



Royal College of Art

Postgraduate Art & Design

Extenuating Circumstances Policy

Introduction

1. Assessment boards and panels may, according to the Academic Regulations, take into account information provided by a student on extenuating circumstances that have had an adverse impact on assessment performance.
2. The Academic Regulations provide for an examination to be deferred in the following circumstances:
 - Absence, for a valid reason, from the course which prevented completion of the submission;
 - Any circumstances which prevented the student from attending the assessment on the day that it is scheduled to take place, and which are beyond the student's control;
 - Any circumstances which are beyond the student's control and which prevent the student from demonstrating the extent to which they have achieved the defined learning outcomes of the element of assessment in question.
3. Where a case for extenuating circumstances is accepted by the assessment board or panel, then the board or panel may defer the assessment by:
 - rescheduling that assessment
 - setting the student a specific programme of work, which enables the student to demonstrate achievement of the relevant learning outcomes, in lieu of the assessment or;
 - permitting the student a further attempt at the assessment at the next available opportunity without penalty.
4. Where a student has, in the judgement of the assessment board or panel, marginally failed an examination, and has extenuating circumstances accepted by the assessment board or panel, then the board or panel may, as an alternative to the outcomes outlined in paragraph 3 of this Policy, apply to the Academic Board for Concessions & Discipline (ABCD) for the student to be considered as a pass in that examination.
5. Where a student takes a leave of absence (whether short or long term) then the student will not be able to complete any assessment that falls during the period of the leave of absence; in such cases the assessment will automatically be deferred until the next available opportunity

6. This Policy outlines how the College and its assessment boards and panels will identify and treat applications from students for consideration of extenuating circumstances. It includes a definition of extenuating circumstances, and identifies acceptable evidence and responses from assessment boards and panels.

Definition

7. Extenuating Circumstances are defined as unforeseeable and unpreventable circumstances which are beyond the student's control, and are likely to prevent the student from demonstrating the extent to which they have achieved the defined learning outcomes of an element or elements of assessment.
8. Disabled students who have a sensory or mobility impairment or a fluctuating health condition (including a mental health condition), should contact the Disability Adviser within Student Support at the outset of their studies. The College will then establish an Inclusion Plan confirmed by the Disability Adviser. In these cases students should use the Extenuating Circumstances provision only where:
 - their condition has altered in a significant way since confirmation of the Inclusion Plan, and this has had an impact on the student's performance at assessment;
 - the agreed reasonable adjustments are not adequate to enable the student to demonstrate their achievement;
 - the adjustments were agreed too late to apply for this assessment;
 - they are subject to circumstances beyond their control, which are unconnected to their pre-existing Inclusion Plan.
9. Disabled students may only claim extenuating circumstances relating to their disability where there is a reasonable case that the College could not make appropriate adjustments for the disability in advance of assessment. All disabled students are encouraged to contact the Student Support team, with a view to establishing an Inclusion Plan, which shall articulate the adjustments that shall be made by the College during their studies, including in assessment.

Applying for Extenuating Circumstances

10. Requests for consideration of extenuating circumstances should be submitted to the Head of Programme, or their nominee no later than 7 days after the date of the examination. The precise procedure for applying for extenuating circumstances consideration shall be articulated in the handbook for the Programme.
11. All requests for extenuating circumstances must be supported by appropriate evidence, relevant to the situation. For instance, a request for extenuating circumstances on medical grounds should normally be supported by written

evidence from a registered medical practitioner. Where evidence from a medical practitioner is not available, the reason for this should be explained in the request.

12. Requests not supported by appropriate documentation may only be considered on the approval of the Registrar.
13. Evidence must cover the time period for which the student is requesting extenuating circumstances to be applied to.
14. Evidence must be provided in English. Where evidence is not available in English then the student must seek approval from the Registrar for the use of a translation service, which will be at the student's expense.

Confidentiality

15. Extenuating Circumstances claims will often involve the processing of sensitive personal data, as defined by the UK Data Protection Act. The College shall make every effort to ensure that such data is kept confidential and normally only supplied to members of the sub-board charged with considering the request.

Consideration Process

16. Each School Examination Board¹ shall nominate a sub-board to consider requests from students of Programmes within their remit. The sub-board should consist of at least 3 academic staff members (not normally including a member of staff employed solely on a visiting lecturer contract). The sub-board shall report all accepted cases to the relevant assessment board or panel; this report shall consist only of the identity of the student for whom extenuating circumstances have been accepted. The assessment board or panel shall then decide whether to re-schedule the examination, to set an alternative piece of work or, for marginal fails, to consider the student as a pass. Any recommendation to consider the student as a pass in these circumstances shall be reported to the ABCD for consideration.
17. Each School Examination Board (or programme board where appropriate) must submit an annual report to ABCD, giving details of decisions made, to enable ABCD to ensure consistency of approach between the different Boards.

Extension to Referral Period

18. Extenuating circumstances will be considered in relation to extension to referral period requests, in line with the College's Referral Policy.

¹ For cross-College provision such as the Graduate Diploma programme, PGCert programme and the CHS unit, the programme level board shall appoint a sub-panel for this purpose.

19. After two years of referral extension due to extenuating circumstances, the College may consider the award of an Aegrotat degree, if appropriate.

Academic Standards Committee

March 2021