



# **EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES POLICY AND PROCEDURES 2023-24**

Document Title		
EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES POLICY AND PROCEDURES		
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Summary/Description:		
<p>This document defines the procedure for responding to a request for Extenuating Circumstances when a student's work has been adversely affected by circumstances beyond their control. This applies to all students who are taking any course at All Nations Christian College including those validated by The Open University.</p>		
<p><b>2023-24 v1</b>            March 23: review resulting in:            amendments to section 7 to reflect current procedures            addition of page numbers,            amendment of related policies section,            amendment of typos/formatting and where College nomenclature has changed</p>		

# ALL NATIONS CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

To train and equip men and women for effective participation in God's mission to His multicultural world.

## EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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### 2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The College recognises that students may suffer from a sudden illness, or other serious and unforeseen event or set of circumstances, which adversely affects their ability to complete an assessment, or the results they obtain for an assessment. In such cases, this policy and procedure document will apply.
- 2.2 The College '[Learning Support Policy](#)' outlines the help that is available to students with a long-term condition or disability.

### 3 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

This policy contains rules and regulations of the College which have been prepared in line with Open University regulations and, where appropriate, the requirement of the Office for Students' Regulatory Framework and the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

### 4 POLICY

- 4.1 It is the student's responsibility to inform the College of extenuating circumstances which they consider are affecting their ability to study and/or undertake assessments using the procedures in this policy.
- 4.2 It is the College's responsibility to treat all extenuating circumstance applications confidentially, fairly and promptly and in accordance with the College's [Equality and Diversity Policy](#).
- 4.3 Students should make every effort to ensure that they are fit to study and undertake assessment, and where a student feels that there are circumstances that are affecting them adversely it is their responsibility to seek professional help, where relevant, to assist in resolving the problem.

- 4.4** Students are responsible for ensuring that they are available for all necessary study and assessment. A student will be in breach of the College's [Attendance Policy](#) if they do not attend an examination or comply with a coursework deadline and do not follow the extenuating circumstance procedure or if their application for extenuating circumstances to be taken into account is insincere.
- 4.5** Extenuating circumstances cannot excuse academic misconduct.
- 4.6** Tutors, with the approval of the Programme Leader, may consider late submission of assignments due to extenuating circumstances, only if they meet the given criteria below.
- 4.7** Upon a student's extenuating circumstances application, it is the Programme Leader's responsibility to inform the student when the outcome of their application can be known. This is usually within seven days but may be delayed pending the submission of evidence from the student.
- 4.8** The aim in dealing with student's work which has been affected by extenuating circumstances is that everyone should be assessed on equal terms and no one should be put in a position of unfair advantage or disadvantage over other students.
- 4.9** Extenuating Circumstances applications should be made at the earliest opportunity i.e. as soon as the situation is foreseen or as soon as possible or no later than 7 calendar days after the circumstances apply. Only in very exceptional circumstances will an application be considered after the published deadline has elapsed.
- 4.10** Students are responsible for providing the required evidence demonstrating their claimed extenuating circumstances.
- 4.11** Confidential information will only be shared with the College for the purposes of implementing this policy in a fair and rigorous manner. Any student wishing to restrict the sharing of such information should make their wishes known to the appropriate members of staff, preferably in writing. Students should be aware that the College cannot respond to a student's circumstances if they remain unaware of relevant information.
- 4.12** Normally such wishes will be respected unless to do so would be against the best interests of the College community or the interests of safety or security of any person.
- 4.13** It is the responsibility of the Programme Leader and their administrators to keep records of all claims and ensure that they manage and note extensions to deadlines and deferral of examinations, keeping the relevant tutors informed.
- 4.14** Normally a student will be offered the opportunity to sit the examination at another time, or have an extension deadline for the submission of coursework.
- 4.15** If extenuating circumstances cause a student to fail more than one module, the student may be offered the option to re-take the entire year, re-attending classes and submitting the required assignments (assignments submitted will be on different questions than those submitted in the previous year). The option of re-taking a year will be at the discretion of the Examination Board and fees may be incurred for the extra year of studies. A student may re-sit a year only once.
- 4.16** Work that has been granted extenuating circumstances permission for late submission will not incur any penalty. Without such permission, the usual penalties for late submission will apply.
- 4.17** If the extenuating circumstance persists and a student is unable to continue with their coursework, they should defer their studies to the following year.
- 4.18** It is the College's responsibility to ensure that all students are aware of this policy. The information should be included in the orientation programme and students should be reminded each year of its existence as well as being included in Policy Appendices of the Programme Handbook.
- 4.19** For further information please see section F of the Regulations for Validated Awards of The Open University.

## 5 ADMISSIBLE GROUNDS

5.1 In order to be considered extenuating circumstances such difficulties must meet all of the following criteria:

- They must be out of a student's control – they could not have been prevented;
- They must have had an impact i.e. a demonstrably negative impact on a student's ability to study or to undertake an assessment;
- The timing of the circumstances must be relevant to the impact the student claims it had on them.

5.2 The type of circumstance must also be covered by one of the following categories:

- Ill-health or accident;
- Compassionate grounds (e.g. bereavement or serious family issues including those which necessitate unexpected travel; or, for postgraduate online students, unavoidable unexpected travel for work or natural disaster etc.);
- Visa renewal or expiry issues which necessitate unexpected travel.

## 6 INADMISSIBLE GROUNDS

Extenuating Circumstances will not be considered:

- if a student fails to plan or organise work;
- for poor time management;
- for requesting an extension after the published deadline has elapsed. NB A student should not presume that they will be granted a last-minute extension beyond 5pm.

## 7 APPLICATION PROCEDURE: ASSIGNMENTS

7.1 Tutors, with the approval of the Programme Leader, may consider late submission of assignments due to extenuating circumstances, only if they meet the above criteria.

7.2 If a student fails to attend an examination or to submit an assignment on time due to extenuating circumstances, they should:

- a. Inform their personal tutor at the earliest opportunity i.e. as soon as the situation is foreseen, as soon as possible or no later than 7 calendar days after the circumstances apply. Only in very exceptional circumstances will an application be considered after the published deadline has elapsed.
- b. Send an email to the Programme Leader (copied to the Personal Tutor) with the appropriate supporting evidence e.g. a medical certificate or a death certificate in the case of bereavement and so on.
- c. The Programme Leader will discuss with the student and the personal tutor and, if approved, a new deadline will be agreed. The options with the student and a decision will be given as soon as we have the approval from the Subsidiary Exam Board (comprising the Chair and an External Examiner). Normally the student will be offered the opportunity to sit the examination at another time (BA students), or be given an extension deadline for the submission of coursework (BA and MA students).

7.3 If an Extenuating Circumstance is granted:

- a. **Undergraduate students:** The Programme Leader will inform the student and the programme administrator of any new deadline. It is the responsibility of the relevant programme administrator to ensure that the student's work is not penalised for late submission unless they fail to meet the new deadline.

7.4 The student must make every effort to submit the assignment by the date given. If they do not do so, they will fail the module.

7.5 A further extension will only be granted under unquestionable extenuating circumstances and supported by evidence.

## **8 EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES AND THE EXAMINATION BOARD: UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS**

- 8.1** If the timing of the extenuating circumstance is so late in a final term of an academic year, such that it prevents a student from submitting any outstanding work in time for the Examination Board to progress them on to the next year of study, the Programme Leader, in conjunction with the Subsidiary Board), will submit the case to the Examination Board, together with their supporting evidence (e.g. doctor's certificate).
- 8.2** Upon receipt of recommendations from them, the Board of Examiners, will decide whether to:
- provide a student with the opportunity to take the affected assessment(s) as if for the first time (i.e. a 'sit' or 'submit'), allowing them to be given the full marks achieved for the examination or assessment, rather than imposing a cap;
  - waive late submission penalties;
  - determine that there is sufficient evidence of the achievement of the intended learning outcomes from other pieces of assessment in the module(s) for an overall mark to be derived;
  - note the accepted extenuation for the module(s) and recommend that it is taken into account at the point of award and classification.
- 8.3** If satisfied, the Examination Board will allow the work of continuing students to be submitted in time for the Progression Board, which meets towards the beginning of the first term of the following academic year.
- 8.4** The Examination Board will take into account any relevant extenuating circumstances when considering borderline cases between one degree classification and another.
- 8.5** The Examination Board makes the ultimate decision on whether or not a student has presented a valid case. The Examination Board must be satisfied that their absence, failure to submit work or poor performance was due to illness or another cause found valid on production of acceptable evidence. If a student fails to attend examinations or submit work for assessment without good cause, the examiners have authority to deem them to have failed the assessments concerned.

## **9 EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES AND THE EXAMINATION BOARD: POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS**

- 9.1** The 48-week period of study usually allows a student to complete modules before the end of the academic year; and includes a period of several months to finish the dissertation.
- 9.2** However, in some cases full-time students do continue into a further year – usually this extra time is needed either to complete a thesis (or less frequently to conclude modules and the final dissertation).
- 9.3** The nature of the MA degree means that there is an expectation that all elements will be properly completed. Where this has not been possible, there are options for a student to be awarded either the PG Cert or the PG Dip.
- 9.4** If a student has to return to work or to their home country before their thesis is completed (sometimes due to extenuating circumstances), they may (subject to the Examination Board's approval) be granted up to an extra year to complete their studies. However, they need to be aware that the regulations do not allow this to extend beyond the time-period stipulated by The Open University.
- 9.5** The Examination Board will take into account every relevant extenuating circumstance that relates to the final award e.g. when considering borderline cases between one classification and another; or in extenuating circumstances where events just before completion of the degree have led to a delay.
- 9.6** The Examination Board makes the ultimate decision on whether or not a student has presented a valid case. The Examination Board must be satisfied that a student's absence,

failure to submit work or poor performance was due to illness or another cause found valid on production of acceptable evidence. If a student fails to submit work for assessment without good cause, the examiners have authority to deem them to have failed the assessments concerned.

## 10 AEGROTAT: UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

- 10.1 Should a student be prevented by illness, or other circumstances, from completing the final assessed component of the programme, the board of examiners, having considered the relevant evidence (including medical certification) may make a recommendation that an Aegrotat award be made.
- 10.2 Such exceptions are limited to students who are permanently unable to continue their studies and are registered for the final module that would complete a qualification, and have been assessed on at least part of the module. The board must be satisfied that the student's prior performance shows beyond reasonable doubt that they would have passed but for the illness, or other circumstances.
- 10.3 Posthumous awards are permitted for all programmes. The classification for such awards is based on past performance and is recommended to the Open University's Module Results Approval and Qualifications Classification Panel (MRAQCP) for approval.
- 10.4 Before a recommendation of an Aegrotat is submitted to the University, a student must have signified willingness to accept the award and understand that this implies waiving the right to be reassessed.

## 11 APPEALING THE DECISION

- 11.1 If a student feels the College did not follow its own procedures or treated them unfairly when refusing a student permission for extenuating circumstances, they may follow the College [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- 11.2 Appeals must be made within 14 calendar days of receiving the refusal using the Formal Appeals form which can be found in the appendix of this document.
- 11.3 The College [Academic Appeals Policy](#) also contains details of how a student may make a further appeal to The Open University and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator after the conclusion of the College's internal appeals procedure.

## 12 EQUALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

Extenuating Circumstances will be considered impartially and in accordance with the College '[Equality and Diversity Policy](#)'. All records are kept in accordance with the College [Data Protection Policy](#), which outlines data subjects' rights regarding the processing of that data.

## 13 ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, POLICY APPROVAL AND REVIEW

- 13.1 The **Board of Trustees** have legal oversight and responsibility for all College policies, but have delegated to the Academic Board the authority to ensure fit-for-purpose policies and procedures related to academic provision are in place. The **Board of Trustees** are responsible for ensuring they receive details from the **Vice-Principal (Academic)** of any serious incident or one which could be of reputational risk to the College which should be reported to either the Open University, the Office for Students and/or the Charity Commission.
- 13.2 The **Academic Board**, who is also authorized by the Open University through its accreditation process, acts on behalf of the **Board of Trustees** on all academic matters. They are responsible for:
  - Ensuring that the academic activities of the College support its mission statement and values.

- Ensuring that a fit-for-purpose extenuating circumstances policy is approved by them and complies with all relevant legislation and regulations (e.g. the regulations of The Open University).
- Overseeing the effective implementation of this policy and ensuring it is satisfactorily managed.
- Ensuring that the principles of this policy are:
  - Considered when managing and planning academic matters.
  - Reviewed by exploring what can be learned from appeals/complaints when they occur.
  - Reviewed in consultation with academic staff, students and The Open University, as a means of constantly seeking to improve the College's academic provision.
- Ensuring they receive details from the **Vice-Principal (Academic)** of reported incidents and outcomes of cases (particularly where a significant impact on someone has occurred or lessons need to be learned), or details of a serious incident or one which could be of reputational risk to the College.

**13.3** The **Principal/CEO**, the **Vice-Principal (Academic)** and the **Quality Assurance Committee** are jointly responsible for the annual monitoring and review of this policy and recommending approval to the Academic Board for all changes.

**13.4** The **Vice-Principal (Academic)** is responsible for providing leadership for all academic provision of the College and for leading the college's extenuating circumstances policy and practice by:

- Monitoring the granting of extensions due to extenuating circumstances and any subsequent appeals process.
- Ensuring that decision making complies with College and Open University regulations and is applied consistently across academic provision.
- Reporting to the **Academic Board** and **Senior Leadership Team** incidents and outcomes of cases (particularly where a significant impact on someone has occurred or lessons need to be learned), or details of a serious incident or one which could be of reputational risk to the College.
- Ensuring the College and its staff comply with any appeals process undertaken by an outside agency (e.g. The OU or the OIA).

**13.5** The **Programme Leaders** are responsible for:

- Decision making regarding the granting of extenuating circumstances in accordance with this policy.
- Monitoring student compliance with new deadline(s), together with the **Recruitment and Training Administrators**.
- Managing any subsequent appeal or complaint.

**13.6** The **Examination Board** is responsible for:

- Ruling on cases where extenuating circumstances prevent a student from submitting outstanding work in time to be presented at an Examination Board to either be progressed to the next level or to be considered for an award.
- Where relevant, recommending posthumous awards to The Open University for the consideration of their Ratification Panel's approval.

**13.7** The **Student Academic Representatives** are responsible for:

- Raising academic issues on behalf of their cohort with the **Vice-Principal (Academic)**.
- Reporting back to their cohort on the resolution of issues raised by the students or one of the academic committees.



- 13.8 All academic staff and students** are responsible for:
- Familiarising themselves with this policy on appointment/at induction/orientation.
  - Taking a pro-active role in improving the College's extenuating circumstances policy and practice.
  - Promoting and implementing/complying with this policy.
  - If **involved in an investigation, complaint or appeal** in any capacity:
    - ensuring they present their case with integrity and in a timely fashion and/or
    - ensuring they comply with any investigation and the procedures in this policy.
- 13.9 The Recruitment and Training Administrators** are responsible for processing an extenuating circumstance request in accordance with the procedures in this policy and processing any complaint or appeal in accordance with the relevant policy.

## **14 POLICY COMMUNICATION**

- 14.1** This document can be found in the Handbook and Policies section of the College website: [www.allnations.ac.uk](http://www.allnations.ac.uk) and in the student area on the College VLE.
- 14.2** The College General Administrator will make every effort to respond to any request to provide this policy in a different format. Such requests should be sent to [info@allnations.ac.uk](mailto:info@allnations.ac.uk)
- 14.3** This policy will be included in staff and student induction.

## **15 RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- All Nations Christian College [Undergraduate Handbook](#)
- All Nations Christian College [Postgraduate Handbook](#)
- All Nations Christian College [Learning Support Policy](#)
- All Nations Christian College [Attendance Policy](#)
- All Nations Christian College [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- All Nations Christian College [Equality and Diversity Policy](#)
- All Nations Christian College [Data Protection Policy](#)
- [Open University Handbook for Validated Awards](#)