



south essex college

SKILLS | EDUCATION | CAREERS

**Extenuating Circumstances and
Extension Policy for Students
Studying for Pearson Higher
Nationals at South Essex College
2023-24**

SLT Member Responsible	Adam Fahey
Author of Policy/Procedure	Matthew Twitchett
Original date of Policy	August 2019
Date approved by (EQB)	15 th Sept 2022
Next Review Date	August 2024

South Essex College Group

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES FOLLOWING REVIEW

11th August 2023

**Extenuating Circumstances and Extension Policy for Students
Studying for Pearson Higher Nationals at South Essex College 2023-24**

Page Number or Heading Name	Details of significant change	Changes made by
Throughout	Changed to titles of staff	Matthew Twitchett
3 and 4	Equality Impact Assessment added	Sharon Dunphy

Equality Impact Assessment

The aim of an equality impact assessment (EIA) is to consider the equality implications of any new or amended policy, procedure, practice, project, function on different groups of staff, students and visitors to the college. This EIA tool provides a simple framework that helps evaluate whether the change may inadvertently disadvantage protected characteristics and identify ways to proactively advance and promote equality.

You will need to consider each of the equations and provide information as to consideration and any changes made in relation to Equality, diversity and inclusion.

Date EIA completed.	11 th August 2023
Name of person responsible for completing the EIA	Sharon Dunphy
Role of person responsible for completing the EIA	Head of Quality and Compliance
Who is affected by the policy / decision / change	Students and Staff
What's the reason for the new policy / change in policy, practice, process etc.	This is a yearly review and update required by awarding organisations

You will need to consider whether its possible that the proposed new policy / change in policy /procedure/practice etc could discriminate or unfairly discriminate or disadvantage people. You should consider:

Who gets to participate	Who does not, or who now does not due to the changes proposed / made.
Who is at an advantage	Who is at a disadvantage, and again has this changed?
Who will benefit	Who will not benefit (or who did and now doesn't due to the changes proposed in policy
Who can access the policy	Who cannot, or now cannot.

Protected Characteristic	What degree of impact does the change have (score 1-5 with one being lowest impact and 5 being the highest)	What is a potential positive, neutral or negative impact? Include what you have considered. Are there any barriers?	What action will be taken to address any negative impact or remove any potential barriers identified? Note if we are not able to resolve anything identified.	Date by when and whom will this action be taken.
Age	1	None identified		
Disability	2	Some students with a disability may need support in understanding the policy. This will be provided by the student support teams in the College.	Students with an identified disability can seek support from the college student support team.	As and when required
Gender (Sex)	1	None identified		
Gender Reassignment	2	A student undergoing medical intervention may not be able to submit an EC form within 10 days of assessment deadline	Student to send medical evidence as to the reason they were unable to send in an EC form within 10 days of deadline and the college will allow an extension.	As and when required
Marriage or Civil Partnership	1	None identified		
Pregnancy / Maternity	2	A student undergoing medical intervention may not be able to submit an EC form within 10 days of assessment deadline	Student to send medical evidence as to the reason they were unable to send in an EC form within 10 days of deadline and the college will allow an extension.	As and when required
Race	1	None identified		
Religion or Religious Belief	2	A student on a religious holiday may not be able to submit an EC form within 10 days of assessment deadline	Student to send evidence as to the reason they were unable to send in an EC form within 10 days of deadline and the college will allow an extension.	As and when required
Sexual Orientation	1	None identified		
Any other element that needs to be considered.	1	None identified		

Note:

1. The terms stated under protected characteristics are the terminology used in the Equality Act 2010. As part of the policy approval process Executive Board will consider the EIA assessment and any potential barriers which we may not be able to overcome and whether the action proposed will mitigate sufficiently within legislation or whether we decide to not implement the new policy if the risk are significant. If the policy is approved the EIA is also approved

1. Extenuating Circumstances

You should consider whether you should request an extension or extenuating circumstances.

A request for an extension should be made prior to the assessment deadline and should be approved by your tutor. Extension can only be authorised for legitimate reasons such as illness at the time of submission. Students are required to complete an extension to deadline request form which can be access from the HE policies website page.

[HE Policies, Procedures and Downloads | South Essex College](#)

An extenuating circumstance request should be completed if the student has submitted late or not at all and not completed a request for an extension. The student must be able to provide evidence for their extenuating circumstance.

Extenuating circumstances (EC) are circumstances beyond your control which cause you to perform less well in your coursework, tests, practical's or examinations than you might have expected. In general, extenuating circumstances will be of a medical or personal nature that affect you for any significant period of time and/or during the assessment period.

It is important to realise that only the most serious extenuating circumstances will have any significant impact on your overall performance. Therefore, the Assessment Board is unlikely to take any action unless it believes that the extenuating circumstances have had a material effect on your academic performance.

The Assessment Board can only make judgements about the impact of extenuating circumstances in light of evidence of your academic ability demonstrated in non-affected work. Boards cannot make judgements about your potential to have gained a higher grade if there is no evidence in the rest of your performance to support this. Furthermore, unless it appears that the extenuating circumstances have had a material effect on your results, the Assessment Board is unlikely to take any action. You should therefore consider this carefully before submitting a form (see also how the Board assesses extenuating circumstances claims).

There are three categories of EC claims which are provided (see Appendix 1 for information):

- A: acceptable reasons for claim with required evidence;
- B: reasons for claim that may be considered (with additional evidence);
- C: reasons that we would normally consider as unacceptable.

2. How do I inform the Assessment Board?

It is your responsibility to inform the Assessment Board about extenuating circumstances. You can do this by completing an extenuating circumstances form

which will be considered by an Extenuating Circumstances panel who will then make recommendations to the Assessment Board regarding the effect your circumstances have had on your performance (including non-submission of work).

The extenuating circumstance form must be completed and submitted with 10 working days of the published deadline of the assessment.

If you are requesting an extension for a deadline, this must be received prior to the deadline of the assessment.

Although you may have previously discussed your difficulties with staff in your department, this does not in itself constitute the submission of extenuating circumstances. You must formally submit an extenuating circumstances form for the Assessment Board to consider; informal notification will not be considered by the Board. You need to complete an extenuating circumstances form which must be returned to the location stated above by the published deadline. We cannot guarantee that forms submitted after this date will be referred to the Extenuating Circumstances Panel or sent directly to the Assessment Board.

It is essential to inform the Board of any extenuating circumstances before it meets because you cannot subsequently appeal against any decision of the Assessment Board on the grounds of extenuating circumstances if you could reasonably have been expected to inform the Board in advance. It is also your responsibility to explain fully the impact of extenuating circumstances on your work. If you do not sufficiently explain their impact then you cannot subsequently appeal and ask the Board to consider additional information

Extenuating Circumstances claims should be submitted within 10 working days of the deadline of the assessment. These assessment deadlines are given on the form and in the Assessment Year Planner available in your Handbook and on the website under HE policies and procedures. All claims for extenuating circumstances must be anonymous and students must use their ID number.

Extenuating Circumstances Form must be emailed to HNECpanel@southessex.ac.uk. These will be date stamped when received and a receipt will normally be sent to your College email account within 10 working days of receipt.

Commented [SD1]: Email address correct?

Extension to Deadline of Course work

Students will only be given authorised extensions for legitimate such as illness at the time of submission. A student will need to formally apply for an extension if they have genuine reasons for not meeting a deadline. If an extension is granted, the new deadline must be recorded and adhered to. Students are required to complete an extension to deadline request form which can be access from the HE policies website page.

[HE Policies, Procedures and Downloads | South Essex College](#)

Extension requests must be made prior to the assessment deadline and will be formally approved by the tutor. The duration of extensions will be consistent across all

students and will not be after summative feedback has been issued to the other students on the programme.

All extensions granted by the tutor or EC panel will be recorded and made available at the Assessment Board and to the External Examiner (EE). Recording details of extensions enables the Assessment Board and the EE to confirm that the programme is operating consistently in accordance with the centre's and Pearson's policies and guidance.

Whilst applications for deadline extensions are under consideration, students should not assume that the extension will be approved and should continue to plan to submit by the published deadline. If a decision is still pending by the submission date, students may wish to continue to work in anticipation of an approved extension.

3. What is an Extenuating Circumstances Panel?

All decisions on action to be taken on claims for extenuating circumstances are the responsibility of the Assessment Board for the programme of study. Recommendations for action are made to the Assessment Board by an Extenuating Circumstances Panel.

The Extenuating Circumstances Panel membership normally comprises of Head of Quality and Compliance Manager, Relevant Course Programme Leader a representative from Student Support Services. All members must be independent of the programme of study of the claimant.

The Extenuating Circumstances Panel will consider extenuating circumstances, requests for extensions relating to assessment performance, the non-submission of coursework and other extenuating circumstances affecting the academic year. The panel will make appropriate recommendations to the Assessment Board.

The Extenuating Circumstances Panel will normally meet monthly during the academic year. The Extenuating Circumstances Panel may request additional supporting evidence, where not provided fully, and will categorise the extenuating circumstances as follows:

- Extenuating circumstances which are sufficiently serious to make a decision to defer an assessment (Categories A and B);
- Extenuating circumstances which are not deemed sufficiently serious to make a deferral of assessment appropriate (Category C).

4. How much information do I need to include?

You should include on the form details of specific coursework, practical or tests affected by your extenuating circumstances. Make sure you explain the impact these circumstances had on your performance. It is not the role of the Assessment Board to try to work this out or to seek further information on your behalf. Make your submission clear and concise. Remember that Extenuating Circumstances Panel and the Assessment Board are trying to determine whether the circumstances are likely to have significantly affected your academic performance.

5. What documentary evidence do I need to provide?

See guidance provided in the appendix 1 on evidence required for extenuating circumstances claims.

You are required to submit documentary evidence to support claims of a medical or non-medical nature relating to absence from examinations/invigilated tests, or related to an individual coursework assignment. It is your responsibility to get this evidence as the College will not seek it on your behalf. A Medical Evidence Pro-forma is attached to the form for you to use if, having read the following guidelines and appendix, you believe that you need to supply medical evidence to support your claim.

Timed Assessment

If you miss an timed assessment or an invigilated test due to illness or are claiming to have been affected by medical problems during your assessment, you must seek medical attention on the day or as near to it as possible, and you must submit documentary evidence. The evidence must relate specifically to the time of the illness and must make it clear that you were medically unfit to take the assessment.

Coursework

You are required to submit documentary evidence to support claims of a medical or non-medical nature. In many cases the Assessment Board may judge that a short-term or minor illness has not had a significant effect on your overall performance.

Serious or long-term illnesses affecting coursework

If you have been receiving treatment for a serious or long-term medical condition which you believe has seriously affected your work over a prolonged period, you must submit appropriate evidence. You should be able to obtain evidence from your doctor using the Medical Evidence Pro-forma.

6. What circumstances are NOT taken into account?

See guidance provided in the appendix on unacceptable reasons for extenuating circumstances claims.

It is not possible to list every circumstance that the Assessment Board would not accept or take into account. However some of the more obvious examples are listed below:

- claims submitted after the deadline, unless there are good reasons why this is the case.
- general pressure of work is not taken to be circumstances beyond your control, as you are expected to plan your work schedule
- a short-term problem or illness which has occurred during the year and which is not deemed to have had an overall effect on your performance

- personal disruptions or events which could have been anticipated; such as holidays, weddings, changing address or employment, religious holidays or festivals which are usually known in advance
- excessive demands on time or pressure of one's employment, which could have been anticipated
- financial constraints commonly experienced by students
- missing an examination practical because you misread the timetable or overslept
- having more than one examination / practical on the same day or on consecutive days (unless you were already suffering from illness or injury)
- where extenuating circumstances have affected you throughout your time at College it is difficult to determine what your marks might have been like otherwise. In such cases, the Assessment Board is unlikely to take any action

7. What is an Assessment Board ?

The Assessment Board will receive the recommendation from the Extenuating Circumstances Panel in respect of submitted extenuating circumstances. The Assessment Board will consider the decision(s) advised by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel and discuss appropriate action in respect of the students.

8. How are extenuating circumstances judged by an Assessment Board?

The Assessment Board will try to determine whether, and to what extent, extenuating circumstances have affected your academic performance, and determine what action, if any, can be taken. In assessing the significance of extenuating circumstances, Boards will normally take into account:

- the severity of the problem and the length of time involved;
- any supporting documentary evidence;
- whether all work in the same period appears to have been equally affected;
- whether it is possible to gauge the effect of the extenuating circumstances upon academic performance;
- whether your achievement is consistent with past performance;
- the type of assessment affected, and how long you had to complete the work (i.e. date when work set and deadline for submission).

Boards cannot estimate what your grade might have been.

9. What action can the Assessment Board take?

The Assessment Board will try to ensure a fair result based on your overall performance. It could take a number of actions as follows:-

The Board will either agree or discuss the recommendations of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel or discuss a particular case in detail as necessary at their meetings. Discussion will normally be brief and concentrated on those cases that require further careful consideration, usually because the extenuating circumstances may have adversely affected the student's final unit grade.

If the Assessment Board accepts the extenuating circumstance(s) , the mitigation will normally be permission for the student to be assessed in the work in question as if for the first time. Such a student is deemed "Deferred".

If the student fails the deferred assessment, any re - assessment will be in accordance with current College Regulations

10.What action will not be taken by Assessment Board ?

- a) Permit a student who presents extenuating circumstances to proceed to the next year of study if he or she has not met the necessary requirements, unless the examiners are satisfied that it is appropriate to do so on academic grounds;
- b) Permit students to fail a core unit or fail any published variations to the rules of assessment;
- c) Annotate statement of results/transcripts with comments about the existence of extenuating circumstances.

11.False Claims

You should note that submitting a false claim or false documentation is a serious matter and would be regarded as an attempt to gain unfair advantage. This would be an academic offence and would be dealt with under the Academic Offences Procedures. The College reserves the right to check on the validity of the document (s) you submit by contacting the third party directly.

12.Data Protection Act 1998

By submitting an extenuating circumstances form you are agreeing to the College holding this personal data for the purposes of processing your claim. The College will hold this data in accordance with its notification under the Data Protection Act 1998.

13.Equality Act 2010

If you find that you are unable to submit a hard copy of the Extenuating Circumstances Form, you can submit it electronically. You should submit the form and evidence by the published deadline to HNECpanel@southessex.ac.uk.

If you have any queries about a claim which has been rejected, please contact your department to request further information. You can also discuss this feedback with staff in HE Student Support Services if you believe that your individual needs have not been understood or adequately taken into account.

If you are providing information about your disability on your extenuating circumstances form, please note that this does not count as disclosure to the College as these forms are intended for use only by the Assessment Board. We strongly urge you to disclose any persistent medical condition, specific learning difficulty or disability to Student Services.

14. Where can I get more guidance?

If after having read these notes you feel you need more help in putting forward your extenuating circumstances, you should contact HE Student Support Services or Personal Tutor.

If you require feedback on the way in which the Assessment Board has handled your extenuating circumstances claim, you can ask for feedback after the results have been released by contacting your department or Student Services.

Appendix 1

Extenuating Circumstances Categories

The following guidance has been produced to help clarify what can be accepted as extenuating circumstances and the evidence required to support a claim. There are three categories, (A, B and C) set out below that should be consulted before completion of an Extenuating Circumstances Form, available from the College website.

Category A: Acceptable reason for claim

Category A lists reasons that normally will be considered as acceptable reasons for submitting an extenuating circumstances claim and the appropriate evidence required to support the claim.

Category B: Reasons for claim that may be considered

Category B lists reasons that that may be considered as acceptable reasons for extenuating circumstances and the appropriate evidence required to support the claim.

Category C: Unacceptable reasons for claim

Category C lists reasons that would normally be considered as unacceptable reasons for extenuating circumstances.

Reason for EC Claim:	Category A: Acceptable reason	Category A: Evidence required	Category B: Reasons that may be considered	Category B: Evidence required	Category C: Unacceptable reason
Serious Medical Condition	Serious personal injury, medical condition or mental health difficulty preventing attendance or completion of assessment or submission of work	Written evidence from a registered medical practitioner	Serious injury or illness to child, partner or close relative (parent) Serious worsening or acute episode of an ongoing medical condition, mental health difficulty or	Written evidence of impact to claimant from registered medical practitioner	Ongoing medical conditions, disabilities, learning difficulties or mental health conditions, for which the student is already receiving reasonable and appropriate adjustments unless

			disability		<p>there is evidence of this condition worsening or 'flaring up'</p> <p>Minor illnesses or injuries (such as colds, headaches, hay fever)</p>
Bereavement	Death of close relative/significant other (of a nature which, in an employment context, would have led to an absence in accordance with the compassionate leave regulations)	<p>Written evidence from a professional such as Undertaker, Coroner or Registrar</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Death Certificate</p>	Death of close relative (not identified in Category A) or friend	Evidence identified in Category A AND Written evidence of impact to claimant from registered medical practitioner	
Trauma	<p>Victim of serious crime (e.g. assault, sexual assault, mugging)</p> <p>Theft of work/computer equipment/materials required for assessment</p>	<p>Written corroboration of reported crime from Police or other investigating authority</p> <p>Written evidence from registered medical practitioner, Police,</p>	Family breakdown (such as divorce)	<p>Evidence from Solicitor AND/OR</p> <p>Written evidence of impact to claimant from registered medical practitioner</p>	<p>Minor crime</p> <p>Financial problems or employment difficulties</p> <p>Accommodation problems or house moves</p> <p>General domestic / family problems</p>

	Direct experience of terrorist incident or natural disaster Major fire in residence	Fire service or University Department (Estates)			Assessment/Test stress
Caring Responsibilities			Unexpected caring responsibilities caused by sudden serious illness or worsening of ongoing medical condition to child, partner or close relative	Written evidence from patient's registered medical practitioner AND Written evidence of impact to claimant from registered medical practitioner	Ongoing caring responsibilities Caring responsibilities for minor illnesses, accidents or injuries
Court Attendance	Jury service or attendance at court or tribunal as a witness, defendant or plaintiff	Official correspondence from Court or Tribunal Authority			
Miscellaneous			Serious disruption caused by terrorist incident or natural disaster	Evidence of serious disruption to travel or other plans preventing attendance at or completion of assessment or submission of work AND/OR written evidence of impact to claimant from registered medical	Any circumstances which have not clearly impacted on academic performance or do not clearly relate to the timing of the assessment Visa problems Failure of IT

				practitioner	equipment or poor working practises – failure to back up work for example. Minor private or public transport failure, holidays or booked travel arrangements Not realising/remembering dates of deadlines
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