Extenuating Circumstances Policy (DMU Registered Students)

Version 9.0

Approved by the Board of Governors

Last Amendment: September 2026

The following sets out the School's policy and procedures for considering extenuating circumstances that have affected a student's performance in a summative assessment or prevented them from undertaking it.

NB: Procedures vary depending on the awarding body for the programme sought. Please read the following carefully to ensure the correct procedures are applied.

This policy has been reviewed and developed in line with *England's Regulatory Framework for Higher Education.* Due regard is also given to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator's *Good Practice Framework*.

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Document owner(s)*: Head of Registry

Date of next review: September 2027

Document Status: IN USE

Dissemination: For general publication

* The document owner is responsible for maintaining and updating the content of this document and ensuring that it reflects current practice at the School.

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1. DEFINITION

1.1. The School defines '**Extenuating circumstances**' as any circumstances that were not within the student's foresight and control and that the School believes may have an adverse effect on a student's academic performance during the assessment period for which they are claiming.

1.2. Students are expected to manage their workload efficiently and not rely on Extenuating Circumstances claims to compensate for poor organisation, everyday stress, or commitments such as work.

1.3. Extenuating Circumstances are:

- Short-term personal circumstances that could not have been anticipated.
- Events over which the student had no control.

1.4. **Extension** - the allowance of additional time to submit an assessment, for up to five working days beyond the original deadline, due to extenuating circumstances, without the application of late submission penalties.

1.5. **Deferral** - the postponement of an assessment to the next scheduled assessment date, normally during the next reassessment period or when the module next runs, due to extenuating circumstances. An approved deferral will not count towards, or reduce, the student's entitlement to reassessment opportunities.

2. 'FIT TO SIT' POLICY

2.1. By submitting coursework, sitting an examination, or participating in any otherform of assessment (e.g. giving a presentation), a student is taken to be confirming that they are fit to submit/sit the assessment concerned and any extenuating circumstances claim in respect of that assessment will be deemed invalid unless:

- There is clear evidence that the student was not in a fit state to decide whether they were able to submit/ sit the assessment in question, or
- The student became ill during an exam, class-test, presentation, etc. and was unable to continue, or
- There was significant disruption to the assessment environment during an examination or presentation, affecting the student's ability to do their best work.

2.2. The School does not usually make exceptions under this policy for students who are inconvenienced by travel or IT issues; however, some exceptional cases may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

3. SCOPE

3.1. The aim of this policy and its associated procedures is to provide guidance to students on submitting claims for extenuating circumstances relating to deadline extensions and deferrals, and to support consistent decision-making by the School when considering such claims.

3.2. This policy applies to LSST students enrolled on De Montfort University (DMU) courses.

3.3. All Extenuating Circumstances claims must be initiated through the Examination Department to ensure correct procedure.

3.4. References to “Registrar” include the authorised nominee from Registry.

4. PRINCIPLES

4.1. In handling all claims of Deferrals and Extensions, the School will adhere to the following principles:

4.2. The School will seek to preserve the integrity of assessments and ensure fairness to other candidates undertaking the same assessments.

4.3. Deferral requests will be reviewed by LSST Deferrals Panel:

- Each deferral claim will be considered on an individual basis, taking into account the validity and authenticity of the supporting evidence provided.
- The panel will assess whether the circumstances presented are genuine and sufficiently evidenced to warrant a deferral.
- Once a decision has been reached, LSST will communicate the outcome directly to the student and notify DMU accordingly.

4.4. Extension requests will be processed, and accompanying evidence will be reviewed by the DMU Exams Officer at LSST, who will decide whether or not the request can be approved. The outcome of the student's extension claim will be communicated directly by the DMU Exams Officer.

4.5. When requesting evidence, the School will exercise caution and only request what is necessary to confirm the student’s claim. All evidence provided, which may contain sensitive personal information, will be treated in strict confidence and in accordance with the School’s *Data Protection Policy.*

4.6. The School will be alert to repeated issues, patterns, or claims that indicate a need for additional study support under another policy (such as reasonable adjustments) or would necessitate an assessment of a student’s ongoing fitness to study.

4.7. No student will be penalised for making a claim for Extenuating circumstances, whether approved or rejected, as long as the claim was made in good faith.

4.8. If a claim is denied, students will be notified of their right to request a review of the decision through the School's *Appeals Policy*, as well as the grounds for doing so.

5. EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES PROCEDURE

5.1. As soon as a student realises that they will be unable to meet the assessment requirements and/or submission deadlines, they should contact their campus student support team, who can advise them on the options that may be available to them.

5.2. Categories of Extenuating Circumstances:

5.3. Extension Request

5.3.1. Extensions may only be requested for assessments classified as coursework. They do not apply to time-constrained assessments.

5.3.2. Extensions to deadlines can only be granted up to a maximum of five working days.

5.3.3. Extension requests may be applied to:

- First sit assessments, where the mark will remain uncapped.
- Resit assessments, where the mark will be capped if no deferral was approved for the first attempt.

5.3.4. All extension requests must be submitted 24 hours before the original submission deadline.

5.3.5. Students are required to provide appropriate supporting evidence at the time of submission. Requests submitted without valid evidence may not be approved.

5.3.6. If an assessment is submitted up to 24 hours after the deadline without an approved extension or deferral, the mark will be capped at the pass mark of 40.

5.4. Deferral Request

5.4.1. Deferral refers to the rescheduling of an assessment or an exam to a later date. If a deferral is granted, the student is required to take the next available date for their assessment submission or exam to take place.

5.4.2. Deferrals may be requested for both coursework and time-constrained assessments.

5.4.3. Students may apply for a deferral where a five-day extension is not sufficient to address their circumstances.

5.4.4. Deferral requests must be submitted no later than 10 university working days from the date of the examination or the original assessment submission deadline, including any approved extension where applicable. Requests received after this time will not normally be considered. Students are encouraged to submit requests in advance of the assessment wherever possible.

5.4.5. Once ratified results have been released, students cannot request a deferral of assessment. At this stage, any extenuating circumstances must be raised in accordance with the Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure.

5.4.6. If an application for deferral is not approved and the student has not submitted the assessment by the original assessment deadline, or within an authorised extension or applicable unauthorised late submission period, the assessment will be recorded as a non-submission.

5.4.7. If an application for deferral is not approved but the student has submitted the assessment by the original assessment deadline, or within an authorised extension or applicable unauthorised late submission period, the assessment will be marked in accordance with the relevant assessment regulations, with any applicable late submission penalties applied accordingly.

5.4.8. Where a request for deferral relates to a group project, a deferral will normally only be granted to the group members who have submitted an application. Where only one group member applies for a deferral, the request will be considered on a case by case basis, taking into account whether the remaining group members can reasonably continue with the assessment. Where the whole group requires a deferral, all affected students should submit an application.

5.4.9. Students are required to provide appropriate supporting evidence at the time of submission. Where permitted, self-certification may be accepted as formal evidence.

5.4.10. Requests submitted without valid evidence or outside the stated timeframe may not be approved.

5.4.11. Examples of valid Extenuating Circumstances:

- Serious accident or injury.
- Illness or significant medical conditions.
- Serious illness or death of a close family member or other person close to the student.
- Mental health difficulties and/or difficulties arising from a disability.
- Serious incidents, such as being a victim of crime, sexual violence or domestic abuse.
- Jury service or other statutory obligations.
- Pregnancy-related conditions or complications.
- Significant financial difficulties.
- Caring responsibilities.
- Serious transport disruption that could not have been avoided.
- Short-term technical issues with the University systems (e.g., unscheduled VLE outage).

5.5. It is the School's aim to ensure that, as far as possible, such unforeseen circumstances do not affect students' grades or achievements.

5.6. Generally, this policy would not apply to the following:

- Permanent or long-standing conditions already supported by a Reasonable Adjustments Plan, unless there is a sudden worsening making current adjustments insufficient.
- Minor illness (such as a cold).
- Absence or lateness from classes (separate procedures apply).
- Failure to manage workload or prioritise other commitments, such as holidays, weddings, moving house, sporting events, acts of religious observance, or other similar foreseeable circumstances.
- Misunderstanding of assignment criteria, deadlines, or examination dates.
- Group coursework issues caused by another member not completing their work (addressed during marking).

5.7. Application process:

- The Extenuating Circumstances Application Forms are available on LSST Connect.
- Forms must be completed in full and supported by appropriate evidence.

6. EVIDENCE

6.1. It is the student's responsibility to obtain and submit the evidence required to support an extenuating circumstances application.

6.2. Students must provide timely evidence of the extenuating circumstances relating directly to the assessment or assessments concerned and submit this with the relevant extension or deferral request within the published deadlines.

6.3. It is recognised that the availability and nature of supporting evidence may be beyond the student's direct control. Decisions will therefore be made on the balance of probabilities, taking into account all relevant evidence available. All supporting evidence must be submitted in English. Where translation is required, the cost of translation must be met by the student.

6.4. Evidence that may be provided to support an extenuating circumstances application includes, but is not limited to:

- A doctor's letter, fit note or hospital appointment letter.
- A statement from an appropriate professional, such as a social worker, faith leader

or lawyer.

- Independent evidence that demonstrates the circumstances or their impact on the student.

- For short-term illness lasting up to five working days, self-certification may be accepted. Where the illness extends beyond five working days, the student will normally be required to provide supporting evidence. Self-certification requests will be monitored to minimise the risk of misuse.

6.5. The School reserves the right to contact third parties to verify supporting documentary evidence. However, the School is not responsible for contacting third parties to obtain the initial evidence required to support an extenuating circumstances application. Where possible, any verification will be undertaken without disclosing the student's personal data.

6.6. Where it is not possible to provide the relevant supporting evidence at the time of submitting an extenuating circumstances application, the application should still be submitted by the published deadline, with an indication that supporting evidence will follow. Students will normally have 10 working days from the date of submission to provide the outstanding evidence. In all cases, supporting evidence must be submitted before the publication of ratified results for it to be considered. Where evidence is submitted after this point, the matter will need to be raised through the Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure.

6.7. Students who submit false or fraudulent documentation in support of an extenuating circumstances application may be subject to the University's disciplinary procedures.

6.8. In exceptional circumstances, where a student is unable to submit coursework or attend an assessment and is unable to provide other timely supporting evidence, self-certification may be considered and accepted in support of an application for an extension or deferral.

6.9. Where a student has an approved reasonable adjustment and the extenuating circumstances relate directly to that adjustment, the student will not normally be required to provide additional evidence in support of the application.

7. REVIEW OF REJECTED CLAIMS

7.1. Students may request a review of a rejected extension within 48 hours (two days) of receiving the outcome, but no later than the extended deadline. The extended deadline is five working days after the main deadline.

7.2. Students may appeal a rejected deferral request in accordance with the University Appeals Policy, as decisions regarding deferrals are made by the University.

8. FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

8.1. Deferral requests may affect progression or re-enrolment timelines.

8.2. Where repeated claims indicate an ongoing problem, the Panel may refer the student for additional support or a fitness-to-study review.

8.3. While a claim is under review, students may continue to attend classes and prepare for assessments, but assessments taken during this period are at the student's own risk.

9. REVIEW AND UPDATE

9.1. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Registry Department; changes to it will be ratified by the School's Board of Governors.

APPENDIX A: Table of Acceptable Extenuating Circumstances and Evidence Requirements

The below table shows examples of mitigating circumstances and the evidence requirements. All Extenuating Circumstances claims are decidedon an individual basis with reference to other contextual information; the below table should serve as a guide only.

	Accepted Circumstances	**Supporting Evidence**	**Generally unacceptable**
Medical	• Acute short-term illness (e.g., Influenza, norovirus, food poisoning)	- Written evidence from a Registered medical practitioner / GP fit note	• Minor ailments (e.g. coughs, mild colds, sore throat, hay fever, etc.) • Sleep loss / oversleeping
	• Serious physical injury incurred near to assessment period.	- Written evidence from a registered medical practitioner	• Minor accidents or injuries (e.g. small cuts, bruises, sprains)
	• Onset of severe physical or mental health condition	- Written evidence from a registered medical practitioner	• Generic exam/assignment stress • Long-term physical or mental health condition for which reasonable adjustments have already been made (except where acute episode or worsening of their condition which means that the reasonable adjustments in place are no longer sufficient)
	• Complications with pregnancy or late stage of pregnancy (e.g. imminent childbirth – partners of pregnant women may be included)	- Written evidence from a registered medical practitioner - Birth certificate	• Pregnancy in and of itself: Students should consult the School's *Pregnant Students and Students With Very Young Children Policy*
	• Long standing hospital / surgical appointment	- Letter form hospital / medical centre confirming time and date of consultation / procedure.	• Routine medical appointment (e.g. non-emergency GP visit, dentist, optician, physiotherapy, etc.)

	Accepted Circumstances	Supporting Evidence	Generally unacceptable
Bereavement	• Loss of a parent, (including stepparents and legal guardian) child, siblings, spouse or common law partner. • Death of close relative or friend.	- Death Certificate - A letter from a doctor concerning bereavement	• Death of a pet • Death of a public figure / celebrity
	• Attending funeral for any of the above persons	- Order of Service (if available)	
Academic	• Disruption to examination conditions / environment • Administrative failing attributable to the School (e.g. incomplete assessment instructions, wrong exam paper given).	- Corroboration from invigilator / administrator - Invigilator report - Original assessment materials provided	• Misreading examination or timetable or rubric • Misinterpreting assessment deadline • Submitting the wrong assignment in error or in the wrong format • Poor time management • Group coursework tasks – failure by one member of the group to submit work or undertake the tasks assigned by the group; this will be taken into account in the marking guidelines
Personal commitments	• Family / care emergency • Work emergency	- Written evidence from a registered medical practitioner / solicitor - Written corroboration from employer	• Normal work commitment • Holidays • Participation in sporting activities • Routine work commitments • Domestic events (e.g. wedding, • Participation in public demonstrations / political rally

Exceptional financial or accommodation problems	• Eviction / being made homeless	- Notice of eviction	• Problems with accommodation • Building/decorating work in progress • Moving to a new house

	Accepted Circumstances	Supporting Evidence	Generally unacceptable
Victim of crime / traumatic personal event	• Victim of serious crime or domestic abuse (e.g. rape, assault, mugging, terrorist incident). • Theft or destruction of work required for submission. • Serious fire in residence • Affected by natural disaster • Family breakdown (such as divorce)	- Written corroboration of the reported crime from Police or other investigating authority	• General domestic / family problems
Public Duty	• Attendance at court or tribunal as a witness, plaintiff or defendant • Jury duty • Assisting with police enquiries	- Official correspondence from - Court of Tribunal Authority	• Attendance at court as spectator
IT Problems	• Failure of School IT equipment at critical time	- Written corroboration from IT Officer	• Minor computer problems including failure to save documents properly
Transport	• Involved in road accident • Severe travel disruption (e.g. stuck on broken down train – unable to alight)	- Insurance report - Online transport updates	• Transport strikes • Delayed trains or traffic jams • Personal transport problems (car break-down)

VERSION HISTORY

Version	**1.0 - 4.0**	
Original author(s):	Head of Registry Head of Assessments	
Reviewed by:	Executive Committee	September 2017 January 2017 September 2018 September 2019
Version	**5.0**	
Revised by:	Quality Audit Manager Head of Registry	
Revision summary:	*Document recomposed; principles added – clarified applicability of process. Appendixrevised. Document reformatted and version control added.*	
Approved by:	The Board of Governors	October 2020
Version	**5.1**	
Revised by:	Quality Manager Head of Registry	
Revision summary:	*Annual review; partnerships amended. Document reformatted and version control added.*	
Approved by:	The Board of Governors	December 2021
Version	**5.2**	
Revised by:	Quality Manager Head of Registry	
Revision summary:	*Annual review; Document amended to align with DMU's processes and procedures; BNU and UWL removed from document.*	
Approved by:	The Board of Governors	March 2023
Version	**6**	
Revised by:	Quality Manager Head of Registry	
Revision summary:	*Annual review; Document amended to align with DMU's processes and procedures; version control applied.*	
Approved by:	The Board of Governors	October 2023
Version	**7**	
Revised by:	Assistant Registrar Quality Unit	
Revision summary:	*Annual review and update, title change from 'Awarding Body - DMU' to 'DMU Registered Student', minor grammatical corrections, document format applied, version control applied.*	
Approved by:	The Board of Governors	October 2024
Version	**8.0**	
Original author(s):	Head of Registry	

	Head of Assessments	
Revised by:	Quality Unit	
Revision summary:	***Annual review and update -*** *Minor grammatical corrections, document format applied, version control applied.*	
Reviewed by:	Publications Committee	September 2025
Approved by:	The Board of Governors	October 2025
Version	**8.1**	
Original author(s):	Head of Registry Head of Assessments	
Revised by:	Exams Coordinator Quality Unit	
Revision summary:	Policy title changed to from Mitigating Circumstances and Extensions to Extenuating Circumstances Policy. Policy updated to reflect up-to-date and accurate DMU processes.	
Reviewed by:	Registry and Exams	March 2026
Approved by:	The Board of Governors	March 2026
Version	**9.0**	
Original author(s):	Head of Registry Head of Assessments	
Revised by:	Exams Coordinator Quality Unit	
Revision summary:	*Annual review and update -* *Policy updated to align with partner university processes. Paragraph 1.4. and 1.5. added on extensions and deferrals. Paragraph 3.1. added on aims of the policy. Section 5 updated on extensions and deferrals. Section 6 updated on Evidence. Section 7 updated on Review of Rejected Claims. Minor grammatical corrections, document format applied, version control applied*.	
Reviewed by:	Publications Committee	October 2026
Approved by:	The Board of Governors	October 2026