



Supporting Students to Succeed:
Extenuating Circumstances and Support to Study
Procedures

Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught only
(excluding PGR study / PG Cert Research Skills)



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<p>This document details the processes through which the University will support students to succeed academically at Winchester (and collaborative partners). There are two 'routes' to the University's Support Framework. The first route is known as Extenuating Circumstances and is instigated by students, with the support and involvement of the Faculty and Student Support and Success. The second route is known as Support to Study, and is driven by the University and its staff in response to more enduring extenuating circumstances. A process chart covering both can be downloaded here.</p>	

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

This list summarises the changes since 2021/22 version. The date confirms when the changes will be implemented.

Implementation date	Changes Approved by Senate
01/09/22	<p>Policy updated to reflect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - removal of PGR students from this version, covered by separate policy - changes related to move to electronic submission of ECs. - links to Self-Certification (of Extenuating Circumstances) policy inserted - links inserted to electronic versions of Action Plan, Request for Medical Evidence document and Return to Study document. - change to Stage 2 timescale from 5 to 7 working days. - specific outcome of withdrawal added under 3.11(i), previously covered by 3.11(j) 'Any other appropriate action' - insertion of Pro VC at 3.11(g) removal of VC, appeal to VC. - links to Assessment Regulations added. - update to person to be contacted in SSaS changed from Mental Wellbeing Outreach Coordinator to Student Support and Success Advisors. - link to Privacy webpage and Data Protection policy added. - method for appeal changed from word document to email with word document attached, email address added. - Previously SSaS 'acted as evidence' for EC1 application to Faculty, if students now apply directly to SSaS outcomes will notified to students by SSaS. - invite to meeting at Stage 1 / 2 to include link to guidance webpage - minimum 48 hour notice period for evidence to be supplied ahead of Support to Study meeting, to allow adequate review. - appendix 4 added giving link to guidance on changing assessment deadlines through support to study. - text amended to clarify 15 day feedback limit is from any new deadline date

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Part 1 The Support Framework

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 All Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught students have a responsibility to manage their learning. This includes submitting work to deadlines. Meeting deadlines is a normal part of work and is vital to professional development.

1.1.2 However, the University recognises that there may be times when adverse circumstances, beyond their direct control, prevent students from completing work to a deadline, or to their customary standard of achievement.

1.1.3 This document details the Framework in place to support students through such circumstances. The Support Framework has two 'routes': Extenuating Circumstances and Support to Study. Part 2 details the Extenuating Circumstances route, which has two stages of applying for extensions. The Extenuating Circumstances route is driven by the student. Part 3 details the Support to Study route, which offers more tailored support. The Support to Study route is driven by the University.

1.1.4 Normally, a student would access Support to Study through the Extenuating Circumstances route, though exceptions may apply. The University may choose to place students directly on Support to Study route.

1.1.5 The normal trigger through the Extenuating Circumstances pathway for Support to Study is when a student does not submit after two successive extensions for the same assignment.

1.1.6 In what follows, 'student' refers to a student on Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught programmes. Any exceptions are noted.

1.1.7 Advice on these Procedures can be sought from the Faculty Student Support and Success Advisor (SSSA) or the Student Union.

1.1.8 The Support Framework sits alongside and complements the [Self Certification for Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedures](#). A student can self-certify prior to seeking support through this policy but not following it.

1.1.9 At all times students are encouraged to seek support from the [Student Support and Success](#) (SSaS) if they are experiencing difficulties. This includes those students who may live with long-term health conditions or disabilities and who would benefit from additional support.

1.1.10 Supporting our students is made up of a plethora of routes and methods. All avenues of support for students should be exhausted before reaching Support to Study.

Part 2 The Extenuating Circumstances Route

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 Students may apply for extensions up to a maximum of twice, per assignment, on the grounds of extenuating circumstances (ECs). This is in addition to the option to Self-Certify, as detailed in [Self Certification for Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedures](#).
- 2.1.2 There are two, successive, stages to applying for extensions through the Extenuating Circumstances route, known as Stage 1 (EC1) and Stage 2 (EC2) Extenuating Circumstances Applications.
- 2.1.3 Stage 2 Extenuating Circumstances Applications are for cases where the extension granted through the Stage 1 Extenuating Circumstances Application was insufficient, and a further extension is requested by the student.
- 2.1.4 The University's definition of what counts and does not count as extenuating circumstances is set out in 2.2.
- 2.1.5 All Extenuating Circumstances applications must be accompanied by evidence, which it is the student's responsibility to source. Students who do not have evidence may refer to the [Self Certification for Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedures](#).
- 2.1.6 Faculties shall maintain accurate records of all successful applications and, if appropriate, on hard copy student files.
- 2.1.7 In addition to deadline extensions Stage 1 Extenuating Circumstances Applications relate to requests for authorised periods (leave) of absence.

2.2 What is and is not an 'Extenuating Circumstance'

- 2.2.1 Extenuating circumstances are 'exceptional circumstances, outside the control of the student, which prevent them from sitting or submitting an assessment on the specified deadline or to the customary standard of achievement'.¹
- 2.2.2 Extenuating Circumstances are also a) or b) or a) and b):
- a) unforeseeable, in that the student could have no prior knowledge of the event concerned;
 - b) unavoidable, in that the student could have done nothing reasonably in their power to prevent or avoid such an event
- 2.2.3 Listed below are examples that the University would normally regard as extenuating circumstances:
- a) Bereavement (E.g. the death of a relative, person of significance or a pet)
 - b) Accident *
 - c) Acute, unforeseen illness *
 - d) Representation in a national/international event which could not be foreseen
 - e) Victim of crime
 - f) The worsening or aggravation of a diagnosed physical or mental health condition #
 - g) Complications relating to:
 - A diagnosed disability # *
 - Pregnancy *
 - h) Serious adverse personal or family circumstances, such as unexpected caring responsibilities *
 - i) Transport difficulties beyond the control of the student

¹ The latter part of the definition focusing on standard of achievement falls under the remit of the Academic Appeals Regulations.

- j) Problems affecting specialised hardware or software supplied via a Disabled Student Allowance (DSA) or equivalent to support the student's learning as documented in the student's Learning Agreement

* *This would also include cases where a student's relative or person of significance is affected.*

Students with an underlying disability, condition or chronic illness are encouraged to engage with Student Support and Success to agree a formal Learning Agreement.

2.2.4 Listed below are examples that the University would not normally regard as extenuating circumstances:

- a) Circumstances outside the relevant assessment or learning period
- b) Physical or mental health condition supported by medical evidence which is not within a reasonable time frame of the assessment submission date*
- c) Long term health condition for which the student is already receiving reasonable or appropriate adjustments
- d) Minor illness or ailment, that would not normally lead to an employer granting sick leave
- e) Transport problems which could have been avoided by the student (e.g. missed bus or train)
- f) Holidays
- g) Financial issues
- h) Computer/printer problems [for exceptions, see 2.2.5 and 2.2.6 below]
- i) Claims that students were unaware of the published dates, times, format of submission for coursework and venues for exams or practical assessments where these were clearly publicised
- j) Complaints against staff or in relation to delivery of the module/programme. These are managed through the University's *Complaints Policy*
- k) Students in receipt of support for learning difference including dyslexia would not be eligible for extenuating circumstances on the grounds of the diagnosis alone
- l) Religious Observances, for which the University makes separate provision for in the Exam Regulations (unless e.g. an illness is exacerbated by fasting).

**Short-term illnesses would normally be covered by the Self-Certification process*

2.2.5 The University would not normally consider computer problems as an extenuating circumstance because students can use University computers on campus and can access support from IT Services. However, it is acknowledged that a global pandemic or other unexpected circumstances may prevent access to the campus and University IT equipment on health and safety grounds. Students in this position may submit a Stage 1 Extenuating Circumstance Application, detailing the precise nature of the IT problem and the dates affected. To support their application, students must provide evidence of the reason they are unable to come onto campus to use University IT equipment.

2.2.6 Students enrolled on an approved Distance Learning route are eligible to apply for Stage 1 Extenuating Circumstances Applications with evidence on IT grounds.

2.2.7 Should you encounter computer problems when sitting an online exam whilst off-campus, then you should try to obtain proof of the issue (e.g. screenshot of error) where reasonable to do so, and you must report the problem including the exact time of the incident to your programme administrator or online proctor (invigilator) immediately. You should follow this up by submitting a Stage 1 Extenuating Circumstances application in the usual way.

2.3 Process for Stage 1 Extenuating Circumstances Applications

- 2.3.1 It is the student's responsibility to ensure a Stage 1 Extenuating Circumstances Application is completed if needed and relevant evidence submitted.
- 2.3.2 Evidence should normally be independent third-party evidence (e.g. a medical professional, counsellor, the police, lawyers) and the student should upload an official pdf document with the EC application.
- 2.3.3 Supporting evidence from relatives or other students is invalid.
- 2.3.4 Evidence must be in English. Where the original document is not in English the student must provide the original evidence and a translation. The University may check the accuracy of the translation.
- 2.3.5 Where a student is applying to Student Support and Success (under 2.3.7b) no separate evidence is required.
- 2.3.6 The table below details examples of acceptable evidence to support a Stage 1 Extenuating Circumstances Application. The examples are not exhaustive.

Examples of valid extenuating circumstances	Examples of acceptable evidence
Bereavement (eg the death of a relative, person of significance, or a pet)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Order of service • Death or Vet certificate • Obituary/Notification of death (website / newspaper)
Accident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police report • Insurance claim documents • Doctor's note/Medical certificate • Hospital admission record
Acute, unforeseen illness * * This would also include cases where a student's relative or person of significance is affected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctor's note/Medical certificate • Letter or email from medical professional or other relevant independent professional (e.g. therapist or counsellor) • Hospital admission record • Photo of a prescription or medication prescribed
Representation in a national/international event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official letter of participation in for event or equivalent, with detail of how it participation was unforeseen
Victim of crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime reference number • Insurance claim documents • In case of sexual assault or similar, Student Support and Success support would be an acceptable alternative

Examples of valid extenuating circumstances	Examples of acceptable evidence
<p>The worsening or aggravation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A diagnosed physical or mental health condition* ▪ A diagnosed disability* ▪ Pregnancy* <p>* All of the above would also include cases where a student's relative or person of significance is affected</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctor's note/Medical certificate • Hospital admission record • Letter (or similar) from medical professional or other relevant independent professional (e.g. therapist or counsellor), or evidence of pending appointment • For more information about support for pregnancy related circumstances, please refer to the Pregnancy, Adoption and Becoming a Parent While Studying - Guidelines • Learning Agreement with specific support for ECs 2
<p>Serious adverse personal or family circumstances, such as unexpected caring responsibilities *</p> <p>* This would also include cases where a student's relative or person of significance is affected</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter (or similar) from an independent professional or organisation (e.g. solicitor, faith leader, Social Worker, Citizens Advice Bureau); • Doctor's note/Medical certificate³ • Hospital admission record • Letter (or similar) from medical professional or other relevant independent professional (e.g. therapist or counsellor) • Insurance claim documents • Letter from registered childcare or other caring provider confirming why care cannot be provided
<p>Transport difficulties beyond the control of the student</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic report (website or newspaper) • Official report of traffic accident
<p>Problems affecting specialised hardware or software supplied via a Disabled Student Allowance (DSA) or equivalent to support the student's learning as documented in the student's Learning Agreement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmation from a University Department, such as Student Support and Success or IT Services

2.3.7 Students usually apply to Faculty for a Stage 1 EC, but should apply to Student Support and Success in cases where either:

- a) the extenuating circumstances relate to issues that the student does not wish to disclose to the Faculty, or
- b) where Student Support and Success have provided support in regard to issues highlighted and where they are the only reasonable source of evidence available

² This is for students who have difficulties associated with their impairment that are likely to fluctuate in severity throughout the year. This may cause them difficulty meeting some deadlines and so extenuating circumstances are supported by Student Support and Success. This support is subject to review on an annual basis.

³ Students may be eligible to apply to the Student Support Fund to help with the costs of this.

- 2.3.8 Stage 1 Extenuating Circumstances Applications are usually submitted to the student's Faculty using the online application form, except under 2.3.7 above.
- 2.3.9 Faculties shall publicise to students where EC applications can be made online.
- 2.3.10 Stage 1 Extenuating Circumstances Applications must be submitted within 10 working days before the original deadline, or 5 working days after the original deadline.
- 2.3.11 Students who submit a Stage 1 Extenuating Circumstances Application without evidence will be advised that the application will be logged but will not be sent to the Evidence Panel until corroborating evidence is received.
- 2.3.12 Any late evidence should be sent via email to the Faculty EC email address or Student Support and Success EC email address.
- 2.3.13 If evidence is not received within 15 working days the application will no longer be processed and any work submitted will be regarded as late. The Stage 1 Extenuating Circumstances Application will then be cancelled.
- 2.3.14 Stage 1 Extenuating Circumstances Applications are considered within the Faculties by Evidence Panels, comprising 3 staff members to include a minimum of one academic member of staff.
- 2.3.15 Panels may meet in person or electronically.
- 2.3.16 At the start of each semester the Faculty will agree the weeks in which Evidence Panel meetings will take place and advertise them to students. They will agree the number of Evidence Panel dates based on their individual needs.
- 2.3.17 Where students are applying to Student Support and Success, the outcome of will be notified to and always accepted by Faculty.⁴
- 2.3.18 Evidence Panel decisions do not have to be unanimous, but the majority of members must be in agreement.
- 2.3.19 The Evidence Panel will communicate outcomes to students by University email address within 3 working days after the Evidence Panel's meeting. Relevant members of staff will also be informed, as appropriate.
- 2.3.20 Outcomes in terms of deadline extensions are as 2.5 below.
- 2.3.21 Stage 1 Extenuating Circumstances Applications may generate the outcome of a temporary leave of absence approved, up to a maximum of 10 working days.
- 2.3.22 If the Evidence Panel determines that the Application does not meet the conditions of this Policy, the student will be advised that their Application is unsuccessful and their assessment submission will fall under the Late Submission Rule, as outlined in section B8 of the [Assessment Regulations](#). For the Appeals route see 2.6 below.
- 2.3.23 Each Faculty will hold a final Evidence Panel before the Semester 1 and Semester 2 mark deadline and a further Evidence Panel in the summer. This Evidence Panel will have the same membership plus a member of designated staff from Student Support and Success and Academic Quality and Development. The purpose of these panels is to consider late submissions which have been evidenced 5.

⁴ Faculty staff should speak with the Faculty Student Support and Success Advisor (or, in their absence, the Faculty Support Coordinator) if there are concerns around the student's welfare.

⁵ For Postgraduate Research Policy, see this [document](#).

2.3.24 Due to the frequency of Evidence Panels within the Faculty, students may not hear the outcome of their Stage 1 Extenuating Circumstances Application before their deadline. Therefore students should continue to work on their assessment(s) while they await the outcome of the Evidence Panel. If the student elects to submit before hearing the outcome this will be regarded as the final submission. If the application is rejected by the Evidence Panel then the Late Submission Rule shall normally apply ([see Assessment Regulations](#)).

2.4 Process for Stage 2 Extenuating Circumstances Applications

2.4.1 Students applying for Stage 2 Extenuating Circumstances can often benefit from engagement with Student Support and Success, either at the outset or after the application.

2.4.2 As a default, Stage 2 Extenuating Circumstances Applications are made directly to Student Support and Success, who can best act as evidence for students who have previously engaged with them. They may not act as evidence for an EC for students who have had no past engagement with any support team. In such instances students will be required to meet with an appropriate member of Student Support and Success and discuss the circumstances and assist Student Support and Success staff in being able to assess the application. The table below lists some circumstances where Student Support and Success involvement can help EC2 applications:

Example of Circumstance (indicative, not exhaustive)	Examples of evidence confirmation
Family breakdown; unexpected death of family member	Confirmation of unexpected challenging family circumstances that have impacted upon a student's ability to engage effectively in study
Sexual Assault; violent crime; miscarriage	Confirmation of a traumatic incident (without details) pertaining to student or student's relative or person of significance
Acute mental health diagnoses;	Confirmation of acute illness where the student does not wish to disclose medical evidence to the faculty for specific personal reasons* * This would also include cases where a student's relative or person of significance is affected
Attendance at consular appointments; attendance at police interview; court appearance	Confirmation of official activity required of a student that has or will impact upon the student's ability to engage effectively in study

2.4.3 Guidance on Stage 2 Extenuating Circumstances Applications can be sought from the Student Support and Success Advisor (SSSA) in each Faculty.

2.4.4 A student who does not wish Student Support and Success to assess their Stage 2 Extenuating Circumstances Applications may apply directly to the Faculty. In such cases the Faculty will direct students to engage with support services, so they are fully aware of the help available. The Faculty will notify Student Support and Success of the Stage 2 EC application and result.

- 2.4.5 Where a student supplies their own evidence for a Stage 2 Extenuating Circumstances Application the evidence cannot be the same as provided for a Stage 1 Extenuating Circumstances Application. Otherwise, it must comply with the table in 2.3.6.
- 2.4.6 Stage 2 Extenuating Circumstances Applications must be submitted no more than 10 working days ahead of the deadline previously extended through a Stage 1 Extenuating Circumstances Application, or no later than 5 days after the previously extended deadline.
- 2.4.7 Staff in Student Support and Success will assess evidence for either Stage 1 or Stage 2 Extenuating Circumstances Application as part of the Student Support and Success Evidence Panel. The panel will include a minimum of three staff members. Meetings will be held regularly to ensure outcomes are communicated to students in a timely manner.
- 2.4.8 The remit of the panel is to assess whether there are relevant circumstances which have been appropriately evidenced.
- 2.4.9 Panel decisions do not have to be unanimous, but the majority of members must be in agreement for a decision to be reached.
- 2.4.10 Where Student Support and Success approve the Stage 2 Extenuating Circumstances application the outcome will be sent to the student and to the Faculty, who will ensure the extension is logged. Extensions will be in line with 2.5 below.
- 2.4.11 Stage 2 Extenuating Circumstances Applications approved by Student Support and Success do not need the evidence verified again by the Faculty Evidence Panel.
- 2.4.12 Where Student Support and Success reject extenuating circumstance applications the student will be notified, along with the Faculty. Appeals against the decision will be handled according to 2.6.
- 2.4.13 Due to the timing of Evidence Panels, students may not hear the outcome before their deadline. Therefore students should continue to work on their assessment(s) while they await the outcome of the Evidence Panel. If the student elects to submit before hearing the outcome this will be regarded as the final submission. If the application is rejected by the Evidence Panel then the Late Submission Rule shall normally apply ([see Assessment Regulations](#)).

2.5 Extension periods available under Extenuating Circumstances Applications

- 2.5.1 Under both Stage 1 and Stage 2 Extenuating Circumstances Applications, if approved, the extension(s)/deferral(s) received will be of a fixed amount of time. These are as follows:
- **Written coursework** – 10 additional working days from the original deadline (Stage 1) or previously extended deadline (Stage 2). The 15 days feedback limit is from any new date.
 - **Exams** – deferred to the next exam period for January or May exams. For July exams that need to be deferred (either a Resit that merits a Stage 1 Extenuating Circumstances Application or where a Stage 2 Extenuating Circumstances Application is granted), an alternative assessment may be sought where permitted, or arrangements will be made between Registry and the Programme to facilitate individual exam sessions outside of the usual assessment periods. Alternatively, the student may be advised to interrupt study until the next formal assessment period.
 - **Group Assessments** – where one person in a group makes an Extenuating Circumstances Application, either the rest of the group should complete the assessment by the original deadline and the student with the extension should complete an alternative assignment, or if this is not workable due to the type of assessment, an alternative solution should be agreed between the module tutor and the students in the group. Extensions will be for 10 working days from the date of the original deadline (Stage 1) or previously extended deadline (Stage 2).

- **Practical assessment/viva** – to be arranged with the module tutor/supervisor normally within 10 working days, from the original deadline (Stage 1) or previously extended deadline (Stage 2).
- For **Postgraduate Independent Study** modules, where an extension request would result in missing the deadline for marks to be considered at the Exam Board, the Stage 1 extension shall normally be extended to the next scheduled submission date for Independent Study modules, i.e. either the first working day of February or the last working day of September. A Stage 2 extension will be limited to a further 10 working days, allowing submission to the April PG Exam Board.
- **Placements** the Faculty will make local decisions based on the requirements of the programme.

2.6 Appeal Against Extenuating Circumstances Applications Outcomes

2.6.1 Students have the right to appeal a rejected application on the following grounds:

- a) procedural irregularity: failure to follow the requirements of this Policy in such a way that the legitimacy of the decision reached is called into question;
- b) perversity of judgement: the decision does not, in the student's opinion, appropriately reflect the weight of evidence presented.

2.6.2 Students may not appeal:

- a) on the grounds that they did not understand, or were not aware of, this Policy.
- b) in relation to the same assessment more than once by means of this process.

2.6.3 The Appeal must be submitted, in writing, to the Academic Registrar within 10 working days of the date of the email notifying the student of the outcome of their application.

2.6.4 The Appeal should be submitted by email with the subject, "*Appeal against Extenuating Circumstances decision*" with a document fully detailing the grounds for appeal and including a copy of the Stage 1 or Stage 2 Extenuating Circumstances Application and outcome correspondence to Registry.Enquiries@winchester.ac.uk. Where the grounds of the appeal relate to 2.6.1 a), the appellant must specify precisely what aspect of the Policy was not followed and how this affected the outcome. Where the grounds for the appeal relate to 2.6.1 b), the student must specify how and why the decision was unreasonable or disproportionate in the light of the available evidence.

2.6.5 Appeals shall be considered by the Academic Registrar (or nominee) and a Chair of a Faculty Academic Development Committee or Dean from a Faculty not associated with the student's programme.

2.6.6 They shall review the statement and any supporting evidence supplied by the student and may request further evidence or information from those involved in the process before reaching a decision. Those from whom responses are sought shall be provided with the letter of appeal and accompanying documents where appropriate. In accordance with the principles of openness and best practice the University shall disclose to the student any relevant case documentation at an early and appropriate stage and, in particular, in advance of any determination of the outcome.

2.6.7 If they do not uphold the appeal, the student shall be informed in writing and given the option of requesting a Completion of Procedures Letter.

2.6.8 If the appeal is upheld, then they shall confirm what action shall be taken to rectify the matter. As internal processes shall be at an end, the appellant shall be notified of the option to request a Completion of Procedures letter if they are dissatisfied with the resolution.

2.6.9 There is no further appeal within the University. Students may seek an external review by the Office of the Independent adjudicator (OIA). Students must normally complain to the OIA within 12 months of the date of the outcome of the appeal. Guidance on submitting a complaint to the OIA can be found on its website at <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/making-a-complaint-to-the-oia.aspx> . The OIA's leaflet *An introduction to the OIA for students* can be downloaded from http://oiahe.org.uk/media/42715/oia_intro_leaflet_16pp.pdf. Students may also wish to seek advice from the Student Union about making a complaint to the OIA.

2.7 Late Submission of Stage 1 and Stage 2 Extenuating Circumstances Applications

2.7.1 There may be certain exceptional reasons why a student may not be able to submit either a Stage 1 or Stage 2 Extenuating Circumstances Application either 10 working days before or 5 working days after the original or extended deadline/date. Examples of such exceptional reasons might include:

- a) A serious accident, incident, assault or critical onset of a mental or physical condition or illness where the student required acute medical care, hospitalisation or other professional intervention
- b) Detention or incarceration by police or other statutory services

2.7.2 In such cases, if the deadline for submitting an Extenuating Circumstances Application has been missed, a student is advised to submit a Stage 1 or Stage 2 Extenuating Circumstances Application at the earliest opportunity, stating the reasons for the late submission of their claim and providing corroborating evidence for both the extenuating circumstance and the reason for the late application. Late Applications would be reviewed for consideration by the end of term or end of academic year panel as a late submission. See 2.3.23

2.8 Quality Assurance and Monitoring of Extenuating Circumstances Procedures

Faculty Academic Development Committees shall be responsible, on behalf of the Senate Academic Development Committee, for the assurance of quality and standards in the management of applications for Extenuating Circumstances.

In particular, Faculty Academic Development Committees are responsible for:

- a) ensuring that sufficient staff involved have been through central or local level training, so that consistency and fairness is maintained;
- b) ensuring that accurate records of all applications and the outcomes are maintained and all paperwork should be available for internal or external scrutiny, as required;
- c) reviewing the Faculty's annual record of Extenuating Circumstances, monitoring trends over time and identifying areas of concern.

2.9 Extenuating Circumstances and Support to Study

2.9.1 Support to Study may be initiated when a student does not submit after two successive extensions for the same assignment. All avenues of support for students should be exhausted before Support to Study is initiated.

Part 3 The Support to Study Route

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The Support to Study route is intended to aid both staff and students in cases where there is evidence of student disengagement from their academic studies, or where student wellbeing or ability to engage in student life is such that normal adjustments are not sufficient. It is a supportive route to assist the small number of students whose behaviour gives cause for concern. Support to Study can offer an alternative to the disciplinary procedures where behavioural concerns may have their cause in health conditions or disabilities.
- 3.1.2 The following procedures apply to all students on all courses, placements, field trips and any University activities in and out of semester time, whether living on or off campus and applies to all aspects of University life. It is expected that the majority of students who enter Support to Study will have previously engaged with other avenues of support, such as Extenuating Circumstances. Support to Study will be considered if a student does not submit after two successive extensions for the same assignment.
- 3.1.3 We expect our students to act responsibly and to conduct themselves in ways that do not compromise either their own wellbeing or that of other members of the University community. We also recognise that, in some circumstances, students may experience difficulties or have conditions that may require additional support in order for them to succeed. Staff supporting students with their mental wellbeing, health or life choices, are expected to be respectful.
- 3.1.4 The aim of Support to Study is to sustain the progress of the student in a supportive environment while being mindful of the need to exercise our duty of care to the student and those around them, so that the best possible student experience is achieved for all.

3.2 Stages of Support to Study

- 3.2.1 Support to Study is a formal process and should only be used where other routes are not available or beneficial to the student. Initial and basic concerns (Stage 0) are often effectively addressed by routine support and/or service referrals and lead to improved academic engagement and/or personal wellbeing.

Stage 1: Continuing or serious concern (Support Meeting and formal plan)

This covers initial concerns which endure despite lower-level support or more serious concerns such as where a student's behaviour is adversely affecting their own or other students' studies or personal physical or mental health and wellbeing.

Stage 2: Persistent or critical concern (Support Meeting and formal plan)

This covers more serious concerns which endure despite Stage 1 support or more critical concerns where a student's actions or behaviour are putting the health, safety, wellbeing or academic progress of him/herself or other members of the University community at significant risk.

- 3.2.2 The University can enter students at either Stage or move students between Stages.

3.3 Types of Concern

- 3.3.1 Concerns may arise in any one of a wide range of circumstances, including (but not restricted to) the following:
- Disengagement from academic studies;
 - Conduct which would usually be dealt with as a disciplinary matter, but which may be known to be, or suspected to be, the result of underlying physical or mental health difficulties;
 - A student's physical or mental health difficulties are substantially adversely affecting the physical or mental health, safety or wellbeing of themselves or others;

- d) The student's support needs fall outside the scope of the support and other services which the University can reasonably be expected to provide, either directly or indirectly.

3.4 Stage 1 - detailed procedures

3.4.1 Stage 1 will apply when:

- A student's situation continues to be of concern despite earlier interventions
- Following two successive non-submissions for the same assignment the Faculty Student Support and Success advisor recommends it.
- There are serious concerns for the student (or the impact on others) related to unusual or concerning behaviour such as disruptive actions, a marked change/ deterioration in general demeanour, unexplained changes in level of engagement, speaking or acting in a way that gives concern for mental/ physical health or communication of distress related to a significant event.

3.4.2 Any member of staff within the University may become aware of issues that are affecting a student's health, safety, behaviour or wellbeing. Stage 1 of these procedures can be invoked, with the agreement of their line manager, by a member of staff with a direct link to the student or a member of staff who holds responsibility for the student's care. For example:

- An appropriate member of staff from the Faculty in which the concern has been raised, e.g. Programme Leader, Programme Administrator, Tutor, Faculty Student Support & Success Advisor (SSSA) etc.
- An appropriate member of staff in the professional service where the concern has been raised, e.g. Housing Manager, Security Manager, Site Steward, Campus Supervisor, Catering Supervisor, Librarian etc.

3.4.3 Before Support to Study is invoked, the line manager to whom the concern has been raised agrees a lead person (Chair) and separate notetaker for the meeting. Where a Student Support & Success advisor identifies a need for Support to Study they will approach the tutor, programme leader, HoD, DoPS to identify the above.

3.4.4 The lead person will have overall responsibility for ensuring all policy, processes and timescales are followed.

3.4.5 When staff outwith Student Support and Success are considering invoking Stage 1, they should approach the Faculty Student Support & Success Advisor (SSSA) to determine if the student is already known and being supported and whether other support routes are preferable. Information may be shared per the [Privacy and Cookie Policy webpage](#), see the [Data Protection Policy](#) for full details.

3.4.6 The lead person will send the Stage 1 Support to Study Meeting invitation to the student via unimail normally providing 5 working days' notice. The invitation will include the following information:

- Purpose of the meeting
- Attendees invited
- Link to this [guidance webpage](#)
- Request for any evidence required for the meeting (see 3.5.7)

3.5 Stage 1 Support Meeting

3.5.1 The Stage 1 Support meeting should be convened by the area raising the concern and include the student, in addition to the following members of staff as appropriate⁶:

- Programme Leader or nominee/Professional Service Manager (**Chair and Lead**)
- Representative of Student Support & Success (if appropriate)
- Notetaker (**nominated by Chair and Lead**)

The meeting must consist of more than 1 member of staff and no more than 5 people.

3.5.2 The student may be accompanied in a supportive capacity; this is in addition to any representative of Student Support and Success. The lead staff member should ensure the student has opportunity to discuss any issues or concerns.

3.5.3 If the Chair approves the meeting may take place via MS Teams.

3.5.4 If a student is unable to attend the Stage 1 meeting, due to extenuating circumstances, for which evidence has been provided, or chooses not to attend, they will have the option to nominate a member of staff to represent them, or to request that a member of the Students Union executive attend in their place. If they choose not to have someone attend in their absence the meeting will still go ahead. It may be that the chair of the meeting is unable to determine a full programme of supportive action, but it is preferable to start the process and amend it subsequently, when the student is able to engage with the process.

3.5.5 The Stage 1 support meeting Chair shall attempt to assess the student's perception of their academic progress and any impact that their physical or mental health and/or behaviour is having on themselves and/or the University community. This may require a medical assessment to be sought, normally from the student's GP or medical professional (see Appendix 2). The student shall be encouraged to consent to the assessment, where it is agreed this would be helpful.

3.5.6 If the student withholds their consent, decisions may be made based on the information available.

3.5.7 The student shall be able to submit documents, no less than 48 hours prior, for the support meeting to consider and should retain a copy for their reference.

3.5.8 The support meeting may seek information or advice from others within or outside the University.

3.5.9 The support meeting may discuss with the student whether it would be appropriate for them to interrupt their studies, via Leave of Absence (up to two weeks) or Interruption (normally for a semester or year of study, as appropriate for the programme).

3.5.10 Where the student wishes to voluntarily interrupt their studies at this stage, this should be favourably considered by the support meeting with the provision for a review of the physical or mental health and wellbeing of the student at the end of the interruption period as a condition of their return to studies (see appendix 3).

3.6 Possible outcomes from Stage 1

3.6.1 Possible outcomes of Stage 1 include:

- no action required
- devise an Action Plan (See Appendix 1) to support the student (where appropriate) and formally agree expectations for the student to observe. Action plans may include, for example, amendments to deadlines or changes to mode of delivery in agreement with Programme Leaders. This Stage 1 Action Plan may be academic and/or conduct-related. Review meetings

⁶ Staff should be mindful not to overwhelm a student and should ensure meeting membership is kept to a necessary minimum.

shall be arranged with the student as needed. The student shall be made aware of what will happen if the action plan is breached or the concerns are not resolved within the timeframe set in the Action Plan. This may result in escalating to a higher level.⁷

- recommendation to escalate to Stage 2.

3.7 Post Stage 1 meeting actions

- 3.7.1 Within 7 working days of the meeting, the Notetaker shall write up agreed actions of the support meeting (using the [Action Plan Template](#)) and save it in the Faculty MS Teams Support to Study Group. (relevant departmental channel and files tab).
- 3.7.2 A copy of the action plan should be emailed to the student within 7 working days of the meeting.
- 3.7.3 The email should advise that the student has 7 days from the date sent to reply to confirm acceptance of the meeting outcome and that should they not reply the University will assume the student understands and accepts the action plan.
- 3.7.4 The intention is to encourage the student to engage with the Action Plan and access the outlined support and modify their conduct.
- 3.7.5 Should the student not respond positively, then the Chair shall discuss the situation with the other members of the meeting with a view to determining whether the case should be considered for Stage 2. (see 3.9.4)

3.8 Reviewing the Stage 1 Action Plan

- 3.8.1 Each time the Action Plan is reviewed, colleagues attending the support meeting shall decide whether to:
- close the action⁸
 - the Action Plan should be continued or extended/amended; or
 - recommend an escalation to Stage 2

3.9 Stage 2 detailed procedures

- 3.9.1 It is anticipated that Stage 2 will only be used rarely. This may be when a student's engagement or wellbeing is not improving, despite a Stage 1 intervention or a student's actions or behaviour are putting the health, safety, wellbeing or academic progress of him/herself or other members of the University community at significant and immediate risk.
- 3.9.2 In most cases escalation to this stage will follow attempts to address concerns through Stage 1. However, in some cases it may be appropriate to proceed directly to Stage 2, examples of circumstances where a direct referral to Stage 2 is appropriate are listed below under 3.12
- 3.9.3 Exceptionally, it may be appropriate to refer a student for consideration under the Disciplinary Procedures.
- 3.9.4 In all cases the decision to escalate to a Stage 2 support meeting will be made in partnership by the Dean of Faculty and Deputy Director & Head of Operations (Student Support and Success) or Director of Student Support and Success.

⁷ Colleagues comprising the Support to Study meeting panel will have authority to review a student's academic assessment schedule for the remainder of the current semester and agree a revised schedule of staggered deadlines, balancing the interests of the student and the academic requirements. Staff wishing to clarify extension periods should see the flowchart under Appendix 4.

⁸ Where the concerns are deemed to have been fully resolved, the Action shall be closed. The Chair shall verbally inform the student and shall follow up the meeting with written confirmation. Copies of the final action plan shall be forwarded to anyone involved to ensure that everyone is aware that the matter is now closed.

- 3.9.5 If the presenting issue is not located within a Faculty then the Director of the Professional Service (DoPS) would be required.
- 3.9.6 The aim of the Stage 2 support meeting is to ensure the University considers all possible support options available to the student.

3.10 Stage 2 Support Meeting

- 3.10.1 The Deputy Director & Head of Operations (Student Support and Success) or Director of Student Support and Success will usually send an invite to a Stage 2 support meeting within 7 working days of the case being escalated to Stage 2.
- 3.10.2 The support meeting will comprise of:
- Deputy Director & Head of Operations, Student Support and Success, or Director of Student Support and Success (SSaS) or appropriate nominee (**Chair & Lead**),
 - Head of Department (Academic) or Director of Professional Service (DoPS)
 - Lead staff member from stage 1 (where a case has come directly to Stage 2 a lead person should be appointed by the Dean of Faculty/Director SSaS)
 - Student Support and Success Advisor (SSSA) (**Notetaker**)
 - Other representative from Student Support and Success (if appropriate)
- 3.10.3 The student may be accompanied in a supportive capacity, in addition to enabling the student to be supported by a professional support worker at the meeting.
- 3.10.4 If a student is unable to attend the Stage 2 meeting, due to extenuating circumstances, for which evidence has been provided, or chooses not to attend, they will have the option to nominate a member of staff to represent them, or to request that a member of the Students Union executive attend in their place. If they choose not to have someone attend in their absence the meeting will still go ahead. It may be that the chair of the meeting is unable to determine a full programme of supportive action, but it is preferable to start the process and amend it subsequently, when the student is able to engage with the process.
- 3.10.5 The invitation will usually provide a minimum of 5 days' notice and will include the following:
- Purpose of the meeting
 - Attendees invited
 - Link to this [guidance webpage](#)
 - Request for any evidence required for the meeting
- 3.10.6 Prior to the meeting the University may seek additional information relevant to the student's circumstances from parties other than the student.

3.11 Possible outcomes at Stage 2

- a. No further action - situation resolved
 - b. Enhanced action plan
 - c. Lowering to Stage 1
 - d. Approved temporary leave of absence (no longer than 3 weeks)
 - e. Continuation of studies but temporary ban from site
 - f. Recommendation for additional support services
 - g. Recommendation to Dean and/or Pro VC for interruption of studies
 - h. Recommendation that the student is subject to Disciplinary Procedures
 - i. Recommendation that the student is withdrawn
 - j. Any other appropriate action
- 3.11.1 Within 7 working days of the meeting, the Notetaker shall write up notes of the discussion on the support meeting (using the [Action Plan Template](#)) and save it in the Faculty Support to Study MS Teams Group. (relevant departmental channel and files tab).
- 3.11.2 A copy of the action plan should be emailed to the student within 7 working days of the meeting.

- 3.11.3 The email should advise that the student has 7 days from the date sent to reply to confirm acceptance of the meeting outcome and that, should they not reply the University will assume the student understands and accepts the content of the action plan.
- 3.11.4 The intention is to encourage the student to respond positively to the Action Plan and access the outlined support and modify their behaviour accordingly, as appropriate.
- 3.11.5 Should the student not respond to the Action Plan, then the Chair shall discuss the situation with the other members of the meeting with a view to determining next steps

3.12 Examples of when a direct referral to Stage 2 could occur

- a) where a health care professional/occupational health advisor considers that the health, wellbeing and ability to study is significantly affected by the student's condition;
- b) when all other options to deal with the situations have been explored locally and a wider University perspective is required;
- c) when a higher stage of decision making and authority is required;
- d) where there are serious concerns regarding risk to the health and safety of the student and/or where there is a perceived threat and risk to others;
- e) where an immediate temporary suspension is considered to be in the best interests of the student or the University

3.13 Exceptional Circumstances – Interruption without a support meeting

- 3.13.1 In very rare circumstances, members of the Executive Leadership Team may take immediate action to enact a temporary interruption of studies without the requirement for a Stage 2 Support to Study Meeting being convened.
- 3.13.2 Examples of when such a decision would be taken would include:
- serious risk to life;
 - unacceptable impact upon the daily business of the University or University community.
- 3.13.3 Such a decision would be taken following advice from the Dean of Faculty and Director of Student Support and Success (or their nominee).
- 3.13.4 An appeal route by email to the Vice Chancellor will exist for students temporarily interrupted.

3.14 Returning to Study

- 3.14.1 Following a period of absence from the University, it may be appropriate for the student to return to study. Registry shall write to students who are coming to the end of their interruption of studies to instigate any return to studies.
- 3.14.2 The University may require the student to produce appropriate confirmation of their physical or mental health and ability to resume studying.
- 3.14.3 What is deemed appropriate confirmation in any individual case shall be decided upon by the members of the Supporting to Study Panel, which may vary depending on the level of action reached at the time of the student's suspension, interruption or leave of absence.
- 3.14.4 Normally this shall include at least one 'Request for medical evidence in relation to the student's Support to Study plan' to be completed and submitted. (see Appendix 2)
- 3.14.5 If it would be beneficial for the student to live away from home in order to study, a member of the Housing Team can be invited to join the Support to Study Meeting.
- 3.14.6 The University may wish to encourage the student to live in a particular type of University housing in order to ensure that the best support is available, even if the student is not in their first year of study.

- 3.14.7 The Programme Leader shall draw up a 'Return to Study Plan' (see Appendix 3) in consultation with the student, once the appropriate confirmation of their physical or mental health and ability to resume studying has been received and approved.
- 3.14.8 The Return to Study Plan shall address the specific study-related support needs of the student in returning to university studies including:
- the support which is reasonably required in the short term;
 - involvement of and liaison with external agencies (where appropriate);
 - any longer-term support or adjustments that are reasonably required;
 - any conditions that might or will apply to provision; and
 - a schedule for regular review meetings to be arranged with a member of academic staff, for the remainder of the academic year
- 3.14.9 Any return to study shall be subject to the student's engagement with this process and adherence to any agreements made.
- 3.14.10 Other members of staff within Student Support & Success shall be available to provide advice and support to facilitate the student's transition back into the programme, particularly in relation to any action that might be required under the Equality Act 2010. This shall be arranged with the direct involvement of, or in consultation with, the Mental Wellbeing Team or the Disabilities and Learning Diversity Team within Student Support and Success, or with external statutory services.
- 3.14.11 The Return to Study Plan will be shared with the Support to Study Meeting panel members.

3.15 Central Recording and Monitoring

- 3.15.1 The Deputy Director & Head of Operations (Student Support and Success) shall be responsible for regularly engaging with Directors of Faculty of Operations to ensure oversight of numbers of Support to Study cases being undertaken and to discuss any concerns.
- 3.15.2 The Deputy Director & Head of Operations shall provide an annual monitoring report to SADC.

Part 4 Appendices

- 4.1 Appendix 1 - Record of Stage 1/2 – Notes of Support Meeting/Review ([Link](#))**
- 4.2 Appendix 2 - Request for medical evidence in relation to Support to Study ([Link](#))**
- 4.3 Appendix 3 - Return to Study Plan ([Link](#))**
- 4.4 Appendix 4 - Extending Assignment Deadlines through Support to Study ([Link](#))**
- 4.5 Appendix 5 - Authorised Temporary Leave of Absence (LOA)**
- 4.6 Appendix 6 - Extenuating Circumstances and Interruption to Study**

4.5 Appendix 5 - Authorised Temporary Leave of Absence

1.1 Programmes with programme-level attendance requirements

- 1.1.1 Students requiring a temporary leave of absence (up to a maximum of 10 working days, or the maximum allowed by the Programme's Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body) should complete the relevant section of a Stage 1 Extenuating Circumstances Application and submit it along with

corroborating evidence to be considered by the Evidence Panel. If the request is accepted by the Evidence Panel, the student's absence will not be counted against them for the purpose of programme-specific/University attendance requirements.

- 1.1.2 Student Visa students who wish to apply for leave of absence while continuing their teaching and learning should complete the Authorised Absence Form in accordance with the Home Office guidance available from the Registry Intranet page.
- 1.1.3 Where the absence shall mean that one or more submission deadlines for coursework, exams, practical assessments or vivas shall be missed, an Extension/Deferral Request must also be submitted as part of the application.
- 1.1.4 Students who believe they require a longer leave of absence (eg more than 10 working days) should discuss their circumstances with their Programme Leader or Director of Studies and consider interrupting their studies (see Section D1 of the Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes or Section C2 of the Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Research Programmes).

1.2 Jury Service

- 1.2.1 While the University supports students or staff undertaking civic duties, students who receive a summons to attend Jury Service during the academic year are strongly advised to seek a deferral for two related reasons: disrupted study and missed assessment (which may result in repeated study and/or interruption); costs incurred (living, tuition fees, employment). Courts understand the issues and deferrals are generally approved. Please contact Registry for a supporting letter.
- 1.2.2 Students who do not wish to request a deferral from Jury Service or their request for a deferral is turned down, should follow these procedures to apply for a Temporary Authorised Leave of Absence for a maximum of 10 working days. Alternatively, an Interruption to Study may be appropriate.

4.6 Appendix 6 – Extenuating Circumstances and Interruption to Study

- 1.1 Students wishing to interrupt their studies may wish to provide evidence of Extenuating Circumstances in order to receive uncapped marks for any incomplete modules once they return to their studies.
- 1.2 Students should complete the [Extenuating Circumstances Form](#) and submit their supporting evidence at the same time they complete their [Interruption of Study form](#).
- 1.3 The Extenuating Circumstances and supporting evidence will be considered by the Evidence Panel at the next available opportunity. If the request is approved, the secretary to the panel will inform the student, the Programme Leader and Registry that the student's marks for any incomplete modules should be uncapped when they return to the University.