



This document relates to the extenuating circumstances (EC) policy and procedure that was in place at the University of Nottingham during the 2022/23 academic year. For information about the policy from 25 September 2023 onwards, please visit our [extenuating circumstances webpages](#).

Guidance on Acceptable Circumstances and Evidence (EC Procedure)

1. Core considerations

This guidance supports the University's Extenuating Circumstances Procedure and should be read in conjunction with the procedure.

In order to be considered under this procedure, circumstances must meet all of the following criteria:

- They must be out of the student's control – the student could not have prevented them.
- They must have had an impact – they must have had a demonstrably negative impact on the student's ability to study or to undertake an assessment.
- The timing of the circumstances must be relevant to the claimed impact.

2. Standard of evidence

- With the limited exception of the circumstances provided for in the Examination Self-Certification Policy, all claims made under the Extenuating Circumstances Procedure must be supported by independent, reliable documentary evidence of inability to comply with the assessment requirements or to attend teaching or undertake required study.
- The burden of proof to support a claim lies with the student at all times.
- Evidence presented by students must meet the following standards and should:
 - a. Where written by appropriately qualified professionals who are independent of the student, be on headed paper and signed and dated by the author. Evidence presented by email may be acceptable if the email has been sent by the author from the official domain name of the author's organisation. Students should note that the Cripps Health Centre and the University Counselling Service in the UK or equivalent services on other campuses will be unlikely to provide such confirmation if the student has had no engagement with the service(s) prior to the affected assessment(s).
 - b. Confirm specifically that the circumstances were witnessed on the relevant date as opposed to being reported retrospectively.

- c. Be in English. It is the student's responsibility to provide supporting documentation and any translation should be undertaken by an accredited translator (e.g. be a member of the [Association of Translation Companies](#). Any associated costs must be met by the student.
- d. Be unaltered by the student. Documentation that has been amended for any reason will be deemed inadmissible by the University and may be subject to investigation under the Academic Misconduct Procedure or the Code of Discipline. Schools/Departments should also consider evidence supplied by other members of staff known to the student, for example, Personal Tutors, Welfare Officers or Hall Wardens. People in these roles should only provide supporting evidence if:
 - 1. The student has engaged with them sufficiently prior to the affected assessment(s) such that they are fully conversant with their situation.
 - 2. They are satisfied that there will have been an adverse impact on the student's ability to study and/or take assessments
 - 3. The student does not require medical/professional treatment for their circumstances.

A [template](#) is provided for staff wishing to provide a supporting statement. This statement serves as evidence in support of an extenuating circumstances claim, it is not confirmation that the claim has been approved. An Extenuating Circumstances Panel has the final decision regarding the claim.

Schools/Departments should also consider evidence available in Invigilator reports and, if the report indicates significant negative impact during the assessment, should suspend the need for medical evidence if the student would not normally require medical treatment for the circumstances e.g. sickness and diarrhoea or migraine.

- 4. The School/Department should only consider upholding a student's claim of extenuating circumstances when, in their opinion, all of the above conditions are fully satisfied.
- 5. The University reserves the right to take such steps as are deemed necessary to verify the evidence submitted without prior notification. Where the University is unable to authenticate the material to its satisfaction, the claim may not be accepted. The University reserves the right to request sight of original documents, if necessary.
- 6. If there is evidence that a student has fraudulently presented documentation to the University the matter will usually be referred for consideration under the [University's Academic Misconduct regulations](#) and, where applicable, the University's [Fitness to Practise Procedure](#).

3. Acceptable circumstances

1. The following gives examples of the kind of acceptable circumstances (ie where the student might be able to demonstrate sufficient cause for non-compliance with an assessment requirement or for missing teaching or required study) and examples of the associated evidence that is normally required. This is given without prejudice and for general guidance; it is not exhaustive, definitive or prescriptive.

2. The University considers each claim of extenuating circumstances on its own merits, as an individual case and according to the relevant procedure. The EC Panel will consider the documentation provided and determine whether it provides sufficient evidence of impact on the ability to study and take assessments to approve the claim.

Circumstance	Evidence	Comments
Illness	<p>Printouts from the NHS app which attest to the circumstances claimed in the form.</p> <p>Where possible, a letter from an appropriate medical professional or statement from the University Counselling Service (or equivalent) confirming the nature of the illness and the likely impact it is having on the student's ability to undertake formal assessment and/or study. This includes medical certificates supplied by online doctors, provided that they are UK based and CQC-regulated.</p>	<p>Short-term illness (less than 7 days) will not generally be regarded as an extenuating circumstance with regard to assessed coursework, where the student is given a number of weeks/months to complete and submit such work, although a School/Department may decide to grant an extension dependent on individual circumstances and/or grant an extension for short-term assignments (e.g. 1 or 2 weeks).</p>
Hospitalisation	<p>Discharge notes.</p> <p>A medical letter/certificate from the relevant hospital confirming the nature of the student's circumstances.</p> <p>Letter of appointment for a specialist consultation, investigation or outpatient treatment.</p>	<p>Students should not need to visit a Health Centre to provide medical certification when they have an obvious physical injury.</p> <p>Corroboration, such as a note from a hospital casualty department, or from a tutor who has seen the injury, would normally be sufficient.</p> <p>Examples of obvious physical injury could include plaster casts or metal</p>

		pins supporting broken bones.
Family illness	A medical certificate/letter from a medical professional confirming the nature and severity of the family circumstances.	
Bereavement	A death certificate <i>or</i> a letter confirming the death from an independent person (usually not a family member) Evidence from a hospital Family Bereavement Centre, or equivalent. Where these are not available, an order of service from the funeral.	The claim should make clear the nature of the relationship between the student and the deceased and how the student's ability to study has been affected.
IT and/or computer failure during online examinations	Screen shots of the issue which demonstrate the timing and the longevity of the issue. Where relevant, a statement of disrupted service from an internet provider.	
Acute Personal/ Emotional Circumstances	An original medical certificate or letter from an appropriate medical professional or a letter from the University Counselling Service (or equivalent) confirming a list of counselling session attended dates.	If EC panels require further information please contact the counselling service directly. It is unlikely that evidence will be given if there has been limited or no recent engagement.
Pregnancy		The University has a policy on pregnancy related issues . Students who are pregnant should follow the guidance in this document. In some cases it may be appropriate to use the Extenuating Circumstances procedure (for instance when a student suffers from a specific illness caused by the pregnancy), in which case the requirements for illness or

		hospitalisation above should be followed.
Victim of crime	A written statement of events which is supported by written evidence from the Police (including a crime reference number). Where the impact of the crime has led to a medical or other professional consultation, an original medical certificate or letter from an appropriate medical professional or a letter from the University Counselling Service (or equivalent) confirming the likely impact the reported crime had/is having on the student's ability to undertake formal assessment and/or study.	
Domestic disruption	Where significant and unforeseen domestic disruption has occurred very close to a timetabled examination a letter from an appropriate independent individual/authority detailing the relevant circumstances and an indication of the likely impact with their contact details provided.	This applies only in relation to examinations unless the circumstances are exceptionally severe and extended. Disturbances caused by housemates would generally be considered to be normal and therefore not acceptable as an extenuating circumstance. (See also Accommodation Disturbances in section 4 – Unacceptable Circumstances)
Representing the University at a national event or involvement in some other significant/prestigious event	A letter of confirmation from the relevant organising body and a supporting statement from the student explaining why the event should be considered as significant/prestigious and the reason(s) why they are required to be absent from University.	

Jury Service (UK)	A letter from the Court together with proof that a deferral has been requested and rejected or proof that a previous request for deferral has been accepted.	A student who is asked to undertake jury service that would affect their ability to meet any of the requirements of their programme should make a request to the Court for the Jury Service to be deferred. Only where the Court has refused such a deferral will Jury Service be considered as an acceptable extenuating circumstance. Deferral of Jury Service is only permitted once by the Courts.
Court Attendance (UK)	Where a student is required to attend a tribunal or court as a witness, defendant (but see 'Criminal Conviction' in Section 4, Unacceptable Circumstances) or plaintiff the student should provide official correspondence from the tribunal/court confirming attendance or a solicitor's letter detailing the nature and dates of the legal proceedings and the requirement for the student to attend.	
Other	The list of circumstances cannot be exhaustive and it is possible that other circumstances will arise that should be considered as acceptable. Examples that have arisen are listed in the next column and additional examples will be added as they become known.	Examples of other circumstances that might be considered to be acceptable: Requirements of military service; Exceptional transport issues (see Transport issues in Unacceptable circumstances); Unforeseen or exceptional work commitments in the case of part-time students.

4. Unacceptable circumstances

1. The following gives examples of circumstances that are likely to be considered as unacceptable (ie where the student is unlikely to be able to demonstrate sufficient cause for non-compliance with an assessment requirement or lack of engagement with required study activities). This is given for general guidance and is not exhaustive, definitive or prescriptive. All cases should be considered on an individual basis.

2. Due regard should be given to the reasonableness and proportionality of the outcome, and it may be that in some circumstances these examples would be deemed to be acceptable particularly where the circumstances are exceptional or could not have been foreseen.

Circumstance	
Transport issues	It is expected that students will ensure that they arrive at the assessment on time, irrespective of the form of transport used or relied upon. An inability to travel as a result of circumstances beyond the student's control may though constitute sufficient cause e.g. cancellation of a train/plane, car breakdown. Students should, however, allow a reasonable contingency time in any travel arrangements made, as moderate delays are considered to be a normal expectation.
Holidays	It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they are available for all study activities and all assessments, including any assessments taking place on Saturdays in the main examination periods or offered in the reassessment period (August – September). All holidays and vacations should take place at a time that will not impact on the student's availability to study or undertake or prepare for an assessment(s).
Accommodation disturbances	It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they have access to suitable accommodation, including for any assessments offered in the reassessment period, and therefore ongoing or foreseeable problems with accommodation are unlikely to constitute a good case. Disturbances

	<p>caused by housemates would generally be considered to be normal and therefore not acceptable as an extenuating circumstance. (See also Domestic Disruption, Victim of Crime and Acute Personal/Emotional Circumstances in section 3 – Acceptable circumstances.)</p>
Misreading the examination timetable	<p>It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they know and remember the location, time and duration of all formal assessments.</p>
Paid employment or voluntary work	<p>It is expected that students will ensure that any paid employment or voluntary work does not interfere with their ability to engage with their studies or assessments. It should be noted that examinations may be scheduled to take place on Saturdays during the published examination periods. The University has guidance for students undertaking employment or other activities during their studies.</p> <p>Where unforeseen or exceptional work commitments arise in the case of part-time students these may be considered to be acceptable dependent on individual circumstances.</p>
Exam stress	<p>Feeling 'below par', stressed and anxious leading up to and during an assessment(s) is a common experience of many students. It is not considered to be an acceptable extenuating circumstance unless a medical diagnosis of illness has been made.</p>
IT and/or computer failure	<p>For assessed coursework, loss or corruption of files is not an acceptable extenuating circumstance. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all work which is electronically stored, generated and/or submitted is sufficiently backed up.</p> <p>However, if failure happens during an online</p>

	examination, this may be grounds for a claim.
Foreseeable/preventable circumstances	Where the circumstances are within the control of the student they are unlikely to constitute sufficient cause for failure to comply with the assessment requirements or engage fully with their studies.
Scheduling of assessments/deadline	Deadlines being close together or examinations scheduled close together are unlikely to constitute acceptable circumstances.
Being reluctant to disclose the circumstances for any reason	Not informing the University of circumstances due to personal feelings e.g. shame, embarrassment and pride, or having concerns over the confidential handling of claims, are not considered to be credible and compelling explanations for non-submission of contemporaneous claims. The University can only consider circumstances if they are disclosed in accordance with this policy.
Submitting the same extenuating circumstances more than once except where the student has accessed appropriate support to manage the circumstances but there is an unexpected acute episode at a particularly significant time.	

The following will not be acceptable as extenuating circumstances:

Circumstance	
Criminal conviction	If a student is convicted of a criminal offence any disruption caused by the investigation or sentence is not an acceptable extenuating circumstance.
Withdrawal of IT facilities or suspension for reason of debt	

5. Religious observance in relation to Scheduled Examinations

If a student has completed the Religious Observance Form by the published deadline and it has not been possible to make alternative arrangements centrally, the School should take reasonable steps

to provide an alternative assessment opportunity. Where this is not possible, the School may consider a claim under this policy.

This will not, however, normally be regarded as an extenuating circumstance with regard to assessed coursework where the student is given a number of weeks/months to complete and submit such work. Absence from an assessment for reason of religious observance, where no Religious Observance Form has been completed, or where the relevant permission for absence has not been obtained prior to the assessment, will not be deemed an acceptable extenuating circumstance.

Students may submit EC claims in respect of performance in assessments affected by symptoms attributable to religious observance.