

# BPP University – University Policies and Procedures

## Extensions and Extenuating Circumstances Policy



<b>Scope</b>	Students/Staff
<b>Approved Date</b>	July 2024
<b>Approving Authority</b>	Education and Standards Committee
<b>Date Effective</b>	September 2024
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<b>Document Owner</b>	Office for University Academic Quality
<b>Purpose</b>	Outlines the policy and procedure for short-term academic adjustments in the University in the form of extensions and the application of extenuating circumstances.

### *Regulatory Mapping*

<b>BPP University General Academic Regulations</b>
Section D: Awards & Programmes Section E: Examinations, Assessment & Academic Practice

**BPP University**  
**University Policies and Procedures**  
**Extensions and Extenuating Circumstances Policy**

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**1. Extension of Deadline Date for Assessments (Assessment Extension)**

- 1.1. Where a student considers that because of illness or other good cause there are valid reasons for seeking an extension to the deadline for handing in an assessment the student may apply to their School, for an extension of the deadline.
- 1.2. Where a student has an active Learning Support Agreement with a pre-existing position agreed on extensions to coursework, then this will take precedence and the student shall not be required to apply for an extension separately.
- 1.3. Students with active Learning Support Agreements who do not have pre-existing agreed extension arrangements in place can negotiate extensions to coursework in certain circumstances where the Learning Support Office and the School are satisfied that such an agreement does not place the student at an unfair advantage nor compromises academic standards.
- 1.4. The School, on the evidence submitted, has the discretion to grant an extension of one calendar week to the assessment deadline, unless a Learning Support Agreement is in place that provides a longer extension. There may however be circumstances where the School decides that a two-calendar week extension is more appropriate given the student’s circumstances and the School has the discretion to grant this, but only under exceptional circumstances, and where the internal scheduling of marking, feedback, and examination board deadlines allow this.

- 1.5. The School, on the evidence submitted, has discretion to grant or refuse to grant an extension of one calendar week to the assessment deadline, unless a Learning Supporting Agreement is in place that provides for a longer extension.
- 1.6. The application for an extension must be:
  - a) received by 12.00 noon on the last working day before the deadline;
  - b) on the prescribed Extension Form, available on the Hub.
- 1.7. In exercising their discretion, the School, must be satisfied that the illness or other good cause would prevent the student from completing and submitting the assessment within the timeframe permitted for the assessment. Where the School, is satisfied that this condition has been met a new submission deadline will be set.
- 1.8. All extensions must be requested for valid reasons, and persistent overuse of extensions will lead to additional scrutiny of requests. Any misuse of extension requests may be regarded as seeking to obtain an academic advantage unfairly, and would be considered and investigated in line with the Academic Practice Policy.
- 1.9. Students are required to complete their programme in accordance with the time limits, extensions do not extend beyond the expected programme end date, or impact other considerations such as visa regulations.

## **2. Extenuating Circumstances and Concessions**

### ***Introduction and Principles***

- 2.1. Extenuating circumstances are where a student experiences an unforeseeable or unavoidable circumstances prior to or during the assessment/examination which may have a detrimental effect on academic performance.
- 2.2. Unforeseeable or unavoidable circumstances may:
  - a) Be affecting the student at the time they are due to submit their coursework or as they are about to sit an examination, i.e., just prior to the event which therefore prevent them from submitting their assessment or sitting the examination at the time, or
  - b) Affected the student at the time they submitted their coursework or at the time they sat their examination, i.e., they submitted their coursework or sat the examination but were affected by circumstances that they believed affected their performance.

- 2.3. A concession is the acceptance on the part of an authorised body<sup>1</sup> that extenuating circumstances, supported by objective and authoritative evidence, have affected a student's summative assessment and the voiding of that assessment attempt. The granting of a concession will not result in any increase in marks.
- 2.4. The University encourages students who do not consider themselves fit to sit an examination or who believe that an assessment would be impaired because of unforeseen and unavoidable circumstances outside their control, to use the procedures open to them such as deferral of an assessment or an extension of the deadline for submission, in advance of the examination or assessment.

### ***Fit to Submit/Sit***

- 2.5. In the case of examinations, where a student is affected by unforeseen/unavoidable circumstances they should not proceed to sit the examination, but rather apply for extenuating circumstances. Such an application will not however be accepted unless it is supported by authoritative evidence (e.g., student must have a valid and evidential reason for not sitting the examination). A student who proceeds to sit the examination without declaring the unforeseen/unavoidable circumstances affecting them at the time of sitting the examination will be considered "fit to sit". Only under very exceptional circumstances will Extenuating circumstances be considered for a student post-examination as outlined in this policy. It is therefore important students raise issues with their ability to sit an examination prior to the date of examination and seek advice and guidance on whether their circumstances merit the submission of an extenuating circumstances application.
- 2.6. The submission of coursework or attendance at an examination normally precludes the ability to apply for extenuating circumstances, unless:
- a) In the case of examinations only, where a student is affected by unforeseen circumstances beyond their control after starting the examination, but before the end of the examination, they can make an extenuating circumstance application. This includes technical issues where the student is affected during the examination and the issue is believed to have impacted them.
  - b) In the case of both examinations and coursework submissions, where the student is subsequently diagnosed as having been suffering from a condition at the time of the assessment, of which, for a reason supported by evidence, they were unaware

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<sup>1</sup> An authorised body means a Regulation and Compliance Officer or the Extenuating Circumstances Panel.

of at the time of assessment, they can make an extenuating circumstance application.

- c) In the case of both examinations and coursework submissions, where the student at the time of submitting coursework or sitting an examination, was suffering from a condition which impaired their ability to make a rational judgement when sitting or submitting the assessment, they can make an extenuating circumstance application.

In all of the above cases, the student must believe these circumstances affected their performance in the assessment, and in each case they must provide objective and authoritative evidence of their condition.

### ***Stage 1 – Submission of an Extenuating Circumstances Application***

- 2.7. A student may make an application where they believe that their assessment has been adversely affected by unforeseen circumstances beyond their control. Students may make such an application:
  - a) If the circumstances prevent the student from undertaking all or part of an assessment task;
  - b) Subject to point 3.6. above, if the assessment task is completed, but the student believes that the extenuating circumstances have had a detrimental effect on the standard of work presented for assessment.
- 2.8. Where a student knows prior to the submission of coursework or the sitting on an examination that unforeseen/unavoidable circumstances are affecting them, they must notify their School in one of the following ways:
  - a) For coursework if an extension is required, see Section 2 of this policy.
  - b) For coursework if the student considers they are not fit to submit their coursework by the deadline and do not feel an extension is viable, then they are expected to inform their School through the Form on the Hub, and then complete an Extenuating Circumstances Application. There may be circumstances where notification of the School is not possible ahead of making the Extenuating Circumstances Application, and so students may in those circumstances submit the Extenuating Circumstances Application without having informed the School ahead of submission.
- 2.9. To submit an extenuating circumstances application, students must complete the Extenuating Circumstances online application using the following link:

<https://www.bpp.com/account> Students using this process for the first time will need to set up an account and use a new login password. Applications should be made no more than 10 working days after the assessment took place or was due.

- 2.10. Where a student applies to the Extenuating Circumstances process ahead of their examination to report that they will be absent and unable to attend, they must do this, where possible, by 12 noon on the last working day before the examination. If students apply by this deadline, they will normally hear of the outcome of their application prior to the examination, but there may be circumstances where this is not possible, and they will hear as soon as possible on the outcome of their application.
- 2.11. Students should be aware that if they re-open their online application after it has been submitted, it will be considered withdrawn. If it is resubmitted, this will be taken as the date received, which may be outside of the 10-working day timeframe and will be considered as a late application. Late applications will not be considered unless the student is able to prove that they were mentally or physically incapable of submitting an application within the prescribed time limit. Late applications need to be accompanied by authoritative and objective evidence which confirms that the student was incapable of submitting an application within the prescribed time period.
- 2.12. The Extenuating Circumstances application must contain or be accompanied by objective<sup>2</sup> and authoritative evidence showing the time and character of the circumstances. Where appropriate, one Extenuating Circumstances application may relate to several assessment tasks. Objective and authoritative evidence is original, signed documentation from an appropriate third party (e.g., a doctor or psychiatrist). Evidence should be proximate and relevant to the assessment or assessment period. If a document submitted as evidence is not in English, an independent translation must be provided.
- 2.13. Where a student is affected by bereavement, they will not normally be required to provide a death certificate unless it is available to them. An Order of Service, an Obituary, news report or a supporting statement from a member of the Programme Team will be acceptable forms of evidence.
- 2.14. Students, taken ill, or who experience any unforeseen or unavoidable incidents during an assessment, are expected to notify the invigilator before leaving the venue to ensure that the time and nature of the illness or incident is noted in the invigilation report. Students will also be required to seek medical attention on the day of the assessment

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<sup>2</sup> Objective evidence must be from an independent source wherever possible.

or as close to it as possible if they feel their performance was adversely affected by illness.

- 2.15. The Extenuating Circumstances and Concessions Procedure is intended to cover circumstances which, though they may cover a period of time, are essentially transient, and do not prevent the student from continuing with the work of the programme.
- 2.16. If a student is affected by serious ongoing circumstances (which may for example be medical or personal) which appear unlikely to be resolved or significantly improved within the timescale of the student's assessment for a programme, the student may be referred to the Inclusion and Learning Support Team or advised to take an Interruption of Studies.
- 2.17. The Office of Regulation and Compliance shall keep a record of extenuating circumstances applications and granted concessions per student and will take this into account when considering future applications for extenuating circumstances.

### ***Stage 2 – Initial Consideration***

- 2.18. An extenuating circumstances application must be submitted online and students must use their BPP email address. An acknowledgement of receipt, which the candidate must retain as proof that an extenuating circumstances application has been lodged for consideration, will be automatically generated.
- 2.19. The Regulation and Compliance Officer will determine, normally within ten working days of receipt of the extenuating circumstances application, whether the information provided by the student presents a case that satisfies the threshold conditions for a valid extenuating circumstances application. Where an application has been made by 5 working days before an examination for an absence, students will normally hear of the outcome of their application prior to the examination, but there may be circumstances where this is not possible, and they will hear as soon as possible on the outcome of their application.
- 2.20. To meet the threshold conditions for a valid concession, the application must:
- (a) be made online on the appropriate form, and accurately bear all of the information requested on the form; and
  - (b) clearly identify the unforeseeable and unavoidable extenuating circumstance(s); and
  - (c) include evidence which demonstrates to the Regulation and Compliance Officer that the extenuating circumstance is connected to the assessment; and

- (d) have been received within the time limits set above.
- 2.21. The Regulation and Compliance Officer will inform the student in writing, usually online with their application, that either:
- (a) the extenuating circumstances application is rejected because it does not satisfy the threshold conditions for a valid concession as defined above;
  - (b) the Extenuating circumstances meet the threshold conditions, but on substantive consideration the application is rejected; or
  - (c) the application has been granted by a Regulation and Compliance Officer; or
  - (d) the application has been part granted by a Regulation and Compliance Officer.
- 2.22. For applications where a case has been established that satisfies the threshold conditions for a valid concession and these applications are supported by authoritative and objective evidence, the Office for Regulation and Compliance Officer, may grant the application. In the case that the application is rejected, the student reserves the right for the application to be considered by the Academic Appeals Board.
- 2.23. Where a student has had their application rejected they may appeal to the Academic Appeals Board in accordance with the procedures set out in the University's Policies and Procedures – Complaints and Appeals.

### ***Stay on Action***

- 2.24. Where a student is submitting an application for extenuating circumstances on a final assessment attempt, from the date of lodging the application, a stay of execution shall be placed on any action or decision affecting the student's registration status or progression whilst the outcome of the extenuating circumstances application is pending. Boards of Examiners or any other body, except for the Academic Council, shall not implement any decision, or consequential action of the final assessment attempt before the outcome of the extenuating circumstances application is known.
- 2.25. In furtherance of point 2.24 above, pending the outcome of the extenuating circumstances application, and where they have the right, the candidate may undertake classes, attend BPP University and must prepare for and retake any assessments or examinations that have been scheduled. However, such assessments are sat at the students' own risk.
- 2.26. A confidential, written report of the extenuating circumstances applications and the decisions determined shall be made to the Chair of the Board of Examiners.

2.27. The Board will receive the determination of extenuating circumstances applications but no details of the extenuating circumstances will be disclosed to it.

### ***Appeals***

2.28. Where a student has their application rejected they may appeal to the Academic Appeals Board in accordance with the procedures set out in the University Policies and Procedures on Academic Appeals.

2.29. Where a student has an extenuating circumstances application granted, however, subsequently discovers that they would have passed the assessment, this will not be a valid ground for appeals.

### ***Consideration by the Board of Examiners***

2.30. A confidential, written report of the extenuating circumstances applications and the decisions determined by the Panel shall be made to the Chair of the Board of Examiners.

2.31. Extenuating circumstances applications will be indicated against the student record for the relevant module(s) on the Board of Examiners' grade sheet.

2.32. The Board will receive the determination of the Office of Regulation and Compliance but no details of the Extenuating circumstances will be disclosed to it.

### ***Monitoring, Evaluation and Review of the Extenuating Circumstances and Concessions Procedure***

2.33. The Office of Regulation and Compliance shall provide an annual report to the Education and Standards Committee summarising the cases that have been considered, the actions taken, a commentary on the effectiveness or otherwise of the procedures, and any recommendations for change.

2.34. The effectiveness of the Extenuating Circumstances and Concessions Procedure must be monitored, evaluated and reviewed annually and a report made to the Academic Council through the Education and Standards Committee.

## Policy Revision History

<b>Version Number</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Reviewed by</b>	<b>Date</b>
1.0	Movement of Policy to stand-alone section for ease of referencing.	Director of Academic Governance & Proctor	Dean of Academic Quality & Policy	July 2024