

# **Extenuating Circumstances and Special Considerations Procedures**

## **QUA 21**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Date of 1<sup>st</sup> Issue</b>	<b>Last Reviewed</b>	<b>Date of Next Review</b>	<b>Responsibility of</b>
05	Sept 2015	March 2023	August 2024	Quality Manager

This document can also be produced in alternative formats upon request.

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## 1. Purpose

Awarding organisations and the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), require the College to have an internal procedure to handle students' extenuating circumstances which may arise during assessment. This document explains what does, and does not constitute an 'extenuating circumstance', how a student may declare an extenuating circumstance, and how staff should handle this.

## 2. Scope

This document applies to all students and staff within the Northern Regional College.

Note that in exceptional times, such as global pandemics, the use of exceptional circumstances and special considerations may be adapted or removed in line with awarding organisation guidance.

## 3. Definitions

**Pre-examination** or **pre-assessment** in this document means prior to the student completing work or sitting an exam at the set time.

**Post-examination** or **post-assessment** in this document means after the student has completed work or sat an exam at the set time, but where outcomes have not been claimed.

**Extenuating circumstances** are temporary situations beyond a student's control, which may at the time of assessment affect them from submitting a piece of work on time or attending an exam on a predetermined date.

**Special consideration** is a post-examination/post-assessment adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade. It should not give a student an unfair advantage and must be made before an outcome is claimed. It may be applied to reflect temporary illness, temporary injury or some other event/indisposition outside of the candidates control at the time of examination/assessment. Not all requests for special consideration will be accepted; it will be dependent on the qualification, the assessment, the circumstances presented and the awarding organisations regulations. Special considerations must be approved by the awarding organisation. In some cases it may be deemed more appropriate for a student to take the assessment at a later date.

**Reasonable adjustment** is for students who have an impairment which affects his/her learning, and/or requires additional support for assignments and exams. Advice and support should be obtained from Student Support services at the College. Information is available on the Student Hub under 'Education Support'.

#### 4. Examples of Extenuating Circumstances

The following are examples of extenuating circumstances that will, and will not, be accepted. The examples below are neither prescriptive nor exhaustive; each extenuating circumstances will be considered on an individual basis and at the discretion of the course team.

Acceptable Extenuating Circumstances	Extenuating Circumstances which will not be accepted
temporary ill health / hospital inpatient / accident	medical appointments e.g. dentist, GP Medical –self-certification’
bereavement of a near relative at the time of assessment	bereavement which occurred more than 6 months before the assessment
significant adverse family circumstances	holidays and family celebrations
significant adverse personal circumstances e.g. sudden illness, car accident, clash with another exam	sporting / music / learning to drive commitments students not managing their time appropriately
significant adverse domestic upheaval e.g. burglary, fire, eviction	moving house
significant travel disruption severe weather conditions e.g. heavy snow	missing a bus / train
requests from College placement providers for additional support	employment commitments /part time work that limit the time available to complete assignments / exams
attendance at court (if over 18)	failure of personal IT devices e.g. USB pen not working, printer ink running out

#### 5. Timeframe for Extenuating Circumstances

If a student is **already aware of extenuating circumstances** which will mean:

- he/she will not be able to submit an assignment on the submission date; or,
- he/she will not be able to sit an exam on the exam date;

The student should submit an EC1 Form as soon as possible and at least **5 working days before** the submission/exam date.

If a student:

- is handing in an assignment **after the submission date** and wishes to let staff know of extenuating circumstances which may have caused this; or
- has **missed an exam on the exam date** and wish to let staff know of the extenuating circumstances which may have caused this;

The student should submit an EC1 Form **within 5 working days** of the submission date/exam date.

In extraordinary circumstances, where a student is incapacitated and unable to complete a EC1 Form within 5 days of the submission date/exam date, it may be possible to extend this date until the student is capable of doing so.

## 6. Declaring Extenuating Circumstances – Procedure for Students

### Completing the EC1 Form

Students can access an Extenuating Circumstances Form (EC1) on the Student Hub. Students may also obtain an EC1 from his/her Lecturer. It is a student's responsibility to make the College aware of extenuating circumstances – this is only possible through the completion of the EC1 Form.

Students should be aware that Information regarding their extenuating circumstances will be passed to the relevant staff within the College so that the request may be considered. Personal details and information will be dealt with in a professional and sensitive manner and in accordance with UK GDPR. Details of extenuating circumstances will be securely held to satisfy external quality assurance activities.

Please see Appendix 1 for Guidance in completing the EC1 Form.

### Submission of the EC1 Form

Completed EC1 Forms should be submitted to the Course Coordinator

- **5 working days before** the submission/exam date where a student is already aware of extenuating circumstances
- **within 5 working days** of the submission date/exam date if the extenuating circumstances were not known in advance.

### Outcome of EC1 Form

The Course Coordinator will inform you of the outcome of your extenuating circumstances request (EC1 Form) after it has been discussed by the team and at the necessary progression board/exam board.

The outcome of your request cannot be appealed. If however you believe that there has been a procedural error in the administration of you request, please refer to the College's Complaints Policy.

## 7. Extenuating Circumstances – Procedure for Staff

- 7.1.1 Lecturers must make students aware of the extenuating circumstances, where they may be used and how they may be applied for.
- 7.1.2 The Course Coordinator should check requirements for extenuating circumstances with the awarding organisation.
- 7.1.3 Students may be required to complete a **separate** EC1 Form for each unit/ module/ exam affected by extenuating circumstances.
- 7.1.4 The Course Coordinator should acknowledge receipt of the extenuating circumstances form within 5 working days (please refer to Appendix 2).
- 7.1.5 The course team must adhere to UK GDPR when sharing information.
- 7.1.6 The Course Coordinator must discuss the EC1 form and the student's request with the course team within 5 working days of acknowledgement. The meeting must be recorded in Minutes (please refer to Appendix 3). The course team may also discuss the request at the progression board/exam board, if applicable.
- 7.1.7 In considering an EC1 form and request, the course team may consider:
  - student attendance and past grades;
  - the severity of the extenuating circumstances presented;
  - the length of time involved;
  - any other evidence.
- 7.1.8 The Course Coordinator must inform a student of the outcome of his/her request, in writing, within 5 working days of the course team meeting/progression board/exam board meeting.
- 7.1.9 The Course Coordinator must inform the student that the outcome of his/her extenuating circumstances request is final and cannot be appealed (please refer to Appendix 4).
- 7.1.10 The Course Coordinator must securely store/save the **EC1** form, **Minutes** of meeting and **response** to student in accordance with the Records Retention Policy and UK GDPR. Details of extenuating circumstances may be required for external quality assurance activities.

## 8. Special Consideration – Procedure for Students

Students can access a Special Considerations Form (SC1) on the Student Hub. Students may also obtain an SC1 from his/her Lecturer. It is a student's responsibility to make the College aware of special consideration – this is only possible through the completion of the SC1 Form.

The SC1 Form must be submitted:

- **immediately** after handing in a piece of work;
- **immediately** after sitting an exam.

Students should be aware that information on their SC1 Form will be passed to the relevant staff within the College and the awarding organisation so that the request may be considered.

Not all requests for special consideration will be accepted; it will be dependent on the qualification, the assessment, the circumstances presented and the awarding organisations regulations.

Personal details and information will be dealt with in a professional and sensitive manner and in accordance with UK GDPR. Details of special consideration will be securely held to satisfy external quality assurance activities.

## 9. Special Consideration – Procedure for Staff

- 9.1.1 Lecturers must make students aware of the special considerations option, where it may be used, and how they may be applied for.
- 9.1.2 The Course Coordinator must check requirements regarding special consideration with the awarding organisation.
- 9.1.3 Students may be required to complete a **separate** SC1 Form for each unit/ module/ exam for which that wish special consideration to be requested.
- 9.1.4 The Course Coordinator should acknowledge receipt of the SC1 Form immediately (see Appendix 2).
- 9.1.5 With consideration to awarding organisation guidance, and if in agreement with the student request for special consideration, the Course Coordinator will forward the SC1 Form to Exams and Quality immediately.
- 9.1.6 If in agreement with the student request, Quality will forward the request to the Head of Centre or member of SLT for them to authorise submission to the awarding organisation.
- 9.1.7 If authorised, Exams will contact the awarding organisation regarding the special consideration request within 5 working days using the [JCQ Form 10](#)

## 10. Quality Assurance

- 7.1. Comments and complaints regarding this document will be handled through the College's comments and complaints mechanisms. If you have a comment or complaint, or require further information regarding the process, please e-mail [quality.improvement@nrc.ac.uk](mailto:quality.improvement@nrc.ac.uk).
- 7.2. The following processes must be followed to monitor and review this document:
- a. It will be monitored on an ongoing basis and subject to a full review at least every two years.
  - b. It may also be updated if changes or improvements in processes or procedures are identified.
  - c. In monitoring and reviewing the document, the following will be taken into consideration:
    - Feedback regarding the content and format of the document;
    - Uptake and usage;
    - Comments or complaints regarding the document;
    - Equality information and monitoring data.

## 11. Links to other Documents

### 8.1. Internal Documents:

- Extenuating Circumstances Form – Supplement 1 – EC1 Form
- Special Considerations Form – Supplement 2 – SC1 Form
- Records Retention Policy
- Student Assessment Appeals Policy
- Complaints Policy

### 8.2. External Documents:

- QAA Quality Code



## Appendix 1: EC1 Form Guidance for Students

### Part 1: Personal Details

- This part of the form requires you to give your name, course title, module/unit/exam title and name of your Course Coordinator. Please give specific details.

### Part 2: Details of Extenuating Circumstances

- This part of the form requires you to give details of your extenuating circumstances.
- It is your responsibility to complete the EC1 Form with all relevant information to allow the course team/achievement and progression board/exam board, to arrive at a decision.
- Failure to provide full and valid reasons with applicable supporting evidence (please see Part 3 below) may affect the decision of the course team/achievement and progression board/exam board, and hence your overall grade/result.

**Please Note:** If you require help or advice completing the EC1 Form please contact Student Support or a member of staff.

### Part 3: Supporting Evidence

- This part of the form requires you to state whether you have evidence to support your extenuating circumstances i.e. evidence to support what you have said in part 2.
- If you have supporting evidence, you should list what you have included or attached to your EC1 form.
- Examples of acceptable forms of evidence include:
  - medical certificate
  - hospital letter
  - hospital discharge letter
  - letter from doctor
  - letter from police service
  - letter from solicitor
  - jury service notice
  - letter from travel operator
  - letter from insurance copy
  - Exam Board entry slip
  - Written evidence from placement provider

**Please Note:** Medical 'Self Certification' is not acceptable.

### Part 4: Your Request

- This part of the form asks you what you are requesting i.e. your desired outcome.
- Completion and submission of an Extenuating Circumstances Form does not mean your request (i.e. your desired outcome) will be granted.
- You may request the following:
  - an extension to the submission deadline;
  - a request to resubmit an assignment within the rules and regulations of the Awarding Body;

- a request to sit an exam paper as a 'first sit' i.e. a first sit would entitle you to a re-sit if you did not pass;
- other – if you have other requests please provide details on the EC1 form.

**Please Note:** that lecturers/assessors will not allocate marks to assignments or exams to compensate for extenuating circumstances.

#### Part 5: Declaration

- This part of the form asks for your signature to say that the information you have provided is true and accurate.
- If you are under 18 years of age, please sign the form, but also ask a parent or guardian to sign the form.

**Please Note:** false claims will be deemed as malpractice and could result in disciplinary action.

## **Appendix 2: Acknowledgement Template**

Dear [student name]

As Course Coordinator for [course title] I wish to acknowledge receipt of your Extenuating Circumstances Form/Special Consideration Form [delete as appropriate].

I will share and discuss your request with the course team and inform you of the outcome within 5 working days of our meeting.

Yours sincerely,  
[Course Coordinator name]

### Appendix 3: Extenuating Circumstances Meeting - Minutes Template

If extenuating circumstances are discussed prior to an Exam Board, then the meeting must be recorded using this template:

Programme title	
Course Coordinator	
Date of Meeting	
Time of Meeting	
In attendance	
Have all staff read the procedure for extenuating circumstances?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Student/s Name	Evidence provided (yes/no)	Student Request (extension / re-submission / exam first sit / other)	Outcome (granted / not granted)	Reason for team's decision:

#### **Appendix 4: Response to student:**

Dear [student name]

As Course Coordinator for [course title] I wish to inform you of the outcome of your Extenuating Circumstances request.

After a team meeting on [date] it has been agreed that your request has been:

Granted and I will be in contact with you regarding arrangements for your extension date / resubmission / exam first sit

Or

Not granted due to [explanation to be provided]

Please note that this decision is final and that the record of your extenuating circumstance request and outcome will be held on file according to the College's Records Retention Policy and in line with UK GDPR.

If you believe that there has been a procedural error in the administration of your request, please refer to the College's Complaints Policy.

Yours sincerely,

[Course Coordinator name]