



HIGHER EDUCATION EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES POLICY

Date Last Reviewed	December 2024
Date Effective From	6th January 2025
Date of Next Planned Review	December 2025
Signed	Natalie King, Managing Director

INTRODUCTION:

The purpose of the Higher Education Extenuating Circumstances policy is to provide Higher Education students with guidance on ability to apply for additional time to submit their work due to circumstances that are beyond their control.

POLICY STATEMENT:

The objective of the policy is to:

- Provide students with an extension that best meet their needs.
- Provide AccXel with sufficient information to support the student with their studies.
- Ensure a fair and transparent approach to agreeing extensions.

SCOPE:

This Extenuating Circumstances policy applies to students studying on Pearson Higher National awards.

The criteria AccXel considers to be an Extenuating Circumstance (EC) is as follows:

- Any personal circumstances that are out of the control of the student.
- Any personal circumstances that the student could not reasonably have prevented or accommodated.
- Any personal circumstances that have had a significant and demonstratively negative effect on the student's ability to study or undertake an assessment(s).

Long-Term Health Conditions:

Long-Term Health Conditions (LTHC) should be discussed and recorded between a student and the Head of Education upon enrolment to ensure any reasonable adjustments are put into place (with the approval of the External Examiner) with regards to teaching and assessment.

An email submission should be provided to the HE Team (he@accxel.co.uk) with evidence to support it. Examples of accepted evidence include correspondence from medical practitioner, diagnosis letter etc. A long-term health condition is a mental or physical condition that

- is persistent, typically lasting for more than three months and is often life-long.
- cannot be resolved in a short time, or which will recur regardless of action, or which needs to be managed on a long-term basis.
- may require students to seek help with some activities but is not otherwise disabling.
- can be managed but can 'flare-up'. If a student experiences a flare-up of the condition affecting their ability to attend or complete an assessment, they should submit an extenuating circumstance claim for the specific assessment(s), detailing how the flare-up is affecting their ability to complete the assessment(s). The HE Team will already hold the evidence relating to their LTHC, students with approved LTHC will not need to submit evidence if they apply for a Type B deadline extension which is related to their Long-Term Health Condition. However, they will need to state that the LTHC is their reason for applying.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF ASSESSMENT DEADLINES:

Extenuating Circumstances can be used for different assessment types which have been placed into 2 broad categories:

- a) Deadline assessments (Coursework) – assessments not taken under controlled and timed conditions such as essays, assignments and placements.
- b) Non – examined event assessments - assessments taken under controlled and timed conditions such as tests and presentations.

There are 2 types of application a student can make under this policy, as follows:

- a) Type A: an extension of up to 5 working days for ‘deadline’ and non-examined ‘event’ assessments. Students must provide a valid reason as detailed in section below, however no evidence is required. The reason provided by the student must detail how the circumstances are affecting their ability to complete/submit the assignment.
- b) Type B: an extension beyond 5 working days for ‘deadline’ and non-examined ‘event’ assessments. Students must provide a valid reason as detailed below and applications must be supported by evidence. The reason provided by the student must detail how the circumstances are affecting their ability to complete/submit the assignment.

All applications will be considered by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel which will meet as needed. The panel will consist of a member of the HE Team who will act as the Chair and at least one other member drawn from the HE Team. Where the panel decision is unable to reach a consensus the view of a third member will be sought. The third member will be drawn from the HE Team. The panel may liaise with programme teams regarding appropriate deadlines and appropriate outcomes. All claims for consideration of extenuating circumstances should be submitted via an email to the HE Team at he@accxel.co.uk.

Applications should be made as soon as the circumstances become apparent and ahead of the assessment deadline or the start of the event assessment. Any required supporting evidence must be supplied at the point of application. Evidence supplied later will only be considered if provided with a valid reason why the evidence could not be supplied at the point of application.

All applications that meet the administrative requirements of the process will be considered in full. The Extenuating Circumstances Panel cannot extend the deadline for a second time for the same assessment. If students are still unable to submit on time, students must apply for an additional Extenuating Circumstance with a valid reason. The Panel will consider this request and if it is considered valid the Assessment Board will be informed of this. The Assessment Board will then make a decision about any new deadline that might be offered to the student. This will be communicated to the student following the Assessment Board.

Students are responsible for submitting accurate information and evidence. Any student suspected of submitting dishonest claims will be referred for action under the Student Conduct & Disciplinary Policy. Personal information submitted by students as part of a claim will be stored on the student's confidential records, but access will be restricted to staff who need to be aware of any disclosure of circumstances that have been made.

TYPE A APPLICATION:

Students who require an extension (up to a maximum of 5 working days) if they are unable to submit/complete an assessment(s) by the deadline can submit an application for a Type A extension via submission of an email to he@accxel.co.uk.

Students must provide a valid reason as detailed below however they are not required to provide any supporting evidence. Students who are granted a Type A extension can have their deadlines extended by up to 5 working days and will have access to the full range of marks for the assessment. Working to deadlines is a skill expected of higher-level students. Repeated applications for extensions to assessment deadlines may lead to a student requiring a fitness to study meeting.

Examples of circumstances which would normally be considered valid:

- Your own health problems, including major accident or injury, acute ailments, hospitalisation (including for operations), or those affecting a significant period of study.
- Personal or psychological problems for which you are receiving counselling or have been referred to a counsellor or similarly qualified practitioner.
- Clinical depression or other significant mental health issue.
- Pregnancy-related conditions and childbirth (including a partner in labour).

- Bereavement causing significant impact.
- Separation or divorce of yourself or your parents/carers.
- Recent burglary, theft or serious car accident.
- Jury service which cannot be deferred.
- Late diagnosis of, for example, dyslexia, meaning you have not had the appropriate support for assessment.

Examples of circumstances which would not normally be considered valid:

- You slept in or your alarm clock did not go off.
- Accidents or illness affecting relatives or friends, unless serious, or you are a sole carer.
- Financial problems.
- Computing problems, such as corrupt data or media, poor internet connectivity, printer failure, or e-submission of an assessment file in an incorrect format, or lack of access to IT facilities.
- Family celebrations, holidays, planned house moves, or similar events, in which you have input to, or control over, the date or may choose not to participate.
- Appointments of any kind, including legal or medical appointments, which could be rearranged.
- Sporting, recreational or voluntary commitments.

Students will be notified of the outcome of their application as soon as possible, normally within five working days of submitting an application and associated evidence. Students need to be aware that if they are applying for an EC within 5 days of their deadline, they may not receive the decision of the panel either valid or denied, until after the deadline has passed so students are advised to continue working on their assignments. An assignment that is submitted late due to a declined EC application will be considered a late submission.

TYPE B APPLICATION:

Students who require a longer extension of more than 5 working days if they are unable to submit/complete an assessment(s) by the deadline can apply for a Type B extension via an email application to he@accxel.co.uk.

Students must provide a valid reason as detailed below and they are required to provide supporting evidence. Students who are granted a Type B extension can have their deadlines extended by more than 5 working days and will have access to the full range of marks for the assessment.

Students will be notified of the outcome of their application as soon as possible, normally within five working days of submitting a completed application and associated evidence. Students need to be aware that if they are applying for an EC within 5 days of their deadline, they may not receive the decision of the panel, either valid or denied, until after the deadline has passed so students are advised to continue working on their assignment(s).

An assignment that is submitted late due to a declined EC application will be considered a late submission and a grading cap will be applied.

Repeated applications for extensions to assessment deadlines may lead to a student requiring a fitness to study meeting.

Examples of circumstances which would normally be considered valid:

- Your own health problems, including major accident or injury, acute ailments, hospitalisation (including for operations), or those affecting a significant period of study.
- Personal or psychological problems for which you are receiving counselling or have been referred to a counsellor or similarly qualified practitioner.
- Clinical depression or other significant mental health issue.
- Pregnancy-related conditions and childbirth (including a partner in labour).
- Bereavement causing significant impact.
- Separation or divorce of yourself or your parents/carers.
- Recent burglary, theft or serious car accident.
- Jury service which cannot be deferred.
- Late diagnosis of, for example, dyslexia, meaning you have not had the appropriate support for assessment.

Examples of circumstances which would not normally be considered valid:

- You slept in or your alarm clock did not go off.
- Accidents or illness affecting relatives or friends, unless serious, or you are a sole carer.
- Financial problems.

- Computing problems, such as corrupt data or media, poor internet connectivity, printer failure, or e-submission of an assessment file in an incorrect format, or lack of access to IT facilities.
- Family celebrations, holidays, planned house moves, or similar events, in which you have input to, or control over, the date or may choose not to participate.
- Appointments of any kind, including legal or medical appointments, which could be rearranged.
- Sporting, recreational or voluntary commitments.

Students who wish to temporarily withdraw or defer their studies will be required to apply for a Type B extension explaining their circumstances in full and explicitly state how these circumstances have affected their decision to temporarily withdraw or defer their studies.

Type B Applications should be supported by appropriate evidence. The nature of evidence will vary depending on the circumstances, but it must:

- confirm the existence of the extenuating circumstances and the relevant timeframe.
- confirm the impact of the extenuating circumstances on the student concerned.
- Students need to explain why the extenuating circumstances will prevent them from submitting by their original assessment deadline
- be comprehensible for the panel.

The panel reserves the right to request clarification regarding particular evidence or ask for further evidence. Requests may include, but are not limited to:

- extra supporting documentation.
- the evidence being sent directly from a third party.
- the translation of documents into English, as required.

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES:

Students will be provided with email confirmation from the HE Team on whether their application was considered valid or not. All applications that are denied will require the student to submit their assignment(s) on the original deadline set for them.

For valid Type A applications, a student will normally be able to submit/complete their assessment at a later date, up to 5 working days. The date and time will be confirmed to the student in a confirmation letter sent via the student's college email address.

For valid Type B applications, the student will be able to submit/complete the assessment at a later date, which can be more than 5 working days. The date and time will be confirmed to the student in a confirmation letter sent via the student's college email address.

Furthermore, students that have applied for a Type B extension in order to notify AccXel that they wish to temporarily withdraw or defer their studies will receive a confirmation email.

ACADEMIC APPEAL:

Students may formally appeal the decision of an Extenuating Circumstances Panel following the outcome being emailed to them. This will follow the process and time constraints set out in the Assessment Appeal Procedure (Higher Education Qualifications).

Academic appeals which question academic judgement, without sufficient grounds or valid supporting evidence, shall not be considered.

An academic appeal against an EC decision can only be submitted on the following grounds (via email to he@accxel.co.uk):

- There is evidence to suggest that the Extenuating Circumstances Policy was not followed, in a manner that could have resulted in a different decision if it had been properly followed.
- There is evidence to suggest that there was an administrative error or some other irregularity in the consideration of the request.
- The decision of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel failed to take into account the evidence of Extenuating Circumstances provided.
- New material evidence is available which the student was unable, for good reason, to provide earlier in the process.

Academic Appeals should be made within 15 working days of the date of the email communicating the extenuating circumstances decision.

However, if a student wishes to claim for extenuating circumstances for a taught module after the formal publication of results at the end of the year, this will be dealt with as an appeal against the decision of the Assessment Board. In this case, students must submit their appeal by the deadline specified when the results are published. To submit an appeal, students must complete the appeal process set out in the Assessment Appeal Procedure (Higher Education Qualifications).

Any academic appeal against the decision of an Assessment Board which is raised based on extenuating circumstances, must contain a valid reason to explain why information could not have been submitted at the time.

OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT ADJUDICATOR FOR HIGHER EDUCATION (OIA):

If the student has completed AccXel's internal appeals procedure and they are still dissatisfied with the outcome, they may refer their case to Pearson.

Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA): Once you have completed all the internal procedures if you are still dissatisfied with the outcome of your appeal, you may be able to apply for a review of the matter to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA).

You will normally need to have completed the academic appeals procedures before you complain to the OIA (all three stages of the process). If your final challenge (stage three) is not upheld, we will issue you with a Completion of Procedures Letter automatically. If your appeal is upheld or partly upheld, you can ask for a Completion of Procedures Letter if you would like one. You can find more information about Completion of Procedures Letters and when you should expect to receive one on the OIA website.

You must make your complaint to the OIA within 12 months of completing the appeals procedures. The 12-month period will begin from the date of the Completion of Procedures Letter.

REPEATED USE OF THE EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES PROCESS:

AccXel has a responsibility to monitor the progress of students throughout their studies and intervene where progress is not being made at the expected rate. Where a student is not moving through the levels of their studies as expected, because they need to make multiple applications for exceptional circumstances, AccXel is likely to refer students to support areas for additional support needs. It may also be appropriate to recommend the student undertakes a fitness to study discussion with the Head of Education.

This policy has been agreed by the AccXel senior management team and agreed. It will be reviewed every year or after significant changes to the centre's business or staff.

Signed:

Natalie King

Date: 06/01/2025