

## **Policy 006: Extenuating Circumstances**

### **1. Purpose and Scope**

1.1. This policy describes how the Academy of Contemporary Music (ACM) considers formal Extenuating Circumstances claims in relation to the outcome a student's summative assessment and overall programme/award/classification outcomes.

1.2. This policy applies 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 content of this policy aligns with the regulations of ACM's validating partners and other external stakeholders to whom ACM must make reference.

### **2. Extenuating Circumstances**

2.1 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, which 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.

2.2 Extenuating circumstances will not normally include:

- (a) proximity or number of examinations or other assessments
- (b) pressure of paid or unpaid employment
- (c) misreading of examination timetables
- (d) poor time management
- (e) scheduling of holidays or time abroad

2.3 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.

2.4 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.

2.5 Students must submit extenuating circumstances applications to Registry, with authoritative documentary evidence, by the last day of the trimester in which the assessment is due.

2.6 Extenuating circumstances will be considered, upheld or rejected by Student Progression and Assessment Boards and/or the Finalist Exam Board in the following circumstances:

- (a) in considering whether a student may progress to the next stage of the

programme

(b) in determining the classification for a qualification where the student is borderline or there are conflicting classifications in the profiles of grades

(c) consideration for an aegrotat award (a qualification that is awarded although one or more assessments have been missed due to illness).

2.7 Normally extenuating circumstances shall not be taken into account where the circumstances have already been allowed for (for example, by special assessment arrangements or through agreed reasonable adjustments). Alternative assessment arrangements should be agreed at enrolment in cases of known disability and agreed with the student before an examination period begins.

2.8 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 2.5, should normally be considered only if the student was unable or, for valid reasons, unwilling, to disclose them before the deadline.

2.9 The student's extenuating circumstances will be recorded by Registry, noting what documentary evidence had been supplied, and the documentation will normally be made available to the Student Progression and Assessment Boards and Final Exam Boards with supporting commentary. Access to the original evidence may be restricted to the Chair, Secretary and the External Examiners of the Final Exam Boards, and the Academic Registrar, in cases where it is deemed prudent due to the nature of or circumstances around the extenuating circumstances.

2.10 Only formal extenuating circumstances applications and supporting evidence submitted directly to Registry will be recorded and considered by the Student Progression and Assessment Boards and Final Exam Boards. Programme Managers, Senior Programme Officers and teaching staff should advise students accordingly.

2.11 The Student Progression and Assessment Boards and Final Exam Boards may consider the full history of summarised extenuating circumstances. Where necessary the Chair or Secretary will obtain the original evidence from Registry prior to the commencement of the Board. The extenuating circumstances may be taken into account in accordance with point 2.6 as above, and it should be noted where this may be used in determining the classification of the qualification awarded.

2.12 In considering extenuating circumstances the Student Progression and Assessment Boards and Final Exam Boards will wish to:

a) note whether acceptable, authoritative evidence has been supplied to support a student's application;

b) consider whether the student has performed unexpectedly below their expected level of achievement 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) should be awarded.

d) May consider a student's overall fitness to study in accordance with the Fitness To Study Policy.

2.13 Where the Chair considers extenuating circumstances submitted under 2.8 and which have not been considered by the Student Progression and Assessment Boards and Final Exam Boards, the Chair will follow the procedure in 2.12 and may either make a decision, by way of a Chair's Action, in the student's favour or advise the student to submit an academic appeal to the Registry.

2.14 Students have the right to appeal the decision on an Extenuating Circumstances submission. Please refer to the Academic Appeals policy and procedures for further information.

### **3. Responsible Parties**

3.1 The policy lead is responsible for the cyclical monitoring and review of the policy in liaison with the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manager. The Critical Incident Policy lead is:

- Academic Registrar

3.2 Implementation and compliance with the policy, and corresponding Procedure will be overseen by the following designated staff:

- Head of Education
- Programme Managers
- Module Leaders
- Senior Programme Officers
- Academic Registrar
- Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manager
- Chair, Student Progression and Assessment Board
- Chair, Finalist Exam Board

### **4. Reference Points**

#### **4.1. Internal:**

- Academic Appeals Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Deferral of Assessment Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Fitness to Study Policy

#### **4.2. External:**

- QAA Quality Code Chapter B6: Assessments of Students and the recognition of prior learning
- QAA Quality Code Chapter B4: Enabling student Development and Achievement
- QAA Quality Code, Chapter B9: Student Appeals and Complaints

- Middlesex Regulations 2016 - 2017 (Section D8)

## **5. Date of Approval and Next Review**

Version: 1.1  
Approved on: 28 Jul 2017  
Approved by: Academic Board  
Next Review: 01 Aug 2018