

BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY

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Code of Practice for Extenuating Circumstances

1. Introduction

1.1 The University policy on assessment submission on or before published hand-in dates is strictly applied. However, from time to time unforeseen events, such as illness, may arise preventing students from completing assessments within the time allowed or impact adversely on the quality of the assessment submitted. Such events are referred to as extenuating circumstances. This Code of Practice encompasses the processes of application for extenuating circumstances.

1.2 It follows the precepts and guidance contained in the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) UK Quality Code for Higher Education, specifically *Chapter B6 – Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning [2013] (2015)*.

1.3 Reference should also be made to:

- Code of Practice for the Conduct of Boards of Examiners
- Code of Practice for the Assessment of Students
- Code of Practice on Intercalation
- Code of Practice for Academic Misconduct

1.4 There may be occasion during a student's academic journey when circumstances arise that prevent timely submission of assessed work or attendance of examinations, or impact on assessment performance. Such extenuating circumstances are defined as serious adverse circumstances of limited duration which could not reasonably have been foreseen. The criteria are defined as:

- a. *Serious adverse circumstance*. The events described should be sufficiently serious to mean that it would not be reasonable to expect a student to complete an assignment by the published hand-in date. Minor ailments and mishaps are not likely to meet this criterion.
- b. *Limited duration*. There is an expectation that the usual pattern of study will be resumed after a relatively short period. In more serious cases, where there is likely to be prolonged interruption of normal activity, intercalation (suspension, interruption) of studies may be appropriate until the circumstances have been resolved. Chronic illness and disability are not treated as extenuating circumstances, unless newly diagnosed or in an acute phase.
- c. *Not reasonably have been foreseen*. Assignment submission dates are normally published well in advance. There is, therefore, an expectation that students exercise due foresight in organising workload.

- 1.5 If such extenuating circumstances arise, students may apply for their consideration, the process and procedure for which are provided within this Code of Practice.

2. Providing False or Misleading Information

- 2.1 Students seeking to gain an advantage or benefit through application for consideration of extenuating circumstance, mitigation or extension for submission of assessed work through providing false or misleading information are liable to action being taken against them under the University Code of Practice on Academic Misconduct.

3. Panel Constitution and Authority

- 3.1 All applications for extenuating circumstances are considered by a Panel which will normally be comprised of:
- a. a Head of School (Chair);
 - b. Head of Student Advice;
 - c. Academic representative(s), not exceeding two, who do not have a direct connection to cases under consideration nor are from the same school as the Head;
 - d. Head of Quality and Regulatory Compliance or Registrar; and
 - e. School and Student Administration Manager.
- 3.2 The Panel has the authority to make one of the following decisions on each case presented, either to:
- a. support the application, and make recommendation to the Module Board of Examiners;
 - b. reject the application; or
 - c. defer decision pending further evidence.
- 3.3 Where a unanimous decision cannot be reached then a majority decision can be taken; the Chair in this instance would hold the casting vote.

4. Extenuating Circumstance and Mitigation

4.1 Application

- 4.1.1 Students who wish to inform the University of circumstances which they feel may have affected their performance in assessment or led to them being absent from an

examination or other assessment should make an application for consideration of extenuating circumstances.

- 4.1.2 Exceptionally, where a student has been unable to submit an assignment on time and was unable to request an extension in advance they may apply for extenuating circumstances to be taken into account.
- 4.1.3 Applications must be submitted on the appropriate University form and must be supported by corroborating evidence which can include:
- a. medical evidence e.g. a letter from a doctor, nurse or other professional practitioner, confirmation of appointment, prescription, a completed Medical/Professional Practitioner Support Note etc.;
 - b. supporting statement(s) from Programme Leader and/or tutor; and/or
 - c. other verifiable evidence e.g. police incident/crime number.
- 4.1.4 Application for consideration of extenuating circumstances should normally be made no later than 7 days after the assessment hand-in date. Exceptionally, where a student has been unable to submit an application for extenuating circumstances on time, they may be able to submit a late application provided there is solid evidence for a very good reason for their not disclosing the extenuating circumstances in a timely manner. More information can be found on the Code of Practice for Academic Appeals.
- 4.1.5 On application students may request one, or a combination of the following outcomes:
- a. the existing grade for an assignment is set aside and a fresh attempt is allowed;
 - b. a failing grade for the module is disregarded and a fresh attempt for all or part of the overall assessment strategy is allowed; or
 - c. consideration of the circumstances is taken into account together with the students overall mark profile in determining their degree classification (**final year undergraduate students only**).
- 4.1.6 Applications must be submitted to the Student Administration Office gasd@bishopg.ac.uk.
- 4.1.7 All applications are treated by the University on a need-to-know basis.

5. Notification of Outcome



- 5.1 The student and appropriate Programme Leader will normally be notified in writing within two working days of the Panel's decision.
- 5.2 Where the Panel supports the application the decision of outcome and recommendation will be passed to the Module Board of Examiners who will:
- a. apply the recommendation (*unless the Board is satisfied that there is a compelling reason to make an alternative decision in which case the reason for that decision must be minuted*);
 - b. decide that no action is required; or
 - c. pass the decision to the Programme Board of Examiners for consideration later.
- 5.3 Where applications are deferred pending further evidence, the student will be given a date of submission for further evidence. If no further evidence is provided by the given date the case will be returned to the next available Panel where a default decision of 'reject' will be recorded.
- 5.4 Where applications are rejected, the original mark for the assignment(s) will stand or a mark of zero will be recorded for non-attendance of an exam or other assessment, or for non-submission of the assignment(s).

6. COLLABORATIVE PROVISION

- 6.1 To be applied for all provision involving BGU students wherever they are based (including 'franchised' provision); recommended for all other collaborative provision as per the Memoranda of Cooperation in force at the time.