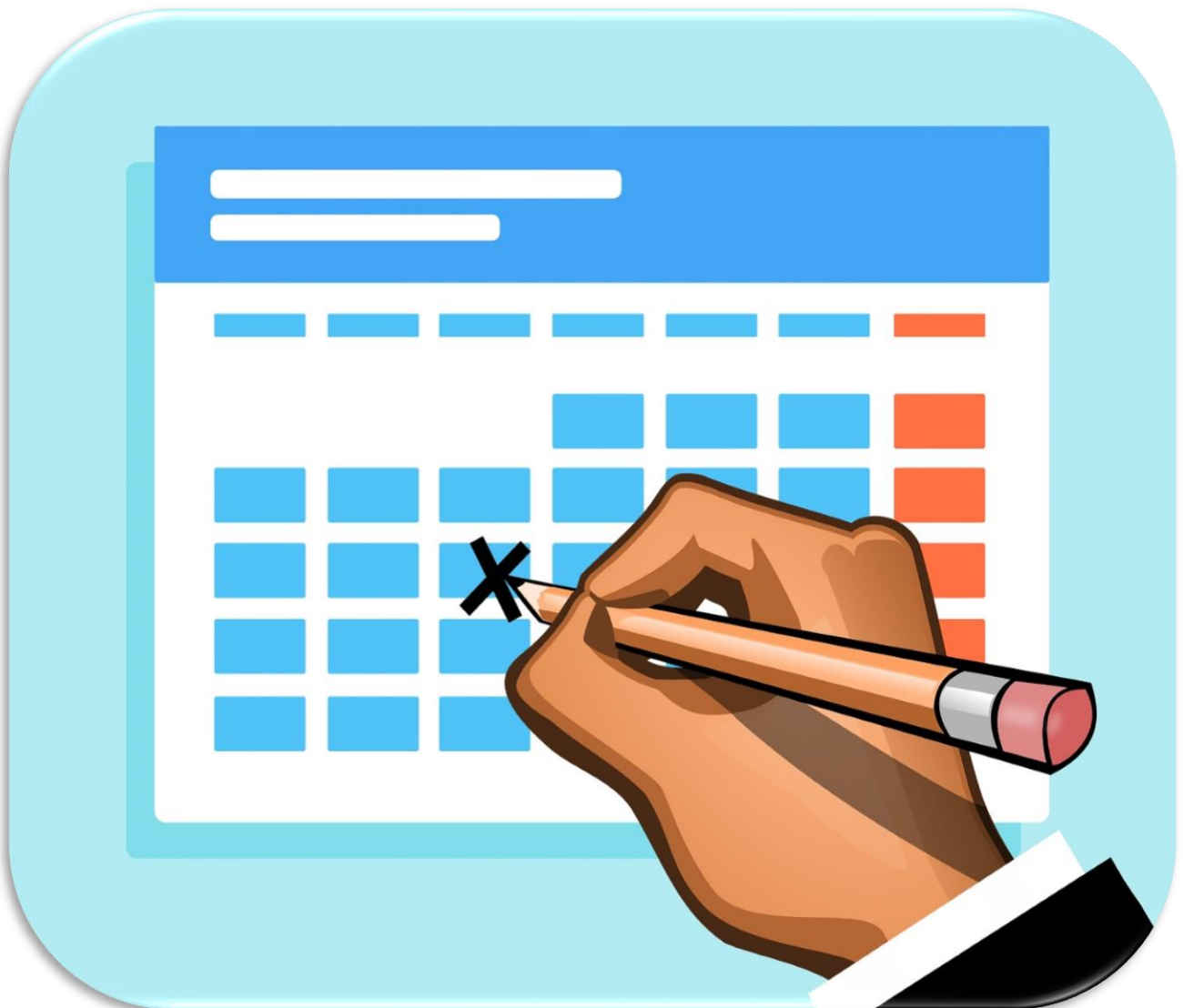


Registry and Student Administration

Policy: Consideration of Personal Circumstances



Version Control

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1. Introduction and Aims

- 1.1 Summative assessment is a key part of a student's academic journey, enabling them to demonstrate the intended learning outcomes of their modules and / or programmes of study. Teaching, learning and support activities, and corresponding assessment deadlines, are structured to ensure students can complete assessments, progress and graduate within the intended timeframes for their programme. Students are expected to engage with their studies and manage their time appropriately, to complete their assessments at the required level and within the deadlines set.
- 1.2 While it is important that students are able to manage minor illness and / or difficult life events at the same time as pursuing their programme of study (just as would be expected in the workplace), the University does recognise that some students may face genuine challenges beyond their control that impact their ability to meet deadlines and / or complete assessments.
- 1.3 This Consideration of Personal Circumstances policy aims to provide a framework for considering such scenarios, and for implementing appropriate measures to support students to complete their assessments and continue their course of study.
- 1.4 The policy aims to ensure that requests for assessment deadline extensions and applications for extenuating circumstances across the University are considered and enacted fairly and consistently, and that all parties are clear on their roles and responsibilities as part of these processes.
- 1.5 The University strives to ensure our policies and procedures are free from bias or the perception of bias. To address this, wherever possible decision maker(s) will not be appointed who:
 - Were directly involved in the assessment that is the subject of the extenuating circumstances claim.
 - Have previously investigated or reached decisions on complaints or appeals from the individual student, or disciplinary or fitness to practise matters involving the student.
 - Have previously been the subject of a formal complaint from the student.
 - Have a close personal connection to the student.
 - Have a personal interest in the outcome of any decision being made.

2. Purpose and Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all students participating in taught programmes and / or modules at the University of Bradford, regardless of qualification level or subject discipline.

- 2.2 For the purposes of this policy, an 'Extension' means a fixed and time-bound extension to a coursework (or related) submission deadline. It does not include requests for additional time in examination (or related) assessments (e.g. timed practical assessments).
- 2.3 For the purposes of this policy, 'Extenuating Circumstances' means a set of rare, severe and / or exceptional circumstances that the student is facing which means they are unable to participate in a particular assessment.
- 2.4 The basic principle of this policy is that if a student attends an examination or submits a piece of coursework, by the initial or extended deadline, they are deeming themselves to be fit and well enough to participate in the assessment process. This is commonly referred to as a 'Fit to Sit / Submit' approach.
- 2.5 The Consideration of Personal Circumstances policy and process is not intended to manage the consideration and implementation of reasonable adjustments due to known and ongoing conditions. Learner Support Profiles and associated reasonable adjustments are considered and managed through the [Disability Advice Service](#).
- 2.6 For postgraduate research students, requests for extensions and / or extenuating circumstances should be discussed between a student and their supervisory team, according to [PGR Progression Regulations and Process](#).

3. Extensions

- 3.1 At the beginning of each module, Module Leaders will set assessment deadlines and these will be communicated to students through module induction information, normally through the relevant module space on the University's Virtual Learning Environment, Canvas.
- 3.2 If a student feels they need an extension for one or more of their assessment deadlines, they are able to submit a request for a standard 7-day deadline extension.
- 3.3 Students should refer to the [Student Guide to Consideration of Personal Circumstances](#) to ensure the extension process is the most appropriate avenue to resolving their assessment submission issues.
- 3.4 In exceptional circumstances students may be permitted an extension beyond the standard 7-days. Students should discuss and gain approval for this from their module leader.
- 3.5 While there is no formal limit to the number of extensions a student can request during their programme of study, students who request multiple extensions in a semester may be contacted by a member of Faculty staff to ensure that any ongoing issues relating to timely submission of assessments are being managed and supported.
- 3.6 Students cannot apply for an extension for a formal examination, which is

held under exam conditions.

Eligible Assessments

- 3.7 Extension requests are possible for the majority of coursework assessments. However, there may be instances where extensions are not possible for certain assignments. This may be, for example, when a deadline is set by, or in agreement with, an external assessor / organisation. Where extension requests are not permitted for certain coursework assessments, this will be communicated to students in module information, assessment briefs and, where applicable, also on submission 'boxes'.
- 3.8 For eligible assessment components, only one extension request of 7-days is permitted per student.

Submitting an Extension Request

- 3.9 Students are encouraged to speak to their personal academic tutor, module leader, or supervisor if they are experiencing difficulties.
- 3.10 Students can ask for a deadline extension via the [online Extension Request form](#).
- 3.11 Students will be asked to provide the following information when submitting a request for a deadline extension:
- Module code and title.
 - Module tutor.
 - Assessment component.
 - Original deadline date.
 - Confirmation that assessment component is eligible for an extension.
 - Category of circumstances.
 - A brief reason why an extension is being requested.
- 3.12 Students are able to upload supporting evidence to their extension request, but this is not a requirement for approval.

Criteria for approving an Extension Request

- 3.13 Extension requests will be reviewed and triaged by a member of the Programme Administration team daily. Extension requests will be approved and actioned by this team within 2 working days if the following criteria are met:
- The module assessment detailed in the request is an 'eligible assessment', as per the definition above.
 - The extension has been requested, through the online form, at the latest by 12.00 noon on the date of the original deadline.

- 3.14 The Programme Administration team may call upon the module / programme team and / or other support services in relation to extension requests where there are immediate intervention needs, questions around assessment eligibility for extensions, and / or complicating factors in actioning an extension (e.g. an extension deadline falls on a bank holiday).

If an Extension is approved

- 3.15 Upon approval of an extension request, the student will be notified of this outcome and will receive confirmation of their extended submission deadline.
- 3.16 Depending on the nature of the circumstances detailed in the extension request form, students may also be signposted to support resources and / or referred directly to University support services.

If an Extension is not approved

- 3.17 If an extension request does not meet the criteria for approval, the student will be notified of this outcome and will receive advice as to their options for the assessment in question. This might include, for example, being signposted to the Extenuating Circumstances process.
- 3.18 Depending on the nature of the circumstances detailed in the extension request form, even if the extension is not approved, students may still be signposted to support resources and / or referred to University support services.
- 3.19 Students cannot appeal an extension decision.

4. Extenuating Circumstances

- 4.1 As with extension requests, students should refer to the [Student Guide to Consideration of Personal Circumstances](#) to ensure the extenuating circumstances process is the most appropriate avenue to resolving their assessment completion issues.
- 4.2 In line with the 'Fit to Sit / Submit' approach of this policy, Extenuating Circumstances should only be requested if the assessment in question has **not** been:
- Attended - e.g. an exam
 - Submitted - e.g. coursework
 - Completed - e.g. if a student falls ill during an exam and is unable to continue in the moment.
- 4.3 Extenuating circumstances requests should **not** be submitted for instances where a student has completed / submitted an assessment but believes their performance has been impaired. The only exception to this may be in a situation whereby a student would have been unable to determine that they were not 'fit to sit / submit' in the moment, for example due to an

acute mental health issue at the time of the assessment.

- 4.4 While there is no formal limit to the number of applications for extenuating circumstances a student can request during their programme of study, students who submit multiple applications in a single academic year may be contacted to ensure that any ongoing issues relating to their ability to participate in assessments and continue on their programme of study are being managed and supported.

Eligible Assessments

- 4.5 Applications for extenuating circumstances are possible for all assessments on taught modules / programmes. However, there may be additional factors to consider when submitting extenuating circumstances requests for certain assignments / modules / programmes. This may be, for example, when assignments are set by, or in agreement with, an external assessor / organisation. Where there are specific factors to note in relation to extenuating circumstances requests for a particular assessment / module / programme, this will be communicated to students in programme / module information and, where applicable, in individual assessment briefs.

Submitting an Extenuating Circumstances request

- 4.6 Students can submit requests for extenuating circumstances via an online form on e:Vision up to 7 days following their assessment date / deadline.

Students will be asked to provide the following information when submitting an extenuating circumstances request:

Selected from a drop-down menu:

- Module code and title.
- Assessment component and completion / submission date.
- Category of circumstances.

Plus:

- Description of the circumstances which led to being unable to attend / submit / complete the assessment in question.
- Evidence to support the description of the circumstances.

- 4.7 A request will be considered late, if students submit their request later than 7 days following their assessment date / deadline.
- 4.8 Students who submit a late request will need to provide additional evidence to support why the request could not have been submitted on time.

Criteria for approving extenuating circumstances requests

- 4.9 All extenuating circumstances requests will be reviewed and triaged by a Senior Programme Administrator. Extenuating circumstances requests will be approved and actioned if the description of circumstances and any supporting evidence meet the following criteria:

- Have been received via the appropriate form on e:Vision within 7 days of the assessment date / deadline.
- Relate to a time period relevant to the assessment submission / completion deadline – e.g. between the beginning of the module in question and the assessment deadline.
- Describe circumstances that were unforeseen and / or unavoidable – i.e. the student could not have done anything to reasonably predict or prevent the circumstances from impacting their ability to complete assessment(s).
- Describe circumstances that are exceptional – i.e. the circumstances are over and above what would be classed as ‘typical’ challenges for the student and can reasonably be believed to have prevented them from completing their assessment(s).

4.10 Examples of circumstances which would typically align with the criteria of unforeseen, unavoidable and exceptional, include (but are not limited to):

- Medical issues, such as sudden, serious and / or worsening physical or mental health conditions.
- Family emergencies, such as serious illness, accidents, or deaths involving friends or family members.
- Legal obligations, such as being called for jury duty or needing to appear in court.
- Unexpected disruption to caring arrangements, such as closure of child’s school / nursery, illness of childcare provider, or last-minute change to home care schedule.
- Unexpected travel disruptions, such as flight cancellations, severe traffic accidents, or public transportation breakdowns.
- Unavoidable infrastructure disruptions, such as data breaches / corruption or destruction of property due to natural disasters (floods, storms etc.).

4.11 Examples of circumstances which would typically not fit the criteria of unforeseen, unavoidable and exceptional, include:

- Minor illnesses which could be treated, for example, with non-prescription medication (e.g. headache, cold)
- Known and stable physical or mental health conditions.
- Physical or mental health conditions already accommodated via reasonable adjustments.

- Predictable events, such as routine medical appointments or known work commitments.
- Procrastination or poor time management.
- Stress or pressure resulting from personal choices, such as engaging in extracurricular activities that impact academic commitments.
- Non-emergency personal events, such as weddings, holidays or religious celebrations.
- Common technical issues, such as temporary loss of internet connection / power or loss of data / files due to not saving / backing-up regularly.

4.12 In instances where it is unclear if the approval criteria have been met, where the circumstances described are particularly complex and / or where the circumstances described necessitate immediate support intervention, the Senior Programme Administrator will escalate to the Head of Programme Administration, to support the decision-making process and liaise with appropriate Faculty staff and support services, as necessary.

Description of circumstances

4.13 As part of their extenuating circumstances request, students will be asked to put their circumstances into one or more broad categories:

- Bereavement and / or Anticipatory Grief
- Recent / Unexpected Health Issues
- Known Health Issues
- Caring Responsibilities
- Major Personal Incident / Difficulties
- Infrastructure Failure
- Public / Civic Duties
- Professional Commitments
- Academic Issues

4.14 These categories are used solely for the purpose of monitoring extenuating circumstances requests across the University and ensuring resources and services for students are meeting ongoing needs. The category of circumstances does not have a bearing on whether a request is approved or denied.

4.15 In addition to selecting the broad category of their circumstances, students

are asked to provide a short narrative explaining why they were unable to submit / complete their assessment. This narrative, along with supporting evidence, is used to assess whether a request for extenuating circumstance meets the criteria for approval.

Supporting evidence

4.16 Unlike extension requests, there is an expectation that requests for extenuating circumstances are accompanied by some form of supporting evidence. This aims to ensure not only that requests for extenuation are genuine, but also to provide additional information that might help signpost students to appropriate resources.

4.17 Evidence may vary depending on the nature of the circumstances in question, but may include:

- A medical certificate, doctor's note, or relevant medical records that detail the timing and nature of the illness or medical emergency. For mental health issues, a counsellor's note or therapist's letter may be appropriate.
- Official documents relating to family emergencies such as a death certificate, hospital records, or letters from a third party (e.g. nurse / carer).
- Legal documentation, such as copies of court summons, legal notices or jury duty letters.
- For transportation issues, airline notices, traffic reports or email notifications of last-minute cancellations.
- Infrastructure-related documentation, such as IT support tickets, emails from service providers, time-stamped photos of property damage, insurance documentation.
- In cases of disruption to caring arrangements, official notices from the educational / care institution, time-stamped communication from intended caregiver.
- Statements from members of University staff who have been involved in supporting the student through ongoing challenges.

4.18 Evidence that would typically not be accepted includes:

- Self-written statements without corroboration.
- Late or retroactive documentation that does not align with either the timing of the assessment or the narrative of the circumstances.
- Generic, vague or 'forgeable' documentation, such as communications, photos, screenshots, records without personalised

recipient, sender / signatory or time / date stamps.

- Photographs of a particularly sensitive and / or potentially distressing nature.
- Official documentation in a language other than English (unless accompanied by a notarised translation).

4.19 Students found to have provided fraudulent evidence or made claims that are found to be untrue, may be subject to further action under the [Student Disciplinary Procedure](#). In these cases, the extenuating circumstances decision will be placed on hold until the disciplinary case has concluded and may result in the request being rejected.

If case for Extenuating Circumstances is accepted

4.20 If a student's case for extenuating circumstances is accepted, their module record will be updated to reflect this, and the outcome will be taken to an Assessment Committee to discuss and agree an appropriate course of action in relation to the assessment component(s) in question.

4.21 A typical outcome for an accepted extenuating circumstances case is to allow the student to submit / complete the assessment component at the next available opportunity at the same attempt status. Assessment Committee decisions may vary, however, depending on contextual factors relating to the student, and / or specific module or programme regulations.

4.22 Depending on the nature of the circumstances detailed in the extenuating circumstances request, students may also be signposted to support resources and / or referred directly to University support services.

If case for Extenuating Circumstances is not accepted

4.23 If a student's case for extenuating circumstances is not accepted, the student will be notified of this outcome and will be signposted to support resources and / or referred to University support services, as appropriate.

4.24 The student's module outcome will be taken to an Assessment Committee to discuss and agree an appropriate course of action in relation to the assessment component(s) in question. For instances where non-attendance or non-submission of an assessment component has led to failure of a module, the student would normally be invited to undertake reassessment for a capped mark at the next attempt status, where eligible.

4.25 Further details regarding Assessment Committee decision-making can be found in the University's [Assessment Regulations](#).

Appeals

4.26 Decisions relating to extenuating circumstances requests cannot be appealed against directly. However, students remain able to appeal against

Board of Examiners' decisions as part of the University's standard [Appeals Regulations](#). As part of this process, students may wish to make reference to their extenuating circumstances case.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1 The Consideration of Personal Circumstances policy is intended to provide a clear framework for making decisions relating to missed assessment activities. It aims to facilitate consistent and timely decision-making, allow for appropriate consideration in relation to complex cases and ensure that, regardless of process or outcome, students are signposted or referred to appropriate support.
- 5.2 All participants in the consideration of personal circumstances processes are expected to act in a supportive and respectful manner, in line with staff and student contracts and codes of conduct.
- 5.3 All participants in the processes are also expected to adhere to any legal, regulatory and policy requirements with regards to [confidentiality and data protection](#).

Students

- 5.4 Students are expected to take responsibility for their own learning and assessment activities and to read available guidance to ensure they are accessing the most appropriate avenue to resolving any assessment submission issues they may be facing.
- 5.5 When making extension or extenuating circumstances requests, students are expected follow the procedures outlined in this policy, including meeting request deadlines, clearly outlining reasons for requests and, where required, ensuring supporting evidence is appropriate and directly relevant to the description of their circumstances.
- 5.6 Students are also asked to consider, acknowledge and take responsibility for the potential implications on their ability to progress through their programme of study as planned due to requesting extensions and / or not completing / submitting assessments.

Staff – Programme and Module Teams

- 5.7 Programme and module teams are expected to set and communicate assessment deadlines to students as early as possible in the academic year, at least at the beginning of each new module. This assessment information should be clear, consistent and in an accessible format and should highlight any assessment components that are ineligible for extensions / certain extenuating circumstances outcomes.
- 5.8 Programme and module teams should also liaise with the Programme Administration Team to set indicative extension deadlines for each eligible assessment and to monitor the number of extension and extenuating

circumstances on an ongoing basis to mitigate the impact on assessment and marking load / schedules.

- 5.9 Programme and module teams are also expected to maintain open and supportive communication with students facing assessment submission issues and / or other challenging circumstances, ensuring that students are signposted or referred to appropriate sources of advice, guidance and support.

Staff – Programme Administration Team

- 5.10 The Programme Administration team is responsible for implementing and managing the day-to-day operations of the Consideration of Personal Circumstances policy and processes. This includes liaising with programme / module teams regarding assessment dates, reviewing and agreeing request outcomes, updating central student records with agreed outcomes, escalating / referring severe and / or complex cases and communicating with students about the status of their extension or extenuating circumstances request.
- 5.11 The Programme Administration team is expected to maintain accurate records of all extension and extenuating circumstances requests and to report on cases, both for the purposes of programme / module team operational planning as well as for institutional oversight / ongoing policy review.

University of Bradford Union of Students (UBU)

- 5.12 UBU is expected to play a key role in disseminating information about the Consideration of Personal Circumstances policy to students, ensuring that they are aware of their rights, roles and responsibilities, as well as any support available for students.
- 5.13 The UBU Advice Centre is expected to help students navigate this policy and related procedures, to ensure students are accessing the most appropriate avenue to resolving any assessment submission issues they may be facing.
- 5.14 UBU colleagues are also expected to maintain open and supportive communication with students and members of UoB staff, as part of this process, to ensure that students are signposted or referred to appropriate sources of advice, guidance and support in a joined up and timely manner.
- 5.15 UBU also plays an important role in providing ongoing feedback to the University about students' experiences with the extension and extenuating circumstances process, to inform policy review and continuous improvement activities.

6. Accessibility and Inclusivity

- 6.1 The Equality Act 2010 places a legal obligation on the University to make reasonable adjustments to its services and meet the requirements of staff

with a disability and / or other specific needs.

- 6.2 The intention of the Consideration of Personal Circumstances policy is to support all students facing assessment submission issues, or broader challenging circumstances, regardless of characteristics or context.
- 6.3 Where a student feels they may require additional support to navigate and / or participate in the processes outlined in this policy, they should contact either their module tutor or the UBU Advice Centre in the first instance. Measures to support participation may include, for example, support to navigate systems, complete forms or upload evidence.
- 6.4 Where a member of staff feels they may require additional support to navigate and / or participate in the processes outlined in this policy, they should contact their line manager in the first instance. Measures to support participation may include, for example, distribution of individual roles and responsibilities across a module team.

7. Oversight, Implementation and Support

- 7.1 This policy and its implementation are owned and overseen by the University of Bradford's Learning and Teaching Committee.
- 7.2 Registry and Student Administration (RSA) are responsible for the operation of the policy and corresponding processes, as well as the ongoing schedule of policy / process review and continuous improvement.

The policy and any accompanying appendices shall be reviewed annually.