



# Extenuating Circumstances Policy (DMU Registered Students)

**Version 8.1**

Approved by the Board of Governors

Last Amendment: March 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

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Document owner(s)\*: Head of Registry

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\* 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. Examples of Extenuating Circumstances:
  - Illness at the time of an examination or during the period preceding coursework submission.
  - Bereavement of a close family member or friend.
  - Severe unforeseen personal or psychological problems.
  - Flare-up or worsening of a chronic condition.
  - Complications in pregnancy.
  - Additional impact of a disability.
  - Serious transport disruption that could not have been avoided.
  - Specific religious observance affecting assessment.
  - Short-term technical issues with the University systems (e.g., unscheduled VLE outage).
- 1.5. It is the School's aim to ensure that, as far as possible, such unforeseen circumstances do not affect students' grades or achievements.
- 1.6. Students must be prepared to submit relevant evidence to support their claim along with their Deferral or Extension form.
- 1.7. 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.



- Absence or lateness from classes (separate procedures apply).
- Failure to manage workload or prioritising other commitments, such as holidays or paid employment, over assessments.
- Misunderstanding of assignment criteria, deadlines, or examination dates.
- Group coursework issues caused by another member not completing their work (addressed during marking).

## 2. 'FIT TO SIT' POLICY

2.1. By submitting coursework, sitting an examination, or participating in any other form 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.

*The Appendix of this document gives examples of reasons that are generally considered as extenuating circumstances, reasons that may be considered and reasons that are not likely to be considered. It also provides examples of typical evidence that would need to be submitted to substantiate a claim for extenuating circumstances.*

## 3. SCOPE

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

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

3.3. 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 a Deferral Panel convened by the awarding body, De Montfort University (DMU).
  - 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, DMU will communicate the outcome directly to the student.
- 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:

### A. Extension Request



An extension request permits a student to receive up to five additional working days to submit an assessment.

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.

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

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

## **B. Deferral Request**

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.

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

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.

Students are required to provide appropriate supporting evidence at the time of submission. Where permitted, self-certification may be accepted as formal evidence. Requests submitted without valid evidence or outside the stated timeframe may not be approved.

Where a deferral request is approved, any marks awarded for work submitted during the affected period will be declared void. The final mark recorded will be based solely on the student's subsequent submission or examination attempt at the next available opportunity, and this mark will be entered on the academic record.

Once a deferral has been approved, it cannot be withdrawn. The student is required to submit the assessment or undertake the examination at the next available opportunity.

### 5.3. Application process:

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



5.4. The Exams Team ensures one claim per assessment attempt, prompt handling of cases, and secure storage of data for one academic year.

## **6. SELF-CERTIFICATION**

6.1. As described above, the majority of claims will require accompanying evidence, and evidence will be expected when a student submits an extension or Deferral claim.

6.2. However, in some cases, the student may be unable to provide evidence to support their claim. This could include cases of minor illness where no medical intervention is required, as well as sensitive cases such as legal proceedings.

6.3. A student can self-certify once per academic.

6.4. Self-certification cannot be used for claims submitted after the original deadline, or for Late Claims.

## **7. REVIEW OF REJECTED CLAIMS**

7.1. Students may appeal rejected claims by following the Appeals Policy and submitting an appeal form.

## **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: 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 decided on an individual basis with reference to other contextual information; the below table should serve as a guide only.

	Accepted Circumstances	Supporting Evidence	Generally unacceptable
<b>Medical</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acute short-term illness (e.g., Influenza, norovirus, food poisoning)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Written evidence from a Registered medical practitioner / GP fit note</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minor ailments (e.g. coughs, mild colds, sore throat, hay fever, etc.)</li> <li>Sleep loss / oversleeping</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Serious physical injury incurred near to assessment period.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Written evidence from a registered medical practitioner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minor accidents or injuries (e.g. small cuts, bruises, sprains)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Onset of severe physical or mental health condition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Written evidence from a registered medical practitioner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generic exam/assignment stress</li> <li>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)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complications with pregnancy or late stage of pregnancy (e.g. imminent childbirth – partners of pregnant women may be included)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Written evidence from a registered medical practitioner</li> <li>Birth certificate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pregnancy in and of itself: Students should consult the School's <i>Pregnant Students and Students With Very Young Children Policy</i></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Long standing hospital / surgical appointment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Letter form hospital / medical centre confirming time and date of consultation / procedure.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Routine medical appointment (e.g. non-emergency GP visit, dentist, optician, physiotherapy, etc.)</li> </ul>

	Accepted Circumstances	Supporting Evidence	Generally unacceptable
<b>Bereavement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of a parent, (including stepparents and legal guardian) child, siblings, spouse or common law partner.</li> <li>Death of close relative or friend.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Death Certificate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Death of a pet</li> <li>Death of a public figure / celebrity</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attending funeral for any of the above persons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Order of Service (if available)</li> </ul>	
<b>Academic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disruption to examination conditions / environment</li> <li>Administrative failing attributable to the School (e.g. incomplete assessment instructions, wrong exam paper given).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corroboration from invigilator / administrator</li> <li>Invigilator report</li> <li>Original assessment materials provided</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Misreading examination or timetable or rubric</li> <li>Misinterpreting assessment deadline</li> <li>Submitting the wrong assignment in error or in the wrong format</li> <li>Poor time management</li> <li>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</li> </ul>
<b>Personal commitments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family / care emergency</li> <li>Work emergency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Written evidence from a registered medical practitioner / solicitor</li> <li>Written corroboration from employer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Normal work commitment</li> <li>Holidays</li> <li>Participation in sporting activities</li> <li>Routine work commitments</li> <li>Domestic events (e.g. wedding,</li> <li>Participation in public demonstrations / political rally</li> </ul>

<b>Exceptional financial or accommodation problems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eviction / being made homeless</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Notice of eviction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problems with accommodation</li> <li>• Building/decorating work in progress</li> <li>• Moving to a new house</li> </ul>
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	<b>Accepted Circumstances</b>	<b>Supporting Evidence</b>	<b>Generally unacceptable</b>
<b>Victim of crime / traumatic personal event</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Victim of serious crime or domestic abuse (e.g. rape, assault, mugging, terrorist incident).</li> <li>• Theft or destruction of work required for submission.</li> <li>• Serious fire in residence</li> <li>• Affected by natural disaster</li> <li>• Family breakdown (such as divorce)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Written corroboration of the reported crime from Police or other investigating authority</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General domestic / family problems</li> </ul>
<b>Public Duty</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance at court or tribunal as a witness, plaintiff or defendant</li> <li>• Jury duty</li> <li>• Assisting with police enquiries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Official correspondence from Court of Tribunal Authority</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance at court as spectator</li> </ul>
<b>IT Problems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure of School IT equipment at critical time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Written corroboration from IT Officer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minor computer problems including failure to save documents properly</li> </ul>
<b>Transport</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involved in road accident</li> <li>• Severe travel disruption (e.g. stuck on broken down train – unable to alight)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Insurance report</li> <li>- Online transport updates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport strikes</li> <li>• Delayed trains or traffic jams</li> <li>• Personal transport problems (car break-down)</li> </ul>

## Version History

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**Version 8.1**

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