Guidance on Extenuating Circumstances and Deferred Consideration Forms

Relevant to: All LJMU Staff, Students and Academic Partnerships

Responsibility for Document Review: Head of Student Administration Services.

Date introduced: Updated with this coversheet April 2016.

Date(s) modified: May 2014, September 2016, July 2018

Next Review Date: May 2019

RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

List here any documents that relate to the creation of this policy

- Assessment Regulations
- Academic Framework

RELATED POLICIES & DOCUMENTS

List here any internal policies or documents that are relevant to this policy

- Student Handbook
- Methods of Practice
Extenuating Circumstances and Deferred Consideration Procedures
Guidance Notes

The following are guidance notes only – students and staff should refer to the Academic Framework Section C4 [https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/about-us/public-information/academic-quality-and-regulations/academic-framework]

Long term illnesses, conditions or disabilities are not covered by this procedure other than where the circumstances meet the criteria as defined in the Academic Framework Regulations Section C.4. The University is committed to enabling all students to participate in assessment on an equal footing. Advice regarding support for students with disabilities, including special assessment arrangements is available from the LJMU Disability Advisers.

Prior to submitting an Extenuating Circumstances Application students should consult with a member of the Student Advice and Wellbeing Team on mailto:studentadvice@ljmu.ac.uk
Students can also acquire independent advice on student related matters can be obtained by contacting John Moores Students’ Union Advice Centre at the John Foster Building, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool L3 5UZ, telephone number 0151 231 4900 email: lsuadvice@ljmu.ac.uk

Students must be aware that submission of an Extenuating Circumstances application is not in itself a guarantee that the Extenuating Circumstances claim will be accepted. Please note that if the Extenuating Circumstances application is accepted as valid this will NOT result in a change of module mark, but will result in a deferral where the student has not attempted the assessment affected by the Extenuating Circumstances. Where a student has attempted the assessment affected by Extenuating Circumstances, then the mark will stand and consideration of the Extenuating Circumstances application is ended.

1. **Underlying Principles**

   • There should be a fairness to the student body as a whole, as well as fairness to a particular individual.
   • Consideration of an Extenuating Circumstances application is independent of marks or assessment outcome.
   • Boards of Examiners cannot estimate a student’s potential to obtain higher marks, therefore marks will not be changed.
   • There should be consistency of treatment of students across the University.
   • Extenuating Circumstances applications from students, which do not meet the required deadlines, will be deemed to be late and students must submit their application as per the Late Extenuating Circumstances procedure.
   • The University makes every effort to ensure that Extenuating Circumstances applications are dealt with confidentially and with appropriate sensitivity.
   • Normally, a student may be deferred only once per module attempt.

2. **What are Extenuating Circumstances?**

The University acknowledges that there may be occasions when a student’s ability to complete an assessment may be severely affected by unforeseen or unexpected circumstances. Such events include sudden acute illness or close personal bereavement. [*It does not include circumstances that arise from minor ailments such as a cold, or circumstances that arise as a result of foreseeable circumstances, such as booking a holiday during an assessment period.*]
Students with long term medical conditions / disabilities who require ongoing support should seek advice from the LJMU Disability team [https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/discover/student-support/students-with-a-disability](https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/discover/student-support/students-with-a-disability)

3. **What should you do if your circumstances may prevent you from completing an assessment?**

The University is committed to helping students to progress on their programme of study and in most cases it may be possible to make arrangements which will enable you to progress. However this will be dependent upon the student contacting the Module Leader, Programme Leader or Personal Tutor as soon as possible, so that there is sufficient time before the assessment to consider the best course of action. In addition students are advised to contact the Student Advice and Wellbeing Team.

**Initial Action**

Academic staff may on receipt of appropriate evidence of the student’s circumstances agree one or more of the actions below:

- Extending an assessment deadline, normally for up to a maximum of fifteen working days.
- Consult with the Module Leader who may set an alternative assessment, which meets the learning outcomes of the original assessment.
- The decision to set an alternative assessment task must be agreed no later than one week in advance of the original assessment item deadline; recorded and reported by the Module Leader to the Board of Examiners.
- The assessment must be completed at least five days prior to the Board of Examiners.

All actions and decisions must be formally recorded and reported to the Board of Examiners. Students can also be directed to the Student Advice and Wellbeing Services for other appropriate support.

Please note that exceptionally, if a scheduled event will prevent a student from attending a module assessment such as an examination or field trip students can request a deferral of that assessment event until the next assessment opportunity though the Deferred Consideration Process (Section 9 of the guidance notes refers).

A student who declares themselves ‘fit to attempt’ at the start of a time-limited summative assessment item but whose performance was adversely and seriously affected by circumstances that occurred during the assessment to such an extent that the assessment item could not be completed, may submit a claim for ‘special mitigation’. Claims for special mitigation must be submitted within 5 working days of the date of the assessment.

4. **Formal Extenuating Circumstances Procedures**

Where the possibility of alternative action as described above is not possible or is not appropriate then the University provides the formal Extenuating Circumstances Procedure whereby students can request consideration of their serious extenuating circumstances, in relation to their performance in assessment (Academic Framework Regulations C4.4 refers).

Students are not obliged to submit Extenuating Circumstances applications and disclose their personal circumstances to the University; however if they wish special consideration to be given to the possible impact of such circumstances by the Board of Examiners then they MUST be prepared to disclose (and evidence) essential details via the Extenuating Circumstances process.

4.1. **How does the Extenuating Circumstances procedure relate to the assessment process?**

It is a condition of assessment that students are required to successfully complete module(s) within a specified time period. It is also a condition that students are normally required to achieve successful completion with a maximum of two attempts – a first sitting and a referral. [Exceptional Second Referrals are only allowed in accordance with the provisions specified in the Academic Framework Regulations C7.14].
If an Extenuating Circumstances application is accepted this will NOT result in a change of module mark, but will result in a deferral where the student has not attempted the assessment affected by the Extenuating Circumstances.

Please note: a student may be deferred only once per module attempt, save for extraordinary circumstances in which case the Board of Examiners may exercise a reserve power to award a subsequent deferral (Academic Framework Regulations C4.8 refers).

5. How does the Formal Extenuating Circumstances process operate?

5.1. Criteria

Student circumstances must meet the following criteria if they wish the Extenuating Circumstances Panel to give consideration to verifiable circumstances which have significantly affected their ability to complete an assessment, and where the possibility of coursework extensions or other actions are inapplicable or inappropriate:

- **Timely**
  - circumstances occurred in close proximity to the assessment event
- **Severe**
  - circumstances should be very serious and significantly impact on your ability to complete an assessment
- **Acute**
  - come on rapidly (not ongoing)
- **Unexpected**
  - be an unplanned circumstance that could have not been foreseen

Please note that the Extenuating Circumstances procedures only relate to sudden, unexpected circumstances. Long term illnesses, conditions, disabilities and ongoing circumstances are not normally considered by this procedure, unless the circumstances meet the above criteria.

5.2. Deadlines

The Extenuating Circumstances procedure operates within deadlines that are driven by the formal assessment/moderation process. This is to enable appropriate consideration of such circumstances by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel in a timely manner and to ensure that the criteria for progression are applied consistently and fairly to all students.

It is the responsibility of the student to use the Extenuating Circumstances procedure within the specified timeframe.

Students should submit an Extenuating Circumstances application within the 5 working day period after the affected assessment event e.g. coursework submission deadline, examination etc.

**LATE Extenuating Circumstances Applications**

Students who do not meet the required deadline may submit a Late Extenuating Circumstances application (procedure below and Academic Framework Regulations C4.10 refer).
All Extenuating Circumstances applications made after the 5 working day deadline are deemed to be late and will require a statement and independent verifiable evidence from the student to support their reasons for late submission.

Late Extenuating Circumstances applications will not be considered after the Extenuating Circumstances Panel has met. Faculties are required to make known to students the date of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel meeting.

5.3. Evidence

Students are required to provide independent supporting evidence of the circumstances which they believe have seriously affected their ability to complete an assessment (examples of evidence which the University considers to be appropriate include; medical certificates, counsellor’s letter, death certificate etc.).

It is the responsibility of the student to submit Extenuating Circumstances applications with the relevant independent supporting evidence with their application.

Extenuating Circumstances applications submitted without relevant supporting evidence will not be accepted.

If you are experiencing difficulties or delays in obtaining evidence for your Extenuating Circumstances submission you should contact your Module or Programme Leader as soon as possible for advice.

LATE Extenuating Circumstances applications:

In considering late Extenuating Circumstances applications the Extenuating Circumstances Panel is seeking evidence of exceptional reasons for the inability of the student to submit within the specified deadlines, such as medical reasons (or similar) as corroborated by objective impartial sources. Students must provide relevant documentation to support their statement.

Students who submit Extenuating Circumstances after the 5 day deadline, must recognise that these applications can only be accepted where there is independent evidence to substantiate that they were unable to or were somehow prevented from submitting within the normal timeframe.

Students submitting Late Extenuating Circumstances applications are required to provide independent evidence supporting the reasons why they were unable to submit their application within the specified deadlines, in addition to independent evidence of the circumstances that have affected their ability to complete an assessment.

6. Procedure for consideration of Extenuating Circumstances applications

6.1. Seek Advice

Students are strongly advised to seek advice and guidance from their Module/Programme Leader or Personal Tutor or other appropriate academic staff in the first instance.

Students can also contact the Student Advice and Wellbeing for advice and support https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/students/supporting-your-study

Independent advice and guidance on student related procedures are available from the Liverpool Students’ Union (telephone 0151 231 4900 email: lsuadvice@ljmu.ac.uk).

6.2. Application Forms
The Extenuating Circumstances forms are available online from the My LJMU portal https://my.ljmu.ac.uk/ more information is available at https://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/student-administration/126416.htm

Students must complete all relevant sections of the form in full and provide appropriate supporting evidence with your application (e.g. medical evidence). Students are required to provide independent verifiable evidence of the circumstances. Guidance on the documentary evidence required is outlined in Section 5.3 of these guidance notes.

**Late Extenuating Circumstances applications**

If an Extenuating Circumstances application is late students are required to complete Section 5 of the Extenuating Circumstances form, providing reasons why they were unable to submit the application within 5 workings days of the assessment event. Students must provide objective, impartial evidence to corroborate and justify the reasons for submitting the form in after required deadline.

6.3. **Submitting your Extenuating Circumstances Application**

Forms and all evidence should be submitted via the My LJMU portal https://my.ljmu.ac.uk/ you will receive an email receipt on submission. Students are advised to keep a copy of their submission and supporting evidence. Students submitting a request by post are advised to use the Recorded Delivery service.

7. **Consideration of Extenuating Circumstances applications by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel**

All applications will be considered by an Extenuating Circumstances Panel (Academic Framework Regulations C4.5 refers). The submission of an Extenuating Circumstances application, even within the required timescale, is not in itself a guarantee that the application will be accepted. Consideration is given to a full range of factors including the nature of the circumstance, the proximity to the assessment and any prior mitigation that may have been given.

The Extenuating Circumstances Panel will determine the validity of the application in relation to the specified criteria (Academic Framework Regulations C4.4 refers) and the corroborating evidence presented by the student. The Panel will determine whether there is evidence that timely, severe, acute and unexpected circumstances have occurred which has prevented the student from attempting an assessment.

7.1. **Consideration of Late Extenuating Circumstances applications**

In considering Late Extenuating Circumstances applications, the Extenuating Circumstances Panel will determine in the first instance whether the justification for late submission is valid or not. If the reason for late submission is valid then the standard Extenuating Circumstances procedures will apply. That is the Extenuating Circumstances Panel will then consider whether there is evidence that timely, severe, acute and unexpected circumstances have occurred which has prevented the student from attempting an assessment. The decision of the Panel will be then as outlined in section 8.

Where the Extenuating Circumstances Panel does not accept the justification for late submission this ends consideration of the application.

8. **Outcomes of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel**

Students must be aware that if the Extenuating Circumstances application is accepted this will NOT result in a change of module mark.

The decision of the Extenuating Circumstances Panels will be notified to students. All decisions of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel will be reported to the Board of Examiners.
Valid Extenuating Circumstances Applications:

If the Extenuating Circumstances application is determined as valid then the assessment will be deferred to the next appropriate opportunity where a student has not attempted the assessment affected by Extenuating Circumstances. Where a student has attempted the assessment affected by Extenuating Circumstances then the mark will stand and consideration of the Extenuating Circumstances application is ended.

A student may be deferred following an Extenuating Circumstances application only once per module attempt, save for extraordinary circumstances in which case the Board of Examiners may reserve power to award a subsequent deferral.

Invalid Extenuating Circumstances Applications

Where the Extenuating Circumstances Panel does not accept that the student has experienced timely, severe, acute and unexpected circumstances this ends consideration of the Extenuating Circumstances application.

9. Request for Deferred Consideration of Module Assessment

What is Deferred Consideration?

Exceptionally, where a pre-scheduled event will prevent a student from attempting a module assessment [such as Jury service or a medical procedure for example] the student may request that consideration of their performance is deferred until the subsequent assessment opportunity. This is known as Deferred Consideration and is covered by the procedures outlined below.

Making an Application

Exceptionally, if a scheduled event will prevent a student from attempting a module assessment event, the student may request a deferral of that assessment event until the next assessment opportunity. (For example: jury service, medical treatment, TA military service etc.)

To request a deferral until the subsequent assessment opportunity, a student must complete the Request for Deferred Consideration of Module Assessment form which is available online via the My LJMU portal https://my.ljmu.ac.uk/.

Independent and verifiable evidence MUST be provided with the application and should be submitted to your Programme Leader, normally no later than two weeks prior to the assessment event.

The Programme Leader will liaise with two other members of staff, normally the Chair of the Board of Examiners and relevant Faculty Registrar to determine whether reasonable grounds have been presented.

If the request for Deferred Consideration is accepted:

• The Board of Examiners will be notified that the consideration of the student’s module attempt is to be deferred until the next assessment opportunity.

If the request for Deferred Consideration is not accepted:

• The student will be notified that the deferred consideration has not been agreed and s/he is expected to undertake the assessment as originally scheduled.
10. **Special Mitigation**

**What is Special Mitigation?**

A student who declares themselves ‘fit to attempt’ at the start of a time-limited summative assessment item but whose performance was adversely and seriously affected by circumstances that occurred during the assessment to such an extent that the assessment item could not be completed, may submit a claim for ‘special mitigation’.

**Making a Special Mitigation claim**

Claims for special mitigation must be submitted within 5 working days of the assessment item attempt. The Extenuating Circumstances Panel will corroborate the details of the claim with staff present at the assessment event. Special Mitigation claim forms are available online via the My LJMU portal [https://my.ljmu.ac.uk/](https://my.ljmu.ac.uk/).

**Outcomes**

In the case of a valid special mitigation application, as determined by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel, the assessment item attempt is either:

- Declared null and void, deferred to the next appropriate opportunity and reported to the Board of Examiners or
- The module leader will assign a mark for the assessment item where there is sufficient evidence to do so and where this is approved by the Chair of the Board of Examiners.

A student may be deferred following an extenuating circumstances or special mitigation application once only per module attempt, save for extraordinary circumstances in which case the Board of Examiners may exercise a reserve power to award a subsequent deferral, (C4.6) or operate under C4.7.3, provided the minutes record the justification for such exceptional action.

**Further information**

Please contact Academic Registry if you require any further information by calling 0151 231 3289 or emailing [registryservices@ljmu.ac.uk](mailto:registryservices@ljmu.ac.uk).