

The University's Academic Regulations: 2023-24

Extenuating Circumstances, Extensions And Deferrals

Regulations

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EC1 Extenuating Circumstances

These regulations apply to all matriculated students of Edinburgh Napier University whose ability to complete an assessment of any type on the due date has been adversely affected by extenuating circumstances that have had a detrimental effect on their academic studies.

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 Acceptable grounds for extenuating circumstances.

The following are examples of extenuating circumstances that may be taken into account by the University. **This is an illustrative but not exhaustive list:**

- i) serious illness or injury; or a communicable disease such as Covid which would prevent engagement with learning, particularly on-campus activities.
- ii) the death or chronic illness of a family member, dependant or friend
- iii) domestic, financial or personal crises, victim of crime
- iv) unplanned absence arising from circumstances such as jury service, 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) Participation in an authorised national or international sporting competition or authorised national sports training camps (see Dual Career Athlete and Coach Policy)
- viii) Where students have been identified as requiring reasonable adjustments and their difficulties or delays in accessing support are a factor
- ix) Major disruption whilst under examination or assessment conditions.
- x) A requirement to attend activities and events in relation to commitments with active armed forces, Reservists and service units, e.g., scheduled training events.

EC1.3 Unacceptable grounds for extenuating circumstances

The following are examples of circumstances or events that **would not normally** be considered as valid extenuating circumstances:

- 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) Minor ailments such as colds and hangovers where it has been possible for you to continue to engage with key learning and teaching activities (such as through recordings)
- v) Technical failure, loss, breakage, or theft of an individual computer, printer or storage device preventing submission of coursework on time
- vi) Minor disruption whilst under examination or assessment conditions
- vii) Last-minute or careless travel arrangements
- viii) Employment commitments for full-time students

- ix) 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 (known as Results Withheld (RW) status).
- x) The impact of widespread disruption caused by weather, viral pandemics, social/political unrest, acts of terrorism or other events out with the University's control where the University has already taken or will be taking action to mitigate for the impact on students' studies, assessment marks and/or award classifications.

EC1.4 Options available to students affected by Extenuating Circumstances

A student who has been affected by extenuating circumstances may apply under these regulations for:

- **Extension**, where they are unable to submit coursework by the due date as a result of extenuating circumstances, but can do so a few days later.
- **Deferral of assessment**, where they are unable to complete an examination at the scheduled time, or cannot complete coursework, even if an extension were granted.
- **Unfit to sit**, where they took an assessment believing they were fit to do so, but were affected by extenuating circumstances.

EC2 Extensions

Students are expected to monitor their workload, be aware of all submission deadlines, and be able to organise themselves accordingly. However, it is recognised that there may be occasional, exceptional circumstances that genuinely affect the ability of a student to complete coursework on time. In such circumstances, which arise owing to **exceptional, serious and acute problems or events**, a student may request an extension to a coursework submission deadline.

EC2.1 Process for application

Requests for extension should be made using the coursework extension request form ([RE1](#)), which must be submitted to the designated module leader, or their designate. Exceptionally, at the module leader's discretion, a verbal request can be considered.

EC2.2 Deadline for application

Requests for extension must be submitted no later than the date on which the coursework is due. Requests submitted after the due date will not be considered, and penalties for late submission cannot be removed retrospectively.

EC2.3 Decisions on applications

A module leader may approve or decline an extension application. Where an extension is approved, they will confirm a deadline to the student in writing, usually by email and the decision will be logged. The normal duration of an extension is up to 5 working days. Exceptionally, a module leader may, at their discretion, grant up to 10 working days where the circumstances are severe or where the module has a value of more than 20 credits. In some cases a module leader may suggest that a deferral is more appropriate.

EC2.4 Evidence

Independent evidence is not required to support a request for up to a 5 working day extension. At their discretion, a module leader may ask to see supporting evidence in relation to up to 10 working days' extension.

EC2.5 Dual Career Athlete and Coach Policy

Please refer to the [Dual Career Athlete and Coach Policy](#) for extension requests related to international competition and training camps.

EC2.6 Class tests

University guidance is to incorporate additional time as standard for class tests as part of the University's commitment to mainstreaming reasonable adjustments. Module leaders should consider requests for an individual who cannot attend a class test and explore whether there is a reasonable alternative. Where it is determined that there is no other alternative, students who miss a class test, or who are aware they are going to miss a class test, should apply to defer the test.

EC3 Deferral of Assessment

Students who are unable to attend, submit or participate in any form of assessment, or that whose preparation for assessment has been compromised as a result of extenuating circumstances, may apply to defer the assessment to the next assessment diet.

EC3.1 Process for application

Applications for deferral should be submitted by completing the relevant sections of form [DE1](#) available on [myNapier](#). An acknowledgement email will be issued on submission of the form and this should be retained by the student as evidence that the application was submitted. Please note that the application process will only use the university email address supplied to the student.

EC3.2 Deadline for application

Ideally, applications for deferral of assessment should be made ahead of the assessment point for which deferral is requested, whether this be a coursework submission date, a formal examination, a practical assessment or any other form of assessment. Where this is not possible, an application for deferral and associated evidence may be accepted up to 5 working days after the assessment point was missed.

EC 3.3 Evidence

Students are expected to submit their application for deferral with recent (within last 30 days) medical or other evidence in support of their submission,

identifying the impact of particular difficulties on the completion of coursework, assessments or attendance at an examination or class test. Please refer to Annex 1 for further details. Documentary evidence should be emailed to the School Extenuating Circumstances inbox or, for students studying on programmes with partners overseas, to their local administrative team. The email addresses are available on [myNapier](#). If it is not possible to email the evidence, students may submit it to a campus iPoint/reception, marked for the attention of the School's Extenuating Circumstances Officer.

EC3.4 Process for considering applications

Each School has appointed an Extenuating Circumstances Officer, who will be an experienced member of academic or administrative staff, who will consider applications in the first instance. Where the application is uncontentious and well supported by appropriate evidence the Extenuating Circumstances Officer is empowered to make an immediate decision approving the application for deferral. In cases where there is doubt about the validity of the claim or the supporting evidence, the Extenuating Circumstances Officer will consult with members of the School Extenuating Circumstances Panel.

EC3.5 Decisions on applications

An Extenuating Circumstances Officer may approve an application or refer it to the School Extenuating Circumstances Panel. The School Extenuating Circumstances Panel may approve deferral, decline deferral or seek further information or evidence from the student. Where a student has applied for deferral using the same circumstances in two consecutive assessment periods, suspension of studies may be considered if this is in the student's best interests, in consultation with the student's Personal Development Tutor and/or programme leader as per Academic Regulation A8.4a).

EC3.6 Impact on progression

It is important for students to note that deferral of assessment may impact on their ability to progress to the next stage of their programme, or to graduate at the expected time. Students should seek advice on the impact of deferral on their progression, eligibility for funding and visa status, as applicable.

EC4 Unfit to Sit

The University applies the principle of 'fit to sit', in that a student who attends, submits or participates in any form of assessment, is declaring themselves to be in a position to do so. However, it is recognised that there may be circumstances in which a student does not fully realise the impact of extenuating circumstances until the assessment has been completed. This process allows students to highlight such cases immediately after the assessment.

EC4.1 Process for application

Applications for unfit to sit should be submitted by completing the relevant sections of form [DE1](#) available on [myNapier](#), ensuring that the application makes clear that it relates to unfitness to sit in an assessment that was taken. An acknowledgement email will be issued on submission of the form and this should be retained by the student as evidence that the application was submitted. Please note that the application process will only use the university email address supplied to the student.

EC4.2 Deadline for application

Applications for unfit to sit should be submitted no later than 5 working days after the date on which the student took or submitted the assessment. Applications beyond this deadline will not be considered, and any grade received for the assessment will stand.

EC4.3 Evidence

Students are expected to submit their application for unfit to sit with medical or other evidence in support of their submission, identifying the impact of the

circumstances on their performance in the assessment. Please refer to Annex 1 for further details. Where a student was unwell during an examination, the Extenuating Circumstances Officer will consult the invigilator's report. Documentary evidence should be emailed to the School Office. The email addresses are available on [myNapier](#). If it is not possible to email the evidence, students may submit it to a campus iPoint/reception.

EC4.4 Process for considering applications

Applications for unfit to sit will be considered by the School Extenuating Circumstances Panel.

EC4.5 Decisions on applications

The School Extenuating Circumstances Panel may approve the application, decline the application, or seek further evidence from the student. Where the application is approved, the assessment will not be marked, the attempt will be considered void, and the assessment will be deferred to the next opportunity. Where the application is declined, the work will be marked and the mark will stand.

EC4.6 Impact on progression

It is important for students to note that deferral of assessment via the unfit to sit process may impact on their ability to progress to the next stage of their programme, or to graduate at the expected time. Students should seek advice on the impact of deferral on their progression, eligibility for funding and visa status, as applicable.

EC5 Exceptional Extenuating Circumstances

The University recognises that some students may experience exceptional extenuating circumstances. The exceptional extenuating circumstances process is in place to support

those students for whom it was impossible for them to engage with the process at the usual time. It allows for deferral of missed assessment **only**; it cannot be used for retrospective extension or for assessments that were taken, regardless of the circumstances.

EC5.1 Process for deferral due to exceptional extenuating circumstances

Where a student's circumstances have been so severe that they were unable to undertake assessment and could not apply for deferral by the deadline, they may submit an application for deferral due to Exceptional Extenuating Circumstances by completing the relevant sections of form [DE1](#) available on [myNapier](#).

EC5.2 Deadline for application

The final deadline by which an application for exceptional extenuating circumstances can be submitted is five working days after the end of the last week of examinations during the trimester in which the assessment was due. Details of dates can be found [here](#). Applications will not be considered beyond this date, regardless of the circumstances.

EC5.3 Evidence

Students applying to defer due to exceptional mitigating circumstances must provide both evidence relating to the application to defer, and further evidence and a detailed explanation of how their extenuating circumstances prevented them from engaging with the process at the appropriate time.

EC5.4 Process for considering applications

Applications for exceptional mitigating circumstances will be considered by the School Extenuating Circumstances Panel.

EC5.5 Decisions on applications

The School Extenuating Circumstances Panel may approve deferral, decline deferral or seek further information or evidence from the student.

EC6 **Next assessment opportunity**

School Extenuating Circumstances Panels may approve deferral of assessment under the categories of deferral, unfit to sit, or exceptional mitigating circumstances. Where the Panel has found a student's circumstances to be valid, and has approved deferral, Programme Assessment Boards will allow the student to take the assessment(s) in the module(s) affected by the extenuating circumstances as a first attempt (or as a second attempt) at the next appropriate opportunity:

- (a) A compulsory opportunity for assessment (or reassessment) is provided in the July following delivery of the module. Thereafter, assessment (or reassessment) should be undertaken in the next trimester in which the module is delivered.
- (b) If practicable, a student may choose to be assessed (or reassessed) at any available earlier opportunity than that stated in Regulation EC6(a). If a student chooses this option it will count as their first opportunity (or their sole reassessment opportunity).
- (c) A compulsory opportunity for assessment (or reassessment) for a student who starts in September and is enrolled on a programme of study leading to the award of a Bachelor of Midwifery or to the award of a Bachelor of Nursing at the University is provided in the August following delivery of the

module. Thereafter, assessment (or reassessment) should be undertaken in the normal trimester of delivery of the module.

- (d) A compulsory opportunity for assessment (or reassessment) for a student who starts in January and is enrolled on a programme of study leading to the award of a Bachelor of Midwifery or to the award of a Bachelor of Nursing at the University is provided in the December following delivery of the module. Thereafter, assessment (or reassessment) should be undertaken in the normal trimester of delivery of the module.
- (e) If practicable, a student mentioned in EC6(c) or EC6(d) may choose to be assessed (or reassessed) at any available earlier opportunity than that stated in Regulation EC6(c) or (d). If a student chooses this option it will count as their first opportunity (or their sole reassessment opportunity).

EC7 Suspension of Study

Students may experience serious or more long-term issues that affect their studies. In these cases, a suspension of study may be more appropriate than extending or deferring assessment. For example, where a student has an extended period of illness, or where their circumstances will not have improved by the next opportunity, suspension may be considered. Further information is available in Academic Regulations A8.4. Students wishing to explore the possibility of suspension should consult their Programme Leader.

EC8 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 Panel or to a nominated member of staff not

connected with their programme of study; usually a member of staff in the Student Wellbeing & Inclusion Team or an advisor in ENSA Advice.

EC8.1 Process on disclosure to an individual

The staff member will advise the student of the benefits of disclosing full information to the Panel and encourage the student to complete the details requested on form DE1 to enable the Panel to take full account of their individual circumstances. Should the student still not wish to complete form DE1, the 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 Panel or their deputy. If there are two or more disclosures for a student on health grounds – physical or mental – this would lead to a referral to the Disability and Inclusion Team, and if there are any safeguarding concerns, these will be referred to the Safeguarding team.

EC8.2 Convenor's assessment of evidence

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

EC9 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) School Extenuating Circumstances Officer
- ii) Edinburgh Napier Students' Association Advice (ENSA Advice)
located within Edinburgh Napier Students Association

- iii) Student Wellbeing Support Services, including Disability and Inclusion and Keep on Track teams.
- iv) School Disability Contact
- v) Relevant Programme Leaders
- vi) Relevant Module Leaders
- vii) Personal Development Tutor
- viii) Other Advisory Staff
- ix) 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.

EC10 School Extenuating Circumstances Panels

EC10.1 Constitution of an Extenuating Circumstances Panel

An Extenuating Circumstances Panel will comprise a minimum of four staff, including the Dean of School or their nominee, the Extenuating Circumstances Officer and a member of staff from another school. Other members will be drawn from the School's academic staff. A Clerk to the Panel who will keep a confidential record of membership, proceedings and all decisions.

EC10.2 Schedule of meetings

In addition to considering applications for deferral and unfit to sit as required, the Extenuating Circumstance Panel will meet on at least two occasions each trimester, to include a meeting no later than two days prior to the Programme Assessment Board to consider any applications for exceptional extenuating circumstances.

EC10.3 Decision making process of an Extenuating Circumstances Panel

The Extenuating Circumstances Panel will take a formal decision on each submission under the categories of deferral, unfit to sit, and exceptional mitigating circumstances, and will report its decisions to the relevant Programme Assessment Board.

The following decisions can be made by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel:

- i) The Extenuating Circumstances Panel considers that extenuating circumstances significantly have or will affect the student's performance and the Panel records such submissions as **Valid and approves the deferral of assessment.**
- ii) The Extenuating Circumstances Panel considers that extenuating circumstances did not significantly affect the student's performance, have been submitted too late for consideration or they fall out-with the definition of extenuating circumstances. The Panel records such submissions as **Not Valid and rejects the deferral of assessment.**
- iii) There was insufficient information provided on which the Extenuating Circumstances Panel could make a decision and therefore the **decision has been deferred, pending receipt of further evidence.**

EC10.4 Requests to extend a period of Suspended Studies

The Extenuating Circumstances Panel will be responsible for considering applications for exceptional extension to a period of suspension in accordance with Regulation A8.4 (i).

EC11 Programme Assessment Boards

The decisions taken by the School Extenuating Circumstances Panel will be recorded in the Programme Assessment Board's minute and taken into account as the Programme Assessment Board makes academic decisions in relation to a student's academic progression.

EC11.1 Circumstances not valid

Extenuating circumstances that were presented to the Extenuating Circumstances Panel and deemed not valid will not be raised at the Programme Assessment Board, and any assessment not submitted or examination or test not attended will be treated as failed for the purposes of progression or award decisions.

EC11.2 Updating student records

The student's module record will be updated to indicate if extenuating circumstances were valid. This update is generally made prior to the Programme Assessment Board meeting.

EC12 Appeals

There is no right of appeal against the decision of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel, except in cases where there is evidence that the application was not properly considered in line with these Regulations.

This document has been reformatted to make it more accessible. Should you have any feedback, please email quality@napier.ac.uk

Version Control	Update Detail
Last update November 2023	Clarification on acceptable and unacceptable grounds in relation to minor ailments & communicable diseases.

Annex 1: Supporting Evidence

The following are illustrative examples of suitable time-relevant, third-party supporting evidence to accompany an application for deferral of assessment or unfit to sit.

- i) a General Practitioner's letter containing details of extenuating circumstances and the period covered
- ii) another medical practitioner letter, e.g. from a hospital, private surgery, or clinic
- iii) Court Order covering the relevant period
- iv) a 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 ENSA Advice Advisor's letter on headed paper or from verifiable email address detailing any relevant non health and non-medical issues
- xiii) visa documents or documents relating to revocation, tribunal or other visa issues.
- xiv) for unfit to sit in an examination, a student may indicate that they made the invigilator aware of their circumstances, in which case the University will consult the invigilator's report

Annex 2: Sources of further information

myNapier online information

Craiglockhart

Business School Students - FitToSitECsTBS@napier.ac.uk

Merchiston

All Merchiston based students - Merchistonecs@napier.ac.uk

Sighthill

School of Applied Sciences students - SAS.ExtCirc@napier.ac.uk

School of Health and Social Care students - SHSC.ExtCirc@napier.ac.uk