



POLICY 006 EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

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Policy 006: Extenuating Circumstances

1. PURPOSE

1.1 This policy is designed to support students whose learning has been adversely affected by circumstances that are unforeseen, exceptional and outside the control of the student. It aims to:

- Ensure fair and equal treatment of all students when considering their Extenuating Circumstances and determining how best to support them.
- Make clear the types of adverse factors that ACM shall consider as Extenuating Circumstances.
- Create a culture of enhancement seeking to learn from Extenuating Circumstances and improve the student experience, including through appropriate training for decision-makers.
- Ensure clarity in language and process.
- Uphold fairness, consistency and natural justice in the treatment of the student body as a whole, as well as for particular individuals by:
 - Ensuring decisions are taken by those without conflicts of interest.
 - Ensuring that students are neither disadvantaged nor overly advantaged as a result of the process.
- Maintain awareness through collaboration with support services (academic and welfare), targeted local campaigns, and visible and accessible central information highlighted to students at relevant key points in the academic year.

1.2 This Policy applies to students studying on the Foundation Year and FHEQ Levels 4, 5, 6 and 7 at all ACM campuses.

2. POLICY DETAILS

2.1 The following principles underpin ACM's approach to extenuating circumstances:

- (a) 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.
- (b) All work submitted by students for assessment shall be graded on its merits without consideration of any extenuating circumstances known to the marker. Extenuating circumstances will not be used by the ACM Assessment Board to alter the grades of students.
- (c) Students must submit notification of extenuating circumstances by the specified assessment deadline as per the published guidance with, where appropriate, dated documentary evidence.
- (d) Claims for additional consideration (extenuating circumstances) submitted after the specified assessment deadline will normally NOT be considered unless the student was unable or, for valid reasons, unwilling to disclose them before the deadline, and valid documentary evidence is submitted to support this. Examples might include the

student being hospitalised or being unable to engage with the process due to severe ill health.

- (e) Claims for additional consideration (extenuating circumstances) will normally not be valid without independent and current supporting evidence (except in cases of self-certification). This evidence must be submitted online with all claims. Students must provide evidence for every claim submission that they make, irrespective of whether they have provided it with any other claim.
- (f) Extenuating circumstances will be considered by Panels, or a delegated nominee, convened on behalf of the ACM Assessment Board, who will make a decision based on the published guidance.
- (g) The outcomes reached by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel, which may include an agreed extension to a coursework deadline or deferral of assessment to the next opportunity, will be provided to the Assessment Board to support its decision-making:
 - In 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;
 - In consideration for an aegrotat award.
- (h) Normally, Extenuating Circumstances shall not be taken into account where the circumstances have already been allowed for (for example, by Reasonable Adjustments (see ACM's Reasonable Adjustments Policy). Reasonable Adjustments should be agreed at enrolment in cases of known disability or long term documented illness, and in any case, agreed with the student before an assessment period begins.

2.2 ACM believes it is reasonable to expect students in general to be able to cope with normal life events, to manage their workloads and time appropriately, to expect a level of pressure around assessments, and to be able to cope with minor, short-term illness.

2.3 Examples of circumstances likely to be accepted or excluded (non-exhaustive list):

Examples of circumstances likely to be accepted	Examples of circumstances likely to be excluded
• Serious short-term illness (mental or physical) or injury • Death or significant illness of a close family member or close friend (note: death of a pet or other animal is not normally acceptable) • Victim of a criminal offence which has had a substantial impact on the student • Witnessing or experiencing a traumatic incident • Public transport delays of over one hour (affecting live, on-site assessments only) • Private transport issues (affecting live, on-site assessments only) • Unexpected, significant personal, family or	• Alleged medical conditions without appropriate, dated supporting evidence • Social activities, including holidays and weddings • Minor ailments and other minor conditions • Temporary self-induced conditions • Foreseeable responsibilities and appointments associated with pregnancy • Stress or anxiety from normal or minor life events • Exam stress or stress from academic workload, including poor time management

wellbeing difficulties • Safeguarding concerns • Unexpected caring responsibilities for a family member or dependent • Mandatory public duty, e.g. jury service • Accommodation crisis such as eviction at short notice or the home becoming uninhabitable	• Exam conditions, including misreading the exam timetable • Domestic or personal disruptions which could have been anticipated or planned for, including work schedules • House moves or other events that were planned or could reasonably have been expected • Study related circumstances, including computer difficulties, losing work not backed up
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Dependency on Collaborators

2.4 Where an assessment brief requires collaboration but results in an individual submission, the student bears sole responsibility for the final delivery and content of their work. Students are responsible for managing all relationships, timelines, and deliverables from internal or external collaborators. Delays, creative disagreements, or failures by a collaborator will not normally constitute grounds for extenuating circumstances.

2.5 Formal extenuating circumstances applications will normally only be accepted when submitted via the Extenuating Circumstances Google form. This can be found on each Assessment Module on Canvas and can also be provided by a Student Relations Officer.

2.6 The ACM Assessment Board and Finalist Examination Boards may consider the full history of summarised extenuating circumstances when making decisions, as recommended by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel. Where necessary, the Chair or Clerk will obtain the original evidence from the relevant team before the commencement of the Board.

Fit to sit

2.7 Students taking part in an assessment by attending a live assessment or submitting work for an assessment are declaring themselves well enough to do so and are therefore 'Fit to Sit.' If you experience disruption to your studies before the assessment (e.g. due to personal difficulties, crime, bereavement, illness, etc.), you must think carefully about whether you should attempt the assessment or whether you should apply for an extension or deferral. A request for additional consideration (extenuating circumstances) after an assessment has been submitted will not normally be granted.

2.8 Examples of the potential outcomes of a request for additional consideration (extenuating circumstances) are as follows:

- Upheld - 14-day extension under Self-Certification.
- Upheld - 14-day extension.
- Upheld - deferral to next assessment period.
- Upheld with Action - candidate for Reasonable Adjustments, or referral to support teams.
- Not Upheld with Action - request for further supporting documentation.
- Not Upheld - no grounds for additional consideration (extenuating circumstances).

2.9 For an assessment to be deferred to the next assessment opportunity, a student must submit an Extenuating Circumstances Google form with relevant, dated supporting documentation. For example, if the application states that the student is suffering from a significant medical issue, a dated and signed letter from their GP will normally be required.

2.10 Where a student repeatedly applies for additional consideration (extenuating circumstances), ACM may initiate the Fitness To Study Policy (Support for Study) if it becomes apparent that there is a long-term impediment to engaging with the programme and/or the assessments.

Self-certification

2.11 ACM considers it to be unreasonable, in some cases of illness that do not require medical attention, to request a medical note as supporting evidence for an extenuating circumstances application. In these cases, a student may self-certify for a 14-day extension a short illness which has had a significant impact on them. To do so, the student must submit a description of the illness and explain the specific functional impairment.

2.12 Self-certification for online submissions will only be considered for illnesses that have occurred within 4 weeks of the assessment deadline. Self-certification is strictly reserved for short-term, minor ailments significantly affecting the student around the time of the assessment. Short-term is defined as 7 days or less. If an illness or condition is long-term, or requires an assessment to be deferred to the next formal examination period, self-certification is not valid, and the student must provide independent professional evidence as outlined in Section 4.

2.13 Self-certified extenuating circumstances applications must be submitted using the Extenuating Circumstances Google form and will be considered by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel or a delegated nominee.

2.14 Where self-certified extenuating circumstances are approved, the student will be awarded up to 14 days' extension after the original assessment deadline to submit for the module affected by extenuating circumstances. For live assessments and written exams, the student will be required to sit these at the next available opportunity.

2.15 Students can self-certify an extenuating circumstances application no more than twice in an Academic Year.

2.16 ACM reserves the right to check the authenticity of all documentation submitted as part of an Extenuating Circumstances claim. If at any time, including after an initial outcome has been made, ACM believes that a student has submitted evidence which may not be genuine, they may be referred to the Student Conduct and Discipline Procedure. Consideration of the student's extenuating circumstances claim will be suspended until the disciplinary process has been completed.

3. PROCEDURE

3.1 This Procedure describes how the ACM considers formal extenuating circumstances claims in relation to the outcome of a student's summative assessment and overall programme/award/classification outcomes.

3.2 Students requesting consideration of extenuating circumstances are required to complete and submit the online Extenuating Circumstances Google form before the published assessment deadline. The online form can be found on the assessment pages on Canvas or by emailing assessment@acm.ac.uk

3.3 If an extenuating circumstances request is received after the published assessment deadline without good reason, it will not normally be accepted.

3.4 All extenuating circumstances requests are considered by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel (ECP) or a designated nominee.

3.5 The ECP or designated nominee will consider the requests, on a *prima facie* basis, to either approve or decline the applications.

3.6 The ECP or designated nominee will not make an academic judgment regarding submissions, resubmissions or possible conceded passing grades.

3.7 Students will normally receive a decision on the outcome of their Extenuating Circumstances request ahead of the published assessment deadline. If the case is more complex and requires extensive discussion, it may take longer to communicate an outcome with the student. Where this is the case, the student will be kept up to date with the progress of their application.

Appeals

3.8 If a request for additional consideration (extenuating circumstances) is not granted and the student feels there has been a material or procedural error in the operation of the Extenuating Circumstances Policy or Procedure, the student may wish to consider submitting an appeal. This must be done within 10 calendar days of receiving your EC application outcome.

Support for Study

3.09 Upon presentation of pro forma, rationale and evidence, and where the EC Panel considers that there is a compelling and significant need, the Panel may action relevant stakeholders to engage the student in the Support for Study procedures, also known as Fitness to Study.

Reasonable Adjustments

3.10 Students who have a long-term condition or learning need which significantly impacts their ability to submit summative assessment work or otherwise complete summative assessment work throughout their course should be engaged with Reasonable Adjustments procedures.

3.11 In cases where the EC Panel or designated nominee considers that the student would be appropriately supported through long-term Reasonable Adjustments, an action may be given for the student, Disability Support Officer, Additional Needs and Disability Manager or equivalent and/ or other member of Student Services staff to convene to mutually agree on the adjustments to be applied.

4. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

4.1 Table A: Supporting Documentation

Issue	Required Documentation	Further Guidance
Illness/ Injury	An original medical certificate/documentation must be provided and be signed, dated, and stamped by an approved Doctor/Surgery/Hospital.	It must state what the student was affected by, the period affected and how it may affect a student's academic performance.
Bereavement	A letter from a relative or a funeral order of service (where possible). A certificate of death is acceptable.	If either of these items is difficult to obtain, please speak to a member of the Academic Affairs Team for advice (assessment@acm.ac.uk)
Victim of a criminal offence	Written confirmation provided by the police.	The confirmation must contain the police case reference number.
Public transport delays of over one hour	A letter from the operating company.	If this is difficult to obtain due to the timeliness of the request, please speak to a member of the Academic Affairs Team for advice (assessment@acm.ac.uk).
Private transport issues	Dependent on circumstances, please speak to a member of the Academic Affairs Team for advice (assessment@acm.ac.uk).	This will only be considered if acceptable, authoritative evidence is supplied, if the problem is deemed unavoidable, and if the student can articulate why they were unable to access forms of public transport.

Unexpected, significant personal/family/wellbeing difficulties	Dependent on circumstances, please speak to a member of the Academic Affairs Team for advice (assessment@acm.ac.uk).	
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5. RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

5.1 This Policy is under the responsibility of the Academic Board. The responsible committee will ensure the cyclical review of this Policy is carried out under ACM's Quality Assurance Framework.

6. RELATED POLICIES

- Academic Appeals Policy
- Learning, Teaching, Assessment and Attainment Policy
- Student Complaints and Grievances Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Fitness to Study Policy
- Student Conduct and Discipline Policy

7. EXHIBITS/APPENDICES/FORMS

7.1 The Extenuating Circumstances Google form can be found on the homepage of each Canvas Assessment Module.

8. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- OfS Conditions B2 and B4
- OIA Good Practice Framework
- QAA Quality Code

9. DOCUMENT HISTORY AND NEXT REVIEW

Version:	4.0
Approved:	September 2026
Approved by:	Academic Board
Date of next review:	August 2027