

HE Mitigating (Extenuating) Circumstances & Coursework Extension Policy (HNC/HND) 2020-23

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HE Mitigating (Extenuating) Circumstances & Coursework Extension Policy & Form (HNC/HND)

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HE MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES AND COURSEWORK EXTENSION POLICY 2020-23

Policy Statement

Capital City College Group (CCCG) recognises that there may be difficult circumstances that affect a student's ability to meet an assessment deadline or affect their performance in an assessment. These are known as extenuating or mitigating circumstances. Extenuating circumstances are exceptional, unforeseen, seriously adverse and outside of a student's control.

CCCG supports Pearson adaptations to processes to reflect the current exceptional circumstances due to coronavirus (COVID-19). Should a student fall ill with this virus and have to self-isolate, now or at any time, CCCG will make sure that they do not suffer academic disadvantage.

Students will also be allowed to submit individual claims for mitigation that recognise circumstances where their academic performance has been affected by the pandemic.

1. Scope

This policy applies to Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals (HNC/HND) to support students seeking mitigation for assessments or requiring a coursework deadline short extension.

Linked Policies:

- CCCG Pearson HN Assessment Regulations
- CCCG Complaints Policy
- CCCG Assessment Appeals Policy
- CCCG Assessment Malpractice and Maladministration Policy
- CCCG HNC/D Break in Study Guidance
- *Reasonable adjustments*
- *Special Examination (Assessment) Arrangements*

HE Programmes validated by partner universities will follow their academic regulations. Students should consult their HE Programme Handbook for details and refer to the relevant academic regulations on the University website.

This policy is not intended for students who have a disability or an ongoing medical condition. If a student has a disability or ongoing medical condition, we strongly urge the student to contact the Student Support Team in order for reasonable adjustments to be put in place. However, a disabled student may need to request a deferral or extension if, for example, they experience an acute episode or worsening of their condition which means that the reasonable adjustments in place are no longer sufficient.

2. Mitigating Circumstances Definition

Mitigating or extenuating circumstances are **acute, severe and unforeseen** circumstances which are beyond the students' control and which occur immediately before or during the assessment period in question. They adversely affect a student's ability to complete assessments by the published deadline or to underperform in regard to an assessment.

Extenuating circumstances may be of a personal or medical nature and must be accompanied by some form of evidence to validate the claim eg medical certificate. Claims for extenuating circumstances which are submitted without supporting evidence will **not** be considered.

It is the student's responsibility to let CCCG know about any extenuating circumstances that have affected their work at the time they occur. Where appropriate, they can request a short extension or a deferral of assessment to the next assessment period, or their circumstances can be taken into

account by the Assessment Board when making its progression/finalist decision.

Extenuating Circumstances can only be requested for summative assessment that count towards an overall unit grade.

Claims for extenuating circumstances may be made for:

- Non-submission of coursework
- Impaired academic performance in an examination, class-test, presentation etc.
- Non-attendance at an exam(s)

3. Reasonable Adjustments

Where assessment adjustments have already been made (e.g. sheltered examination accommodation, adjustments for students with dyslexia etc) the same reason cannot normally be claimed as an extenuating circumstance.

However, if a disabled student experiences an **acute episode or worsening** of their condition which means that the reasonable adjustments in place are no longer sufficient a deferral or extension can be requested. Completion of the submission form concerning their disability for the first time does not count as disclosure to the College as these forms are for use only by the Assessment Board.

4. Rejection of Claims

A claim for extenuating circumstances **will be rejected** for any of the following reasons. The examples listed are not exhaustive, but refer to the most common reasons for invalidation or rejection of a claim:

- I. The claim is not supported by appropriate documentary evidence;
- II. The claim does not relate, in terms of timing, to the submission or examinations dates concerned.
- III. The claim relates to an ongoing or long-term condition, unless the condition unexpectedly deteriorates immediately before or during the assessment period;
- IV. There are reasonable grounds to believe that the circumstances could have been avoided by the student, or the student could reasonably have been expected to take steps to limit the impact of the circumstances. Examples include: leaving coursework to the last minute; missing the deadline because of computer problems or late transport; missing an examination due to oversleeping; failure to make alternative travel plans when disruptions were known in advance; losing work which had not been backed up (e.g on usb/cloud);
- V. 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
- VI. The claim results from misreading or ignorance of the examination timetable or instructions regarding the submission of coursework;
- VII. There are reasonable grounds to believe that the circumstances described would not have prevented the student from taking the examination(s) and/or submitting the assignment(s) by the published assignment deadline date(s).

5. Deadline for submission

If a student believes that they have been subject to extenuating circumstances they must make a claim no more than 28 calendar days after the affected assessment deadline, although students should submit their claim as soon as they can. The request for extenuating circumstances may apply to more than one assessment, as long as all requests are clearly stated on the extenuating circumstances form.

6. Extenuating Circumstances Panel

An Extenuating Circumstances Panel will consider extenuating circumstances 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 or Progression Board against the guidance. The outcomes of the extenuating circumstances panel may include an agreed extension to a coursework deadline, deferral of assessment to the next opportunity or not uphold a claim.

The Extenuating Circumstances Panel membership normally comprises the Director of Quality (or quality nominee), Curriculum Director and an Academic Staff member. All members must be independent of the programme of study of the claimant (s).

7. Assessment Boards

The College process for submitting and considering claims for extenuating/ mitigating circumstances is designed to be straightforward, independent and robust. For HNC/D programmes, final decisions are made at the Assessment Board, which comprises senior members of staff, including the Pearson External Examiner. The Assessment Board will consider the recommendations by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel and discuss the appropriate action in respect of the students.

Before submitting a claim, students should bear in mind:

- a. An application for extenuating circumstances will only be considered if the circumstances are exceptional; they are outside of the control of the student; and original supporting documentary evidence is provided
- b. The Assessment Board is unlikely to take action unless it believes that the extenuating circumstances have had a material impact on a student's academic performance
- c. Judgements can only be made about the impact of extenuating circumstances where there is sufficient evidence of a student's academic ability demonstrated in non-affected work to support a student's potential for a higher grade

8. Submitting a Claim

Students can make a claim by completing an extenuating circumstances form and attaching supporting evidence to be submitted for consideration by an Extenuating Circumstances Panel for the Assessment Board).

It is a student's responsibility to:

- Ensure that the Assessment Board receives their extenuating circumstances form before it meets because he or she cannot subsequently appeal against a decision on the grounds of extenuating circumstances if he or she could reasonably have been expected to inform the Board in advance.
- Ensure that the form contains sufficient detail to fully support the impact of extenuating circumstances on his or her work as they cannot subsequently appeal to ask the Board to consider additional information that was available at the time of the Board.

The completed form and evidence should be submitted to their programme's course manager who will ensure that they are kept confidentially with the student's file.

The Course Manager will state on the mark sheet(s) to be submitted to the Assessment Board the nomenclature 'MC' for any student who has applied for extenuating circumstances and submit the claim form with supporting evidence for any claims alongside the mark sheets.

Claims for extenuating circumstances will be recorded in the minutes of the Assessment Board.

9. Assessment Board Outcomes

The Assessment Board will agree or further discuss the recommendations of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel. Discussions will be brief, and focused on those claims that require further deliberation, usually because of the material impact the extenuating circumstances may have had on a 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 on the work in question as if for the first time and capping does not apply. Such a student is deemed "Deferred". If the student fails the deferred assessment, any re-assessment will be in accordance with current CCCG/Pearson regulations.

If a claim for mitigating circumstances is not accepted for claims related to non attendance at an examination or non-submission of coursework then capping of the reassessment will be applied under Pearson RQF regulations.

The Assessment Board will not take the following action

- a) Allow a student who presents extenuating circumstances to proceed to the next year of study if he or she has not met the necessary requirements under Pearson rules
- b) Allow students to fail a core unit or fail any published variations to the Pearson rules of assessment combination
- c) Annotate statement of results/transcripts with comments about the existence of extenuating circumstances

Students will be formally informed of the outcome of their claim by email from the Course Manager following the Assessment Board including any actions arising from the outcome.

10. Right of Appeal

A student who wishes to request a review of a decision made by an Assessment Board or a Progression Board should consult the CCCG HN Regulations and the CCCG Assessment Appeals Policy. If the decision is as a result of academic misconduct, the CCCG Assessment Malpractice and Maladministration Policy will provide further appeal details. Students may appeal an outcome on the basis of (new) evidence or procedure, but **not** on the basis of disagreement with academic judgement.

In the case of a rejected claim, the student will be notified in writing (by email) of the reason(s) for rejecting the claim. They should also be informed of their right to request a review of the decision.

Failure by a student, without good cause, to have made a claim for extenuating circumstances, with corroborative evidence by the deadline, will mean that an appeal based on the later disclosure of these circumstances is unlikely to be successful.

A successful appeal results in the Assessment Board reviewing its decision in the light of the new information initially provided by the student. This does not necessarily mean that the original decision of the Assessment Board is changed.

If the claim remains rejected, the student will be notified of the reason(s) for this decision. If rejected, the student will be issued with a CCCG Completion of Procedures email/letter.

The student is then able to escalate their complaint to Pearson and/or The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for review, subject to their rules of eligibility and deadlines for submission.

11. Request for Coursework Extensions

The HE Course Manager is delegated by the Assessment Board to grant an extension of up to one week (5 working calendar days) at their discretion and on receipt of appropriate evidence. Students should apply for an extension directly to their Course Manager 2 weeks prior to the assessment deadline or up to 24 hours following the deadline.

Where extensions have been granted and work submitted by the extended deadline agreed, the work shall be assessed for full marks. All extensions formally granted must be recorded and new deadlines adhered to 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 CCCG's and Pearson's policies and guidance.

12. Fraudulent Claims

It is a serious academic offence to submit a false claim or false documentation as it is regarded as an attempt to gain unfair advantage and therefore will be considered under the CCCG Academic Misconduct Procedures. CCCG reserves the right to check on the validity of the document(s) you submit by contacting the third party directly.

13. Confidentiality

CCCG is committed to complying fully with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018 and will treat all claims for extenuating circumstances with confidentiality subject to the considerations of the law, safeguarding, responsibilities to external partners and other students, fitness to study concerns and health and safety issues.

By submitting a mitigating circumstances form students are agreeing to CCCG holding this personal data for the purposes of processing their claim. If a student wishes to make a request for a specific element of his/her extenuating circumstances claim to remain confidential, this should be indicated on the extenuating circumstances claim form along with a brief rationale so that this can be considered by the panel.

14. Mitigating Circumstances Form

This form is for use by students studying Pearson Edexcel Higher Nationals (HNC/D).

- Your request for extenuating circumstances must be made within 28 working days of the original assessment date. Please submit this form with accompanying evidence to the HE Course Manager. This form can be submitted in hard copy or electronically. It will be considered by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel.
- Your request for extenuating circumstances to support a short extension of up to 5 working calendar days must be submitted at least 2 weeks prior to the assessment deadline or up to 24 hours following the deadline. Please submit this form with accompanying evidence to the HE Course Manager.

Examples of acceptable evidence:

All claims for extenuating circumstances must be supported by appropriate, objective evidence. It is your responsibility to submit evidence along with this form and to provide sufficient details of how the extenuating circumstances have affected your academic performance. Please check with your Course Manager regarding COVID 19 evidence requirements as these may differ.

Acceptable evidence is an original (not a photocopy) signed letter etc. from an appropriate third party

(e.g. GP, hospital consultant, solicitor, police officer, College Counsellor) giving details of the circumstance, its duration and its impact.

Letters from family members or fellow students are not normally acceptable.

If the original document submitted as evidence is not in English, an independent (e.g. from a professional translation service, member of College staff, embassy etc.) translation must also be provided.

All evidence should be relevant to the assessment period in question.

MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES AND COURSE WORK EXTENSION REQUEST FORM

Student details	
<p style="color: red; margin: 0;">Please remain anonymous</p>	<p>Student ID number:</p>
<p>Contact email address:</p>	<p>Contact telephone number:</p>
Details of Mitigating Circumstances request	
<p>Programme title:</p>	
<p>Unit / module code:</p>	<p>Unit / module title:</p>
<p>Assessment type (eg. essay, presentation etc):</p>	<p>Submission deadline/assessment date:</p>
<p>Statement regarding your extenuating circumstances request: <i>(this should be a short explanation concerning your request that fully explains the impact of the extenuating circumstances on your academic performance.. Please remember to attach documentary evidence to substantiate your claim – copies of evidence are not acceptable)</i></p>	
<p>Student signature:</p>	
<p>Date:</p>	

[This Form applies to Pearson HNC/Ds only]