Extenuating Circumstances Policy

Extenuating Circumstances Policy
Sponsor: Academic Registrar
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Version	Date Approved	Author / Owner Approving Authority	Summary of Changes	Next Review Date
1.0	August 2026	Academic Registrar	New revised policy	August 2029
2.0	September 2026	Academic Registrar	Policy review, change in headings, minor edits.	Augst 2029

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Annex A - Application for Extenuating Circumstances

1. Introduction

1.1 MLA College strives to ensure that all students are given every opportunity to achieve to the best of their academic abilities. During their studies, there may be occasions where students face situations that have an impact on their ability to complete an assessment, which are outside of their control and/or could not have been predicted.

1.2 These situations are called “Extenuating Circumstances” (ECs). If a student is affected by extenuating circumstances, MLA College will endeavour to take these circumstances into account and consider:

- An extension to the published deadline;
- Non-submission of an assessment (this is called a deferral) with the opportunity to be assessed at a later date;
- Non attendance at a time-scheduled assessment (for example, an examination, test, presentation, or field work) with an opportunity to sit the assessment at a later date.

2. Reasons to apply for Extenuating Circumstances

2.1 Circumstances should be assessed against whether they had an impact upon assessment and could not be controlled nor predicted. There may also be times that, due to unforeseen circumstances affecting the entire College community, other reasons may be approved. The list below is not definitive, and if in doubt students should direct enquiries to the Student Experience Team (student.experience@mla.ac.uk).

2.2 **Examples of reasons which might be approved:**

a. Health problems

- Mental health issues.
- Major accident or injury.
- Acute conditions.
- Hospitalisation (including for operations), or those affecting a significant period of study.
- Cough/cold/sore throats or other minor illness, such as minor viral infection, only if it is incapacitating at the time of a time-scheduled assessment.

b. Significant life events

- Pregnancy-related conditions, childbirth (including a partner or surrogate) or adoption.
- Bereavement.
- Separation or divorce of the student or their parents.
- Weddings or civil partnership ceremonies of close family members.

- Representing the College at national level, or country at international level, or participation in an event that is of benefit to the College's national or international reputation and at the request of the College.

c. Unexpected disruption or events

- Recent burglary, theft or serious car accident.
- Jury service.
- For part-time students in full-time employment, exceptional pressure of work or permanent change of employment circumstances.
- Global/national events, such as terror attacks in the students' home city, or affecting family/friends.
- Emergency or temporary measures enacted by the government such as lockdowns, or limitations on movement or travel.
- Serious accident or illness affecting family/friends.

d. Assessment issues

- Unavailability of the College's resources where the Programme Manager confirms that this would have a significant impact on preparation for an assessment or exam.
- Unavailability of Turnitin.
- Late diagnosis of, for example, dyslexia, meaning the appropriate support for assessment, including provision in exams, has not been available.

2.3 **Examples of reasons which might not be approved:**

a. Time management

- Misreading timetables or assessment deadlines.

b. Life events

- Family celebrations, pre-booked holidays, house moves, or similar events, in which a student can control the date, or may choose not to participate in without significant negative effects.
- Appointments of any kind, including legal or medical appointments, which could be rearranged.
- Minor accidents or illness affecting relatives or friends, unless the student is a sole carer.
- Childcare problems, or problems with similar caring responsibilities which could have been anticipated.
- Financial problems (cases of exceptional hardship or significant sudden changes in financial circumstances may be considered).

- Sporting, recreational or voluntary commitments, unless, at the request of the College, representing the College at national level or home country at international level, or participating in an event that is of benefit to the College's national or international reputation.

- For full-time students, normal pressures of employment.

c. Technical Issues

- Corrupt data or media.

- Poor internet connectivity.

- Printer failure.

- E-Submission of an assessment file in an incorrect format, or submission of the wrong file by accident.

- Re-submission of an assessment accidentally after the deadline.

- Lack of access to IT facilities.

d. Other

- Unspecified short-term anxiety from all sources, mild depression or examination stress.

- Problems with postal or other third-party delivery service.

3. How are Temporary or acute conditions considered

3.1 **Temporary or acute conditions -** If a student reports a temporary, acute condition, the College will try to support them to complete their assessment without extenuating circumstances if possible. Students should contact the Student Experience Team as soon as possible, and it may be possible to arrange for temporary additional support or put in place arrangements for assessments so they can still attend or submit on time.

3.2 **Long-term health conditions, including disability**

a. Disability - Students with a disability must contact the Student Experience Team (student.experience@mla.ac.uk), and College services will normally be able to identify, provide or arrange reasonable adjustments, in the form of teaching and learning support detailed in the Student Handbook. If adjustments have been made prior to assessment, students will not normally be eligible to apply for consideration of extenuating circumstances for this disabilitys. Where an exceptional issue arises consideration of an extenuating circumstances beyond any adjustments already made may be awarded. For extenuating circumstances unrelated to a known disability, this policy will apply as usual.

b. Long-term health conditions - A long-term health condition is a mental or physical condition that:

- Is persistent, typically lasting for more than three months and is often life-long.

- Cannot be resolved in a short time, will recur regardless of action, or which needs to be managed on a long-term basis.

- May require help with some activities but is not otherwise disabling.

- Can be managed but can 'flare-up'.

3.3 Students can inform the College about a long-term health condition at any point during their studies by contacting the Student Experience Team (student.experience@mla.ac.uk). If a student experiences any negative impact from a long-term health condition and this is found to affect their ability to complete an assessment, an application for extenuating circumstances must be submitted, however additional evidence will not be required for every application.

3.4 Students must inform the Student Experience Team (student.experience@mla.ac.uk) of any change in a long-term condition or disability, whether improvement or deterioration, so that individual needs can be assessed.

3.5 The Extenuating Circumstance Committee may require further evidence from time-to time and students will be contacted at the start of each academic year to review cases of long-term health or disability to ensure students are provided with the relevant support.

4. How to apply for Extenuating Circumstances

4.1 Students must complete an Application for Extenuating Circumstance form (Annex A to this policy) which will be considered by the Extenuating Circumstances Committee. In exceptional circumstances where a student is prevented from engaging with the application process, a member of MLA College staff may submit an application for extenuating circumstances on behalf of a student.

4.2 While completing an application form the following should be considered by the student:

- The information provided must be accurate and complete, including the dates that the circumstances occurred and of the assessments affected;

- All applications and evidence will be treated confidentially and any personal information provided is to enable consideration of the application;

- All personal data collected will be processed in accordance with current data protection legislation and will normally only be used for this purpose;

- The information provided will be confidential and will normally only be shared with MLA College staff who are directly involved in the extenuating circumstances decision-making process.

4.3 There are circumstances where confidentiality may be overridden by the following considerations:

- When the health and safety of the student, or that of others, is considered to be at risk.

- When the student is considered to be at serious risk of abuse or exploitation.

- When disclosure is required by law.

- When the student's current behaviour or health requirements compromise our responsibilities to outside agencies, including professional placements and partner institutions.

- When the student's current behaviour or health requirements compromise our responsibilities to other students to the extent that those other students are being adversely affected to the serious detriment of their academic progress.

4.4 Further information can be found in the MLA College Privacy Policy.

5. When should an application for ECs be submitted

5.1

Type of Assessment	Deadline for submission of ECs Application
Coursework	No later than 10 working days after the published deadline
Presentation	No later than 10 working days after the date the presentation/performance was originally due to be delivered
Test	No later than 10 working days after the date the test was originally due to be taken
Examination	No later than 10 working days after the date the examination was originally due to be taken

5.2 Applications submitted after the deadlines outlined in the above table will not normally be accepted, unless the student can demonstrate an exceptional reason why they were unable to submit their application.

5.3 Applications for extenuating circumstances after the formal publication of results will be dealt with as an appeal against the decision of an Assessment and Award Board.

5.4 **Extenuating Circumstances during a time-scheduled assessment -** A time-scheduled assessment is an assessment that takes place in a particular time-slot, such as an examination, test, or presentation. If a student attempts this type of assessment, they have declared themselves fit to do so. Students who think that extenuating circumstances may affect their ability to perform this type of assessment are advised to not attend the time-scheduled assessment and submit an application for extenuating circumstances.

5.5 If a student begins a time-scheduled assessment, but becomes unexpectedly unable to continue, they must inform the invigilator or other person facilitating the assessment before leaving. An application for extenuating circumstances will then, if approved, be for non-attendance.

6. Submitting evidence with the extenuating circumstances application

6.1 **Self-certification** - For short lived circumstances that affect a student for up to five working days no evidence is required.

6.2 **Certification** - For circumstances that affect a student for more than five working days evidence is usually required with the application. This evidence should:

- Be independent and written or verified by appropriately qualified professionals (evidence from family and/or friends will not normally be accepted).

- Confirm the nature and timing of the circumstances, and that the circumstances were witnessed on the relevant date and not reported retrospectively.

- Be on headed paper, signed and dated by the author. If presented by email it should be sent by the author from the official domain name of the author's organisation.

- Be in or translated into English.

6.3 **What evidence is acceptable -** Examples of evidence likely to be acceptable include:

- A medical note confirming a mental or physical health condition.

- A letter from a counsellor confirming a personal, psychological or emotional problem.

- An official document such as a police report including a police reference number, court summons or other legal document.

- A letter from a solicitor, social worker or other official agency.

- An insurance claim document supported by a letter from the insurance company.

- For part-time students in full-time employment who wish to make an application based on exceptional pressures in their employment, a supporting statement will be required from their employer. This can be in the form of an official letter or email from the student's employer/line manager, or a completed and signed Employers Proforma (which forms part of the ECs Application Form) that confirms the particular circumstances, explains why they are exceptional and outside the students control and formally supports the application. For self-employed students, independent evidence may be required to support the application.

- Evidence provided by College staff, such as a personal tutor, academic staff closely involved in pastoral care, a member of Student Experience Team, or staff in Programme Services may be accepted. This may be for reasons which are difficult to obtain independent evidence for, such as a family bereavement.

6.4 Evidence which simply verifies a report made to the person providing the evidence that the student was impacted by a situation will not normally be accepted.

7. Group assessments and extenuating circumstances

7.1 There may be instances where extenuating circumstances affecting a member of a group impacts the group's ability to complete their assessment. MLA College will normally expect the group to have made contingency plans to manage a members' absence, but in some cases the impact may make it impossible for the group to attend or complete the assessment task. In this case the member of the group affected by the circumstance should submit an application for extenuating circumstances, as described in this policy. Other members of the group may also each submit an application, citing the absence of their group member due to extenuating circumstances as their reason for submitting their own application. Students are advised also discuss with the Module Leader whether the group may be able to carry on in this situation, to avoid unnecessary reassessment.

8. After an application for ECs is submitted

8.1 Extenuating circumstances are considered by the Extenuating Circumstances Committee.

8.2 Normally the Student Experience Team will consider straightforward applications.

8.3 The Module Leader or Programme Manager will consider more complex and/or sensitive applications.

8.4 Each application is considered individually, and all students will be treated fairly and equitably. Decisions on whether to approve the application will be based on whether:

- The application was submitted on time and if not, whether evidence to demonstrate an exceptional reason for considering a late application has been provided.
- The circumstances meet the criteria of:
    - Having an impact on the ability to attend or complete assessment(s) at the published/correct/usual time, and;
    - Being outside of the students control or could not have been reasonably predicted.
- Any evidence (if required) is acceptable.

8.5 The Extenuating Circumstances Committee aim to process applications as quickly as possible, however this can sometimes take 2 – 3 days. Once a decision has been made, students are notified by email by the Student Experience Team.

9. When an application for ECs is approved

9.1 Approved extenuating circumstances will not normally change a grade (unless, for example, an application submitted after the deadline was exceptionally approved and resulted in a penalty for a late submission being removed) but will allow completion of the assessment(s) at a time notified to you.

Approved extenuating circumstances allow you to submit or sit your assessment at a later date. Taught modules will normally be allowed a maximum extension of:

- 28 days from the original deadline for part-time students, or;
- 14 days from the original deadline for full-time students

9.4 If a student submits their coursework pending the decision of an application, any late penalty may be waived, or another version may be submitted if there is still time remaining during the extension.

10. Extenuating Circumstances for Non-Submission

10.1 If a student is unable to meet an extended deadline due to continuing extenuating circumstances, a further application for extenuating circumstances must be submitted (with evidence if the first application was self-certified). If the application is approved, it will be for non-submission. A zero mark will be recorded, and the student will normally be allowed to be re-assessed via a referral assessment at the same attempt at the next Assessment and Award Board.

10.2 A referral assessment will take place either:

- During the referral period for full time programmes;
- At the next opportunity within 1 year for part time programmes.

10.3 If a referral assessment is not completed in accordance with 10.2, a repeat of the module may be required during the next academic year for full-time students, or after 12 months has elapsed for part-time students, or if the volume of credit not achieved is more than what is allowed for referrals.

10.4 The mark of zero will be replaced with the mark achieved for the reassessment. Please refer to the Academic Framework and Assessment and Award Board procedures for more information on referrals and repeats.

11. When an application for ECs is not approved

11.1 When an application for extenuating circumstances is not approved, the student will be informed via email by the Student Experience Team giving the reasons why.

11.2 If a student submits their work pending the outcome of an application, the mark received will be capped at the pass mark if this was submitted within 48 hours of the original deadline (assuming the standard of the work is sufficient to warrant a pass mark).

11.3 If a student submits their work more than 48 hours after the original published deadline, the work will not be marked, a mark of zero will be recorded, and reassessment will be at the next attempt (subject to attempts remaining) and capped in accordance with the relevant Assessment Regulations for the programme being studied.

11.4 If a student submits their work by the published deadline, the mark received will be the actual mark awarded and will not be capped, unless it is a second submission in which case the mark awarded will be in accordance with the relevant Assessment Regulations for the programme being studied.

12. Multiple applications for ECs

12.1 The extenuating circumstances policy is in place so that the College can endeavour to ensure students have the best opportunity to demonstrate their academic abilities. If a pattern in a student's applications is noted, or if three applications are submitted within a six-month period, the College may refer the student for a Student Wellbeing Review in line with the College's Fitness to Study Policy. This is to enable discussion of the student's individual circumstances and put in place any additional support that may be required or signpost them to other services that may be beneficial.

13. Appealing an extenuating circumstances decision

13.1 Appeals can be made, in accordance with the College's Academic Appeals Procedure. The grounds on which an appeal can be considered are:

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(i) Procedural irregularity – where the procedures and regulations of the College have not been complied with and where the validity of the decision has therefore been undermined;
(ii) Extenuating circumstances – where, for good reason, the Extenuating Circumstances Panel was not made aware of a significant factor relating to the assessment of the student when it made its decision.

13.2 Appeals should be made within ten working days of the date of the email communicating the extenuating circumstances decision. Applications for extenuating circumstances for taught modules after the formal publication of results will be dealt with as an appeal against the decision of an Assessment and Award Board. Students should refer to the Complaints and Appeals Policy for further details on how to do this.

13.3 If an appeal against an extenuating circumstances decision is upheld at the Formal Stage of the Complaints and Appeals process, the original application will be referred to the Vice-Rector to be reconsidered. The outcome will be communicated to the student in writing via email.

13.4 A student may not subsequently appeal the decision made following reconsideration of an application and will be deemed to have completed the College's internal procedures.

13.5 If a student remains dissatisfied with the outcome, they may request a Completion of Procedures letter to refer their case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

13.6 If an appeal against an extenuating circumstances decision is rejected the student can apply for their appeal to be considered at the Review Stage of the Complaints and Appeals process. Further information can be accessed in the Complaints and Appeals Policy. If the Appeals Officer does not find grounds for appeal at the Review Stage, the student will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter to refer your case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator if they remain dissatisfied.

Annex A to MLA College Extenuating Circumstances Policy

Application for Extenuating Circumstances

Student's Full name:	
Student Number:	
Programme:	

Assessment(s) affected					
Module code	Module title	Type of assessment affected, e.g. coursework, exam, presentation	Assessment deadline or date (for time-specific assessments*)	Are you requesting an extension or non-submission?**	Is the assessment affected group work?

*time-specific assessments are assessments such as an examination, test, presentation, practical

If you are requesting an extension, this means you are requesting additional time in which to complete your assessment. If you are self-certifying or providing evidence you may have an extension of **28 calendar days. Extensions are only available for coursework and not for time-specific assessments. If you are requesting non-submission, this means you are asking to complete the assessment at a later date, usually during your programme's referral period or as a repeat next academic year. For more information, please refer to the Extenuating Circumstances Policy.

Description of the extenuating circumstances and how they are impacting your ability to attend or complete the assessment(s)	
Start date of circumstances:	End date of circumstances:

Type of claim	
Are you self-certifying your claim? (For circumstances affecting you for up to five working days).	Yes/No
If you are not self-certifying your claim as your circumstances are affecting you for more than five working days, please list the evidence you have attached here:	

By submitting this form you are declaring that all information entered in this form is honest and accurate to the best of your knowledge.

All claims and evidence will be treated confidentially and the personal information we ask you to provide is to enable us to consider your application for extenuating circumstances. All personal data collected in this way will be processed in accordance with current data protection legislation and will only be used for this purpose. The information you provide will be confidential and will only be shared with College staff who are directly involved in the extenuating circumstances decision-making process. Full details of the College's Student Privacy Notice can be found on the MLA College website.

Signed: **Date:**

Employers Proforma

replace with LOGO

(Insert Company Name)

Extenuating Circumstances – Employers Corroborating Evidence

Employee Information

Employee name: _____

Employee job title: _____

Employers Statement

Please state the circumstances affecting the employee. Please note that these circumstances must have:

a) affected the employee's ability to attend or complete an assessment or a number of assessments
b) are exceptional
c) are outside of their control
d) can be corroborated by independent evidence
e) occurred during or shortly before the assessment in question

USE THIS SPACE TO ADD A SUPPORTING STATEMENT:

Employer's Information

Employers representative name: _____

Employers job title: _____

Signature

Signature (employers representative): _____ Date: _____

Signature (employee): _____ Date: _____