

APPROVED

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## **THE UNIVERSITY'S ACADEMIC REGULATIONS: 2014-15**

### **EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES REGULATIONS**

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## **EC1 Extenuating Circumstances**

These regulations apply to all matriculated students of Edinburgh Napier University in respect of decisions made by Programme Boards of Examiners. Extenuating Circumstances Committees are convened in Faculties to consider submissions from students who believe their performance has been adversely affected by unforeseen or exceptional extenuating circumstances which have impacted or had a negative effect on their academic studies or progression. Valid extenuating circumstances are reported to a Programme Board of Examiners following consideration by Extenuating Circumstances Committees.

### **EC1.1 Definition of Extenuating Circumstances**

The University considers extenuating circumstances, for the purpose of these regulations, to be exceptional adverse circumstances or events which were unforeseeable or unpreventable, for which the student subject to the circumstances could not take reasonable care to avoid, and which occurred at a significant period within the academic year or trimester.

### **EC1.2 Coursework extensions**

The University has separate guidelines on authorising extensions to the deadline for submission of coursework. Students should contact their Module Leader to discuss any reasonable grounds for extending coursework deadlines before submitting extenuating circumstances. Where an extension has been granted, and the student is able to meet the agreed extension, the student may not submit extenuating circumstances.

### **EC1.3 Examples of Extenuating Circumstances**

The following are examples of extenuating circumstances which may have adversely affected preparation, attendance or performance in an assessment or examination that may merit consideration by an Extenuating Circumstances Committee. **This is an illustrative but not exhaustive list:**

- i) serious illness or injury
- ii) the death or chronic illness of a family member, dependant and/or friend
- iii) domestic, financial and/or personal crises leading to severe stress
- iv) unplanned absence arising from circumstances such as jury service, territorial army deployment, pregnancy, maternity, paternity or adoption leave, or caring responsibilities
- v) circumstances arising as a consequence, or subsequent to, suspension or temporary exclusion from the University, which were not intended as a penalty
- vi) significant adverse weather or travel disruption
- vii) major disruption whilst under examination or assessment conditions.

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#### **EC1.4 Examples of circumstances unlikely to merit consideration**

Examples of circumstances or events that **would not normally** be considered as valid by an Extenuating Circumstances Committee include the following:

- i) planned events, such as holidays, house moves, or planned activities such as extracurricular commitments that could reasonably have been expected
- ii) assessments scheduled close together or on the same day
- iii) misreading timetables, misunderstanding the requirements for assessment, and/or inadequate planning or time management
- iv) technical failure, loss, breakage, or theft of an individual computer, printer or storage device preventing submission of work on time
- v) exam stress or panic attacks not diagnosed as illness
- vi) minor disruption whilst under examination or assessment conditions
- vii) last-minute or careless travel arrangements
- viii) circumstances caused by the withdrawal of information technology services, learning resources or facilities due to debt or non-payment of fees due to the University.

In all cases, the decision on whether submitted circumstances merit consideration will be made by the Extenuating Circumstances Committee.

#### **EC2 Submission of Extenuating Circumstances**

Students are expected to submit extenuating circumstances (accompanied by medical or other evidence in support of their submission), identifying the impact of particular difficulties for the completion of coursework or assessments, for each occasion that they consider these difficulties have adversely affected their performance.

All extenuating circumstances must be submitted on the Form EC1 to the Faculty Head of Business and Administration, or otherwise designated responsible administrator noted on Form EC1. A receipt will be issued in the form of an email to the student's university email account, on submission of the form and this should be retained by the student as confirmation that the information was submitted. Receipt of Form EC1 does not mean that the extenuating circumstances have been accepted as valid.

Form EC1 must be submitted either electronically from a University email address or in a sealed envelope marked 'confidential' and 'extenuating circumstances'. All submissions will be considered in strict confidence and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Form EC1 is available as an appendix to this document, on the University website or from faculty offices. Extenuating circumstances not submitted in compliance with these regulations will not be considered.

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## **EC2 Submission of Extenuating Circumstances (continued)**

Extenuating circumstances **must be** submitted no later than ten working days after the end of an examination diet. Exceptionally, late extenuating circumstances submissions may be accepted for consideration up until the start the published university dates for Programme Board of Examiners meetings. After this date, any further applications related to extenuating circumstances are considered as an appeal under the University's appeals process. In such cases the student will be expected to detail how their exceptional extenuating circumstances prevented them from meeting the original extenuating circumstances deadline. In this situation, a student should refer to the Regulations for Academic Appeals and submit an appeal on the basis of late extenuating circumstances by completing Form AP1 within 15 working days of the publication of results. These will be considered by an Extenuating Circumstances Committee in line with Regulations EC4 and EC5.

### **EC2.1 Supporting evidence**

All submissions for extenuating circumstances must be accompanied by suitable, relevant third party evidence which must name or be directly relevant to the person submitting the extenuating circumstances form. In the case of letters, it must be the original, signed and submitted on headed paper.

The following are illustrative examples of suitable supporting evidence:

- i) General Practitioner's letter containing details of extenuating circumstances and the period covered
- ii) Other medical practitioner letter, e.g. from a hospital, private surgery, or clinic
- iii) Court Order covering the relevant period
- iv) notice of summons to attend court, with relevant dates
- v) a Sheriff Court Notice
- vi) a legal notice or other verifiable letter from a solicitor
- vii) a notice of Jury Duty
- viii) a notice of deployment from armed forces or other government agency
- ix) a police report, incident log, or formal caution notice where accompanied by a formal report
- x) a death certificate
- xi) a notification of death from a recognised and verifiable media source (for example a newspaper) may be acceptable in lieu of other documentary evidence
- xii) a counsellor's letter, or University counsellor's letter or Independent Student Advisory Services Advisor's letter detailing any relevant non health and non-medical issues
- xiii) visa documents or documents relating to revocation, tribunal or other visa issues.

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## **EC2.1 Supporting evidence (continued)**

The following are examples of evidence which would not be regarded as acceptable in isolation:

- i) personal letter
- ii) letters of support from personal tutors or other academic staff
- iii) newspaper articles are not normally acceptable, except where noted above
- iv) prescriptions are not normally accepted as a suitable alternative to doctors letters, except in recognised cases of national or regional epidemic
- v) penalty notices, unless accompanied by a suitable police report or police incident log
- vi) travel tickets, unless accompanied by other documentary evidence. However, in some instances, travel documents may be acceptable in lieu of other evidence being available.

## **EC2.2 Letters of support**

Students may wish to submit letters or character references from family members, academic staff or other personal associates in support of their submission. While such letters or references will be accepted in order to provide a full overview to the Extenuating Circumstances Committee, they will not stand in place of, and will only be considered in conjunction with the required third party evidence.

## **EC3 Advice and guidance**

Students are strongly encouraged to seek advice and guidance on these regulations, and on the preparation of their submission. The University has a wide range of sources of support and advisors and students are encouraged to seek advice, in the first instance, from one or more of the following:

- i) the Independent Student Advice Service located within Napier Students Association
- ii) Student Wellbeing Support Services
- iii) relevant Programme Leaders
- iv) relevant Module Leaders
- v) Personal Development Tutors
- vi) other Advisory Staff
- vii) NHS Occupational Health Service (for nursing and midwifery students only).

In addition to the above, students may also seek advice from the Citizens Advice Bureau, or other external advisory service. Nursing, midwifery and social care students also have recourse to their respective trade union representative and the Faculty Pastoral Care Advisor.

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## **EC4 Extenuating Circumstance Committee**

All submissions of extenuating circumstances will be considered by an Extenuating Circumstances Committee. The Committee is empowered to make formal decisions on each submission and shall be entitled to take into account any other relevant information as they see fit, except the progression and award decisions of individual students.

### **EC4.1 Constitution of an Extenuating Circumstances Committee**

An Extenuating Circumstances Committee shall comprise a minimum of three staff, including the Convenor and a senior member of staff from another Faculty. Any nominated substitute must be approved by the Convenor in advance of the meeting. The general membership constituting an Extenuating Circumstances Committee shall be as prescribed in Regulation EC4.2.

### **EC4.2 Faculty Extenuating Circumstances Committee**

A Faculty Extenuating Circumstances Committee shall be constituted as follows:

- i) the Assistant Dean with responsibility for quality matters who shall act as Convenor of the Committee
- ii) all Heads of School, or respective nominee, from the faculty concerned
- iii) a senior member of academic staff from another faculty
- iv) the Faculty Head of Business and Administration, or respective nominee
- v) a Clerk to the Committee who will keep a confidential record of membership, proceedings and all decisions.

### **EC4.3 Schedule of meetings**

The Extenuating Circumstance Committee will meet not less than two working days prior to the Programme Board of Examiners.

## **EC5 Procedure and decision making process of an Extenuating Circumstances Committee**

In considering extenuating circumstances, the Extenuating Circumstances Committee shall take the following actions in respect of each submission, and shall formally report to the relevant Programme Board of Examiners. Three categories of decision can be made by the Extenuating Circumstances Committee:

- i) The Extenuating Circumstances Committee considers that extenuating circumstances materially affected the student's performance and the Committee recommends such submissions as **Valid**.
- ii) The Extenuating Circumstances Committee considers that extenuating circumstances did not materially affect the student's performance, or they fall outwith the definition of an extenuating circumstance, the Committee recommends such submissions as **Not Valid**.
- iii) There was insufficient information provided on which the Extenuating Circumstances Committee could make a decision and therefore the decision has been **Deferred**.

A minute will be taken of each case discussed. In cases defined in Regulation EC5 iii), the Clerk to the Extenuating Circumstances Committee will ask students to submit additional information within five working days of the Extenuating

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Circumstances Committee meeting so that their submission can be considered by Convenor's action. The Clerk of the Extenuating Circumstances Committee will request this additional information from students within 48 hours of the end of the Extenuating Circumstances Committee meeting. On receipt the Convenor will take Convenor's actions and consider the application valid or invalid. Should the evidence not be submitted after five working days the application will be deemed to be not valid.

Decisions on whether the submitted claims considered by the Extenuating Circumstances Committee are valid or deferred will be forwarded to the Convenor and Clerk of the appropriate Programme Board of Examiners. The extenuating circumstances decision taken will be recorded in the Programme Board of Examiners' minute and taken into account as the Programme Board makes academic decisions in relation to a student's academic progression.

In the case where a student has passed a module that they have valid extenuating circumstances on, the Programme Board of Examiners will consider these in the context of the student's academic profile. In accordance with Regulation A7.13, the Programme Board of Examiners cannot allow the student to retake the assessment specified by the Module Board of Examiners to improve their result.

Extenuating circumstances which were presented to the Extenuating Circumstances Committee and deemed not valid will not be raised again at the Programme Board of Examiners.

#### **EC5 Procedure and decision making process of an Extenuating Circumstances Committee (continued)**

Following the meeting of the Programme Board of Examiners the student's module record will be updated to indicate if extenuating circumstances were valid. Information on whether extenuating circumstances have been considered in previous sessions will be flagged on the documentation available to subsequent Programme Boards of Examiners.

Student's results will outline the consideration of extenuating circumstances by the Extenuating Circumstances Committee and consideration of progression and academic study decisions by the Programme Board of Examiners on their final results.

#### **EC6 Confidentiality**

In **exceptional** circumstances a student may choose to report their circumstances and third party evidence either directly to the Convenor of the Extenuating Circumstances Committee or to a nominated member of staff not connected with their programme of study; usually a student counsellor in Student & Academic Services or an advisor in ISAS.

On receipt of such a request, the staff member or counsellor should advise the student of the benefits of disclosing information related to their circumstances, to allow their particular circumstances to be disclosed to the full panel and encourage the student to complete the details requested on Form EC1. Students should be made aware that whilst strict confidentiality will be adhered to, the more detail disclosed to the Extenuating Circumstances Committee, the greater the Committee's ability to take full account of the reasons for their application.

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Should a student still not wish to complete key sections of Form EC1 which outline their circumstances, then the counsellor or staff member should make the necessary arrangements for the student to report their circumstances in person and confidentially to the Convenor of the Extenuating Circumstances Committee or their depute.

The Convenor of the Extenuating Circumstances Committee must be satisfied that, in their judgement, the circumstances reported have been properly evidenced to justify their recommendation to the Extenuating Circumstances Committee. The Convenor is responsible for making their recommendation to the Committee for approval and homologation.

## **EC7 Requests to extend a period of Suspended Studies**

Edinburgh Napier University students may suspend their studies for a period of up to two years over the duration of their programme. Such requests need to be made in accordance with section A8.4 of the University Academic Regulations. Should any student who has reached the end of their two year suspension period wish to extend beyond this, they should submit an EC1 form with evidence to support their rationale for requesting this extension, for consideration by their Faculty's Extenuating Circumstances Committee.

If the Extenuating Circumstances Committee deems the extenuating circumstances detailed in the application as a valid case for extending the suspension period, then extension will be granted for 1 final year. Details of the decisions will be forwarded to the Convenor and Clerk of the appropriate Programme Board of Examiners, who will be asked to contact the student regarding the decision of the Extenuating Circumstances Committee and the implications this has for the student and their further engagement with their programme. The extenuating circumstances decision taken will be recorded in the Programme Board of Examiners' minute and taken into account as the Programme Board makes academic decisions in relation to a student's academic progression. The decision will draw on the principle of regulation A2.4 that students will be allowed to continue on their studies for as long as they are considered to be able to benefit and succeed.

Full details on suspending studies can be found in section A8.4 of the University's Regulations.

**STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**

Please ensure you consult the Extenuating Circumstances Regulations before completing this form.

**The information you supply on this form and in support of your submission of extenuating circumstances will be held securely by Edinburgh Napier University in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Your information will be entered into a filing system which is accessed only by authorised University staff and will be used strictly for the purposes of processing your submission and preparing statistical and audit data on an anonymised basis. Your form and other documentation will be securely disposed of thereafter in accordance with the University's records retention schedules. By supplying such information you consent to the University using your data, including any sensitive personal data for these purposes.**

**PART ONE: Your Details (Please either type out or print and use ink)**

Full Name and address (for correspondence):	Matriculation Number:
School:	Programme of Study:
Year/Level:	Telephone Number (s):

**PART TWO: Modules Affected by Extenuating Circumstances**

Module Number:	Module Number:
Module Title:	Module Title:
Period Affected:	Period Affected:
Assessment Type(s):	Assessment Type(s):
Module Number:	Module Number:
Module Title:	Module Title:
Period Affected:	Period Affected:
Assessment Type(s):	Assessment Type(s):
Module Number:	Module Number:
Module Title:	Module Title:
Period Affected:	Period Affected:
Assessment Type(s):	Assessment Type(s):

### PART THREE: Your Extenuating Circumstances

In the spaces below please give clear information regarding your circumstances. You should use additional sheets if required. If you have been a Suspended Studies student for two years and wish to extend this further, please indicate and the reasons for the extension request here.

Please detail the **nature** of the Extenuating Circumstances:

Please outline the **impact** you believe the Extenuating Circumstances have had on you and your academic studies:

### PART FOUR: PREVIOUS EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

Have you previously submitted an EC1 form in respect of these or related circumstances?

Yes

No

(Please cross the one which applies)

If you answered **yes** above, please give details of dates, of applications(s) so that previous form(s) can be identified.

## PART FIVE: Third Party Evidence to support your application

Please cross the box and attach the third party written evidence you have enclosed:

Letter from GP/Medical Certificate

Letter from ISAS

Letter from other Medical Practitioner

Legal or Court Documentation

Letter from Counsellor

Visa Document

Other Evidence (Please Specify):

## PART SIX: Extension Deadlines

Has an extension to an assessment submission deadline been granted? :

Yes

No

(Please cross the one which applies)

If yes what arrangements were made and for which modules:

## **IMPORTANT:**

Before you submit this form, you must ensure that all sections are complete and that you have signed the box below. The form will be date stamped when it is received, and confirmation of receipt will be posted to your home address or emailed to your University email account (NOT to other personal email addresses).

SIGNED:

DATE:

Please sign and date form before submission. For Submissions via email, a valid email address recognisably registered in your name will be classed as a digital signature.

Receipt Stamp:

Date:

## **Submission**

**Your Extenuating Circumstances form should be submitted as follows:**

**Faculty of Engineering, Computing and Creative Industries:**

School of Arts and Creative Industries.

School of Computing.

School of Engineering and the Built Environment.

All EC1 Forms should be submitted, during office hours (9am – 4.45pm), to:

School of Arts and Creative Industries:- Room C81a, Merchiston

School of Computing students: - Room C34, Merchiston.

School of Engineering and the Built Environment students:- Room C81b, Merchiston.

**Faculty of Health, Life and Social Sciences:**

School of Nursing, Midwifery & Social Care.

School of Life, Sports & Social Sciences.

All EC1 Forms should be submitted to:

Assistant Faculty Manager, Room 1.B 18, Sighthill

**Edinburgh Napier University Business School:**

School of Accounting, Economics & Statistics.

School of Management & Law.

School of Marketing, Tourism & Languages.

All EC1 forms should be submitted to:

Deputy Faculty Manager, c/o The Faculty Office, Room 2/58, Craiglockhart

## EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES PROCEDURE

### **STAGE 1: Obtain and complete Form EC1**

Form EC1 can be found online at

<https://studentportal.napier.ac.uk/sas/appeals/Pages/default.aspx> or collected from school or faculty offices.

Form EC1 must be submitted directly to the relevant school or faculty administrator, with all

Deadline for receipt of Form EC1 by the faculty is 10 working days following the end of the most recent exam diet.

### **STAGE 2: Consideration by Extenuating Circumstances Committee**

All submitted forms considered by a committee comprising of senior academic and administrative staff from the faculty in which the student submitting Form EC1 studies, as well as a senior member of academic staff from another faculty.

Extenuating Circumstances Committees meet at least two working days ahead of the first Programme Board of Examiners.

### **STAGE 3: Decisions reported to Programme Board of Examiners**

The decisions reached by the Extenuating Circumstances Committee (including decisions made with regard to requests to extend study suspensions beyond 2 years) are reported to the Programme Board of Examiners via the Clerk of the Board. The Board may use this information when making decisions on student progression and awards.

Programme Boards of Examiners are held approximately 10 - 12 working days following the end of the most recent exam diet.

### **STAGE 4: Decision communicated to student**

Communication to the student from the faculty or school office following the Programme Board of Examiners will outline the consideration of extenuating circumstances by the Extenuating Circumstances Committee and consideration of progression and academic study decisions by the Programme Board of Examiners on their final results. Details of decisions made on requests to extend a period of suspended studies will also be communicated.

Programme Boards decisions are communicated to students approximately 15 working days following the end of the most recent exam diet.