b>Ratified by and date:</b>	
<b>Publication:</b>	College Website / SharePoint / Student Intranet

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](mailto:marketingcampaigns@mkcollege.ac.uk)

# Version Control

Version Number	Author	Approver	Date approved	Next review date
1	Group Director HE, Adult & IoT	Group Leadership Team	19/11/25	Nov 27

# Change log

Version Number	Summary of changes
1	New policy

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# 1. Policy Statement

Meeting deadlines is an expectation of students at the degree level). It is, however, acknowledged that unexpected situations may occur that affect your ability to study, take an examination or submit other forms of assessment.

The Higher Education Extensions & Extenuating Circumstances policy is 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 suspension of study options.

This document is written in accordance with our legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, and should be read in conjunction with the Higher Education Withdrawal and Suspension of Studies Policy.

# 2. Scope

This policy applies to all Higher Education students studying taught programmes at Milton Keynes College. It is for students who want to inform the College of any matters beyond their control which may have affected their ability to study, take an exam or submit all forms of assessment.

It also applies to College staff involved in teaching, assessing, and managing Higher Education courses, to ensure academic standards are applied fairly and consistently.

The policy provides Higher Education students with the ability to apply for extensions and extenuating circumstances.

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.
- Outlines how to apply and how your request will be assessed.

### 3. Policy Principles

If you are facing exceptional, acute, or worsening circumstances outside your control 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.

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.

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.

Where possible, documentary proof must be supplied at the point of application, but no later than 7 calendar days after the application.

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.

Late applications or provision of evidence will be considered on a case-by-case basis by an Extenuating Circumstances Panel.

You are responsible for submitting accurate information and evidence.

Intentionally submitting a dishonest claim for an extension or extenuating circumstance is viewed as academic misconduct. This will result in a referral to the HE Academic Misconduct Policy.

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 exceptional, acute or worsening circumstance.	Apply for a short extension using the online 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 exceptional, acute or worsening circumstance.	Apply for a long extension using the online 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 exceptional, acute or worsening circumstance.	Apply for extenuating circumstances using the online 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 exceptional, acute or worsening circumstance.	Apply for extenuating circumstances using the online 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 exceptional, acute or worsening circumstance.	Apply for extenuating circumstances using the online Extensions and Extenuating Circumstances Form.	Extenuating Circumstances Panel	6 working days from Extenuating Circumstances application being submitted.

## 4. Coursework/Non-Examination Event Assessment Extensions

If an exceptional, acute, or worsening circumstance means you are unable to meet a given coursework/non-examination event assessment deadline, you can apply for an extension.

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.

If the impact of your exceptional, acute, or worsening circumstance is likely to be short term, you can apply for a short extension of 5 working days.

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.

Rescheduled in-person assessments (such as a presentation) may take place after the 5 working day extension period depending on staff availability and a date will be agreed with you.

If the impact of your exceptional, acute, or worsening circumstance is likely to last longer than 5 working days, you can apply for a longer extension. If you need an extension of more than 5 working days, you will need to supply documentary proof.

Extensions of longer than 5 working days will be reviewed and decided by an Extenuating Circumstances Panel. 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.

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 (subject to the agreement of the HE Exam Board). You will also be informed of any fees or funding implications as part of the discussion.

You may decide, after a discussion with your Course Team Leader, that a temporary suspension of studies is your best option. For further information, please see the HE Withdrawal or Suspension of Studies Policy.

A suspension of your studies is a temporary measure for a defined time period. During a suspension of 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 suspension 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 a suspension of study, for more information please see the HE Withdrawal or Suspension of Studies Policy.

## **Applying for an Extension – Principles**

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](mailto:Quality@mkcollege.ac.uk).

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.

The circumstances will be expected to be:

- Exceptional: Serious, significant and outside your reasonable control, which have a substantial impact on your ability to engage with your studies or assessment. These circumstances are not part of the normal pressures of academic life and could not reasonably be managed through standard time-management or study strategies.
- Acute: those which arise suddenly or escalate rapidly over a short period of time, resulting in an immediate and significant impact on your ability to prepare for, submit, or undertake an assessment. Acute circumstances are typically short-term but severe in nature.
- Worsening Circumstances: where an existing, ongoing, or previously disclosed condition or situation deteriorates or intensifies during the

relevant assessment period, leading to a greater impact on your ability to study or complete assessed work than could reasonably have been anticipated.

Applications for extensions should be made no later than the coursework/non-examination event assessment submission date.

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 an Extenuating Circumstances Panel on a case-by-case basis.

## **Supporting Evidence**

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

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](mailto:Quality@mkcollege.ac.uk) and this will be considered on a case-by-case basis by an Extenuating Circumstances Panel.

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

- confirm the existence of the exceptional, acute or worsening circumstance;
- cover the relevant timeframe;
- be comprehensible for the panel

Depending on your personal circumstances, and the nature of your exceptional, acute or worsening circumstance, 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

If you fail to attend a postponed evaluation event/resit, you may incur a penalty as outlined in the Late Submission section below.

## 5. **Extenuating Circumstances**

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.

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 practicals (but not formal examinations which are covered below)
- Examined event assessments (Exams) – formally examined assessments taken under controlled and timed conditions.

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 Regulations); and/or
- means you will need to postpone an examination/examined event assessment (if permitted by the Awarding Body Regulations).

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

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

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.

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. 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 an Extenuating Circumstances Panel.

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.

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

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.

Your extenuating circumstances application will be reviewed by an Extenuating Circumstances Panel. 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.

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).

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

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 HE Exam Board.

You may decide, after a discussion with your Course Leader, that your extenuating circumstances are impacting you in such a way that a suspension of your studies, or permanent academic withdrawal is the best option for you. In this case, please refer to the HE Withdrawal or Suspension of Studies Policy.

If your extenuating circumstances only become apparent after you have completed your assessments, your application will be passed onto an Extenuating Circumstances Panel for review, who will submit their recommendations to the HE Exam Board. If you are dissatisfied with the

decision of the HE Exam Board after the formal publication of results, please refer to the Complaints and Appeals section below.

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 Exam Board. Please refer to the Complaints and Appeals section below.

## **Examples of circumstances likely to be accepted:**

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

- Health conditions, 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 a condition e.g. 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:**

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.

## **6. Extenuating Circumstances Panel**

The Extenuating Circumstances Panel operates and makes decisions on behalf of the Higher Education (HE) Board of Examiners. The Extenuating Circumstances Panel 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.

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

The Panel is a sub-committee of, and reports to, the HE Board of Examiners.

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.

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.

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.

The Panel may liaise with programme teams regarding appropriate deadlines and appropriate outcomes.

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.

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.

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.

## 7. Late Submission

Late submission is the submission of academic work after the deadline for submission has passed.

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:**

We will consider these on a case-by-case basis via an Extenuating Circumstances Panel.

Where an extension or extenuating circumstances request has not been submitted or approved, work submitted late will incur a penalty.

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 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**

If you miss an exam or other event assessment due to an exceptional, acute or worsening circumstance, you have 5 working days to submit an application for extenuating circumstances.

## **Penalties for Missed Exam/ Event Assessment:**

If you do not submit an extenuating circumstances request within the above timeframe, you will initially be recorded as a zero or missing mark. The outcome is considered and confirmed by the HE Exam Board and you will be advised of the decision, through the publication of results.

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.

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 Assessment/Resit**

If you fail to attend a rescheduled assessment or resit due to an exceptional, acute or worsening circumstance, you have 5 working days to submit an application for extenuating circumstances.

## **Penalties for Non-Attendance of Rescheduled Assessment/Resit:**

If you do not submit an extenuating circumstances request within the above timeframe, you will initially be recorded as a zero or missing mark. The outcome is considered and confirmed by the HE Exam Board and you will be advised of the decision, through the publication of results.

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.

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.

## **8. Support**

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.

If you are not progressing 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.

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.

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 suspension of studies or permanent withdrawal from study is your preferred option (see HE Withdrawal or Suspension of Studies 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).

## **9. Data Protection**

Personal information submitted by you as part of an extension or extenuating circumstances claim will be stored on college systems. Access will be restricted to staff who need to be aware of any disclosure of circumstances that have been made.

Data will be stored, retained and managed in line with our Data Protection Policy.

## **10. Complaints and Appeals**

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.

Academic Appeals must be made within ten working days of the date of the email communicating the extension or extenuating circumstances decision.

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 Exam Board. In such a case, you must submit your appeal by the deadline specified when the results are published.

Any academic appeal against the decision of the HE Exam Board which is raised based on extenuating circumstances, must contain a valid reason to explain why information could not have been submitted at the time.

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

## **11. Review of Policy**

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

The review is undertaken by the Higher Education Academic Board (HEAB). 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 Policy Scrutiny Group for ratification.

The approved revised policy will be published on the Milton Keynes College policy webpages.

## **12. Related Policies**

Refer to the following documentation in conjunction with this policy, which can be found on the College Website [here](#)

HE Readiness to Learn Policy  
HE Withdrawal or Suspension of Studies Policy  
Complaints Policy (HE)  
HE Academic Appeals Policy  
HE Fees Policy