

## EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

Welcome to Advice Direct..., the written information service from Guild Advice.

This leaflet is to inform students on the University's procedures that relate to extenuating circumstances, and the support available to students throughout the process.

### What are Extenuating Circumstances?

During your time at the University there is a chance you could become ill or experience other personal circumstances (such as a bereavement or an accident) which affect your academic performance when completing coursework or sitting examinations.

Extenuating Circumstances are your opportunity to inform your department of any problems and the extent to which they have affected your performance.

The Board of Examiners, dependent on the severity of your circumstances, will take the extenuating circumstances that you submit into account when making recommendations about your progress or results.

**Extenuating Circumstances could include:- significant illness or injuries, a family crisis, exceptional financial hardship, or anything that has a significantly adverse impact on your studies – if in doubt please contact Guild Advice as quickly as possible.**

The University sets out the role of extenuating circumstances in its Code of Practice on Extenuating Circumstances, and further information about the process is available from this Code.

## What will I need to do?

The University, Schools and Departments will have **published deadlines** for the submission of extenuating circumstances, you should make sure you familiarise yourself with those dates. In some cases, you may only have an exceptionally short timeframe in which to gather evidence and submit the relevant forms.

The University places the **responsibility to ensure that deadlines are met by you**, the student.

Although extenuating circumstances can relate to a variety of points within your studies – coursework, tests, formal examinations, etc – you should always complete the University's Extenuating Circumstances Form or a Request for Alternative Arrangements for Centrally Coordinated Examinations form (see the links below) taking time to include all relevant details and factors.

### Notification of Extenuating Circumstances Form:-

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/registry/policy/documents/public/extcircs/ec-form-14-15.doc>

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/registry/policy/documents/public/extcircs/app-alt-exam-arrangement.doc>

Your submission must include **supporting third party evidence** of your circumstances for it to be successful. As with all University procedures this must be **readable and in English**. Anything in a foreign language must be translated beforehand and a certified copy of the translation enclosed with your **Extenuating Circumstances Form ("ECF")**.

Evidence can include a doctor's letter confirming ill health, a death certificate in relation to bereavement, a letter from a Solicitor or other relevant professional, or a medical certificate from a Counsellor.

Your third party evidence should include all relevant detail, and should not rely on the University contacting the provider for further details. **The University will not contact any of your evidence providers for further information or clarification.**

Remember, all information contained within the ECF will be confidential and the University will not normally accept reasons such as “the information was of a private nature” or “family reasons” for failing to submit an ECF or not including all relevant information.

If you are in doubt about how to complete the form or whether your evidence is in the required format, please contact **Guild Advice** in advance of your School's deadline for the submission of extenuating circumstances.

## What happens after submission?

Following submission, there 5 different options open to the School/Department to consider:-

1. **Extensions for coursework or in-year assessments** – Extenuating Circumstances impacting on coursework or in year assessment will normally be dealt with by an extension being granted where appropriate to the date for submission or completion of the piece(s) of work affected.
2. **Other action for coursework or in-year assessments** – there may be cases where an extension will not be appropriate. In those cases the School may:
  - a) Provide guidance to allow **a small element of coursework or in-year assessments to be disregarded**, with the final mark(s) being recalculated from the remaining elements of coursework or in-year assessment;

b) Implement guidance to accommodate those situations where one component of the module is missing, **to allow for the final mark(s) being recalculated from the remaining module component(s)**;

c) Implement such **other action which has been approved by the College Director of Education** or nominee prior to the commencement of the academic session.

3. **Deferral of Examinations** – under the “**Exceptional deferral of an examination**” students may be able to defer examinations prior to sitting examinations.

#### **Applying for Exceptional Deferral of Examinations;**

At any point **up to the start time of your examination**, you can request a deferral of your examination to your School's Extenuating Circumstances Officer (ECO) or an identified designated individual. Notifying the school at the earliest possible opportunity is advisable.

This request will include:

- (i) A completed extenuating circumstances form.**
- (ii) All relevant evidence in support of your circumstances.**

If, for example on Saturdays, neither the ECO nor an identified designated person is available, you must contact the University's Examination Office regarding the deferral request.

Following submission of the above material the ECO (or appropriate other) will either;

- (i)** accept the deferral and you will not be required to attend the examination,
- (ii)** accept the deferral pending further agreed evidence being submitted within 5 working days, or
- (iii)** reject the deferral request and you will be required to start/rejoin the examination at that time.

In cases where you have been poorly during an examination, and were unable to raise this before/during the examination you could exceptionally submit an ECF along with relevant evidence within 24 hours of the examination in question. There will be a requirement to demonstrate good reasons for why extenuating circumstances were not raised sooner, with any additional evidence of this within 5 working days of the examination.

**N.B.** When a successful deferral has been granted, Students will be advised of the next appropriate sitting. It is the responsibility of the student to ascertain the actual dates/rescheduled examinations timetables for which a deferral was requested.

- 4. Extenuating Circumstances Panel** – In all other circumstances the student is advised to submit the ECF and evidence before the deadline, for it to be considered at an Extenuating Circumstances Panel.
- 5. Request for Alternative Arrangements for Centrally Coordinated Examinations-** This can include alternative arrangements for students such as computers, extra time or rest breaks.

These requests only apply to the examinations specified by the student and must be made no less than 48 hours ahead of the examination that this arrangement has been requested for.

**Request must be made using a [Request for Alternative Arrangements for Centrally Coordinated Examinations form](#).**

Please seek further advice from Guild Advice Advisors if you are unsure which of the above options should be applicable to you, or the process to be followed.

**In exceptional circumstances only, will extenuating circumstances be looked at, following examination/assessment submission when the deadline for ECF has passed.**

## Sources of Help

### **Guild Advice, Guild of Students**

Email: [thearc@guild.bham.ac.uk](mailto:thearc@guild.bham.ac.uk)

Visit the website at: <http://www.guildofstudents.com/support/thearc/>

Opening Hours

Monday – Friday Term: 10am-4pm Vacation 12pm-2pm

### **Drop In Clinics**

**Monday - Friday**

**12 – 2pm**

Saturday/Sunday

CLOSED

### **Extenuating Circumstances**

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/registry/policy/extcircs/index.aspx>

### **Notification of Extenuating Circumstances Form**

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/registry/policy/documents/public/extcircs/ec-form-14-15.doc>

### **Alternative Arrangements for Centrally Co-ordinated Examinations Form**

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/registry/policy/documents/public/extcircs/app-alt-exam-arrangement.doc>

### **Code of Practice on Extenuating Circumstances**

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/university/legal/15-16/code-of-practice-extenuating-circumstances.pdf>

### **Appeals**

Email: [appeals@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:appeals@contacts.bham.ac.uk)

Website: <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/registry/policy/complaint-appeal/index.aspx>

### **Counselling & Wellbeing**

Website: [www.studenthelp.bham.ac.uk](http://www.studenthelp.bham.ac.uk)

Telephone: 0121 414 5130

### **Disability & Learning Support**

Email: [disability@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:disability@contacts.bham.ac.uk)

Telephone: 0121 414 5130

**Disclaimer:** The information on this leaflet only provides general guidance on academic support and University policy. The leaflet should not be regarded or relied upon as a complete or authoritative statement of University policy or procedures. Guild Advice will not accept any liability for any claims or inconvenience as a result of the use of information on this leaflet.

© Guild Advice [August 2015]  
Published By Guild Advice,  
Guild of students, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston Park  
Road, Birmingham, B15 2TU  
[Extenuating Circumstances]