

Extenuating Circumstances Policy

Section 1 - Introduction

Purpose

(1) This policy sets out the principles for ensuring that students who are legitimately prevented from making a fair attempt at an assessment are afforded other opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes.

Scope

To whom does the policy apply?

(2) This policy applies to students undertaking Hibernia College programmes, including those validated by QQI leading to awards on the [National Framework of Qualifications \(NFQ\)](#).

Who is responsible for implementing the policy?

(3) Programme Directors or nominees from Faculty are responsible for determining if a student's circumstances qualify as extenuating circumstances for the purposes of an assessment.

Definitions

(4) Extenuating Circumstances

(5) Extenuating circumstances are not:

- a. The usual difficulty or workload of an academic programme
- b. Pre-existing factors which are known to the student
- c. Normal life events that do not affect ability to undertake an assessment
- d. Factors which do not arise close to or during a summative assessment event
- e. Factors affecting an entire cohort (these are dealt with by the Board of Examiners directly)

Section 2 - Context

Legal or Regulatory Context

QA Guidelines

(6) This policy generally supports the implementation of our regulatory obligation to have policy and procedures in place to support the assessment of learners.

Assessment Policy

(7) This policy is designed to support the principle of fairness set out in our [Assessment, Grading and Certification Policy](#).

Section 3 - Policy Statements

Part A - Principles for Considering and Managing Applications for the Consideration of Extenuating Circumstances

Fairness

(8) Students are entitled to undertake assessment in a fair and reasonable context, in equivalent circumstances to their peers. Where unforeseen circumstances arise which negatively impact on a student's performance, they have the right to seek particular consideration in respect of the submission and marking of a particular assessment task.

(9) No student can be deemed to have passed any module or programme unless the learning outcomes have been achieved. In deciding that a student's performance may have been adversely affected by unforeseen circumstances, the mechanism to provide fairness may involve offering a student a repeat attempt, without any penalty, e.g. for grading purposes treating the repeat attempt as if it were the original attempt.

(10) Normally, an application for the consideration of extenuating circumstances in the allocation of a final mark to a student is considered at the end of a stage by the Board of Examiners as one can adjudicate on the application in the context of the student's overall performance.

Student Responsibility

(11) Students are responsible for:

- a. Providing original and verifiable evidence of the factors affecting their efforts in their application
- b. Making reasonable use of the policies and procedures and support services available in Hibernia College to defray any impact of personal circumstances on their efforts (applying for reasonable accommodation, for instance)

Fit to Submit

(12) A student who attempts an assessment, without having made use of the policies, procedures and support services offered by the College is normally understood to have deemed themselves fit to carry out the assessment task.

Possible Unfair Advantage

(13) In applying for consideration of extenuating circumstances in the marking of an assessment, no student may seek to gain an unfair advantage over other students or to evade, or attempt to evade, demonstration of the learning outcomes for the piece of learning being assessed.

Part B - Possible Outcomes of Applications for Extenuating Circumstances

(14) Students following the [Extenuating Circumstances Procedure](#) may be granted:

- a. No mitigation - where students are required to complete the assessment as normal, which will be graded as normal
- b. An extension - a revised deadline for completion of an assessment task
- c. Use of a repeat opportunity as a first fair attempt
- d. A recommendation to the Board of Examiners to revise a mark in light of the circumstances evidenced and the

original grade for the assessment task (which is not a comment on the soundness of any original academic judgement)

- e. Another outcome agreed in writing with the College and approved by the Programme Director

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	2nd November 2020
Review Date	2nd November 2023
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Approval Date	23rd September 2020
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Enquiries Contact	Quality Assurance

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Policy" - Policies are principled statements adopted by the College at a high level to enable decisions about actions and desired outcomes to which the College is committed. They clearly articulate the formal position of the College on specific issues in order to guide internal decision-making. Policies set out 'what to do' on a given issue. They have a medium- to long-term review cycle.

"Reasonable Accommodation" - 'A Reasonable Accommodation is any action that helps to alleviate a substantial disadvantage due to an impairment or medical condition.' (AHEAD). In the context of supporting higher education students, a reasonable accommodation is any provision made for a particular student to allow them to demonstrate their achievement of the learning outcomes of a piece of learning without any disadvantage which may arise on the basis of their having a disability or long-term illness.

"Extenuating Circumstances" - Extenuating Circumstances are unexpected factors or emergencies arising close to or during a summative assessment event (normally up to three days in advance) having a material effect on the student's preparation for or performance in that summative assessment task, where the student can provide evidence for them.