

Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedures

Version	1.0
Effective date	April 2015
Date for review	September 2018
Policy owner	Registrar
Reference points	QAA Quality Code Chapters B6; Middlesex Regulations 2014/15
Audience / handling notes	Public
Dissemination and implementation plan	<p>This Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedure will be published on the ACM website for reference by students, staff and all other stakeholders.</p> <p>Heads of School will receive training in how to apply this policy and procedures. They will also be directed to where it is published. Heads of School will be responsible for the dissemination of the policy and procedures to academic staff; the Registrar will be responsible for the dissemination of the policy and procedures to support staff.</p> <p>Students will be informed by email that this information is available on the ACM website.</p>
Approving Committee	Policy and Strategy Committee
Date approved	

Version	Date	Activity

music. industry. education.

Initial Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) Questions for ACM Policies:

Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) are a legal requirement of public bodies and form part of the specific duties on universities and colleges to help them meet their general equality duties. For more information on EIA, please refer to the ACM Equality and Diversity Policy.

An EIA involves gathering and using evidence to make a judgement about how a particular policy or practice affects, or is likely to affect, protected equality groups of people when it is implemented. Protected groups¹ are identified in the Equality Act 2010 as sharing a particular characteristic against which it is illegal to discriminate. The assessment should identify whether the policy and its related procedures affect people from different equality strands in different ways and if they do then it should establish whether the differential impact is positive, negative or neutral.

This form is intended to provide a quick assessment of whether a policy requires a Full EIA. It is also intended to be used to EIA all new policies.

- a) Is there any aspect of the policy, procedure or practice that is likely to have a differential impact (negative or positive) on any of the protected characteristics?

No
 Yes

If yes, identify how the impact would affect the specific equality strand:

- b) Is there a possibility of unlawful discrimination, directly or indirectly, on any of the protected characteristics?

No
 Yes

- c) Could there be an effect on relations between certain groups?

No
 Yes

- d) Can the above differences be justified?

No
 Yes
 N/A

- e) What mechanisms are in place to monitor the application of the policy, procedure or practice across people from all protected equality groups? Please explain:

Registry will record the number and type of Extenuating Circumstances forms received in an academic year in order to identify trends, evaluate the effectiveness of and make enhancements to the Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedures.

¹ The nine protected groups are defined in the ACM Equality and Diversity Policy. In brief, they are: Age; Disability; Gender re-assignment; Marriage and civil partnership; Pregnancy and maternity; Race; Religion and belief; Sex; Sexual orientation.

Extenuating Circumstances

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. This policy describes how the Academy of Contemporary Music (ACM) looks upon the issue of Extenuating Circumstances
- 1.2. This policy applies **only to students studying on degree programmes** and is designed to ensure that degree students are treated in a fair and equitable manner.
- 1.3. The Registrar is responsible for managing and reviewing this policy and Registry staff are responsible for the effective administration of the Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedures outlined below.
- 1.4. The content of this policy aligns with the regulations of ACM's validating partners and other external stakeholders to whom ACM must make reference.
- 1.5. Extenuating Circumstances have a direct link with
 - Academic Appeals
 - Assessment
 - Attendance
 - Deferral of Assessment
 - Equality and Diversity

2. Objectives

- 2.1. To explain in an open, transparent and accessible way how ACM will treat students who wish to submit a request for Extenuating Circumstances.
- 2.2. To describe the steps of the Extenuating Circumstances process.

3. Extenuating Circumstances

- 3.1 Extenuating circumstances will consist of the recording of one or more personal difficulties, such as ill health, submitted by a student and supported by acceptable evidence and will be considered and may be taken into account by Student Progression and Assessment Boards and Final Exam Boards in determining the classification of degrees and the progression of students.
- 3.2 Extenuating circumstances will not normally include:
 - 3.2.1 proximity or number of examinations or other assessments
 - 3.2.2 pressure of paid or unpaid employment
 - 3.2.3 misreading of examination timetables
 - 3.2.4 poor time management
 - 3.2.5 scheduling of holidays or time abroad
- 3.3 No student shall be put in a position of unfair advantage over other candidates; the aim should be to enable all students to be assessed on equal terms.
- 3.4 All work submitted by students for assessment will be graded on its merits without consideration of any extenuating circumstances known to the marker. Extenuating circumstances will not be used by Student Progression and Assessment Boards and Final Exam Boards to alter the grades of students.

- 3.5 Students must submit extenuating circumstances to Registry, with documentary evidence, by the deadline of **the last day of the examination period for the trimester in which the assessment is due.**
- 3.6 Extenuating circumstances will be considered by Student Progression and Assessment Boards and Final Exam Boards in the following circumstances:
- 3.6.1 in considering whether a student may progress to the next stage of the programme
 - 3.6.2 in determining the classification for a qualification where the student is borderline or there are conflicting classifications in the profiles of grades
 - 3.6.3 consideration for an aegrotat award (a qualification that is awarded although one or more assessments have been missed due to illness).
- 3.7 Normally extenuating circumstances shall not be taken into account where the circumstances have already been allowed for (for example, by special assessment arrangements). Special assessment arrangements should be agreed at enrolment in cases of known disability and in any case agreed with the student before an examination period begins.
- 3.8 Extenuating circumstances brought to the attention of the Chair of the Student Progression and Assessment Board or Final Exam Board after the deadline specified in 3.5, should normally be considered only if the student was unable or, for valid reasons, unwilling, to disclose them before the deadline.
- 3.9 The student's extenuating circumstances will be recorded by Registry at the time of the affected assessment, noting what documentary evidence had been supplied, and the summary made available to the Student Progression and Assessment Boards and Final Exam Boards in the comments section of the results spreadsheet. Access to the original evidence is restricted to the Chair, Secretary and the External Examination Auditor(s) of the Student Progression and Assessment Boards and Final Exam Boards, and the Registrar, for the purposes of assessment, unless the student declares otherwise.
- 3.10 Only extenuating circumstances submitted directly by the student to Registry will be recorded and considered by the Student Progression and Assessment Boards and Final Exam Boards. **Tutors and other staff should advise students accordingly.**
- 3.11 The Student Progression and Assessment Boards and Final Exam Boards will consider the full history of summarised extenuating circumstances. Where necessary the Chair or Secretary will obtain the original evidence from Registry prior to the meeting. The extenuating circumstances may be taken into account in accordance with Regulation 3.6 above, and it should be noted where this is used in determining the classification of the qualification awarded.
- 3.12 In considering extenuating circumstances the Student Progression and Assessment Boards and Final Exam Boards will wish to:
- a) note whether acceptable evidence has been supplied;
 - b) consider whether the student has performed unexpectedly badly in a given module or modules; whether there is a significant difference between the student's performance in the year in which they experienced difficulties and their previous or later performance; and whether it correlates with the evidence provided;

- c) consider whether, where extenuating circumstances are judged to be very severe and it is not possible for the student to undertake further assessment, an aegrotat degree (which is without classification) be awarded. A student, or authorised representative, must signify acceptance of an aegrotat award within three weeks of notification, and if so accepted waives any right to reassessment.

3.13 Where a Chair considers extenuating circumstances submitted under 3.8 and which have not been considered by the Student Progression and Assessment Boards and Final Exam Boards, the Chair will follow the procedure in 3.12 and may either make a decision in the student's favour or advise the student to submit an academic appeal to the Registry.

4. Academic Appeals

- 4.1. Students have the right to appeal the decision on an Extenuating Circumstances submission. Please refer to the Academic Appeals policy for details.

Procedures (Extenuating Circumstances)

1. Student completes *Extenuating Circumstances* form attaching supporting evidence as required:

- **Illness or injury** - an original medical certificate must be provided and be signed, dated and stamped by an approved Doctor/Surgery/Hospital. It must state what you are suffering from, the period of time affected and how it may affect your academic performance
- **Death of a relative or friend** - a copy of the death certificate is normally required
- **Burglary or theft** – a Police crime report or case reference number is required
- **Public transport delay of over 1 hour** – a letter from the Operating Company is required
- **Private transport problem** – will only be considered if acceptable authoritative evidence is supplied

2. Student submits *Extenuating Circumstances* form and supporting evidence to Registry no later than 3pm on the day of the deadline specified in 3.5. Supporting evidence should be submitted no later than 20 working days after submission of the *Extenuating Circumstances* form, otherwise the request may be rejected.
3. Registry logs *Extenuating Circumstances* form and supporting evidence.
4. Registry passes summary of Extenuating Circumstances and supporting evidence to the Chair of the Student Progression and Assessment Board and/or Final Exam Board.
5. Registry will not inform the student directly about the result of the Extenuating Circumstances submission as the information is used only in the case of considering whether a student may progress to the next stage of the programme; in determining the classification for a qualification where the student is borderline or there are conflicting classifications in the profiles of grades; or consideration for an aegrotat award. The result of the Extenuating Circumstances will therefore be apparent in the results that the student receives in the normal process of results dissemination.
6. At this stage the student is entitled to appeal the decision of the Student Progression and Assessment Board and Final Exam Board - please refer to the Academic Appeals policy for details.