



Higher Education Extensions & Extenuating Circumstances

Policy and Procedure

2023-2024

Version Control			
Author:	<i>HE Quality Officer</i>	Approved by:	<i>SLT</i>
Date Approved:	<i>12/12/2023</i>	Next Review Date:	<i>12/2024</i>
Responsible for review:	<i>Assistant Principal for HE</i>	Version Number:	<i>1</i>
Version Amendments			
Date of Amendment:		Amendments:	
Date of Amendment:		Amendments:	

If you require this extenuating Circumstances policy document in an alternative format, please contact Helen Booth via helen.booth@tameside.ac.uk (phone 0161 908 6763).

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Introduction

- 1.1. Tameside College (we) are committed to supporting our students (your) journey and we recognise that sometimes extenuating circumstances can impact your ability to meet academic expectations. That is why we have an extenuating circumstances policy to ensure that you are provided with the necessary support during difficult times.
- 1.2. This document outlines our policy and the procedure to be followed if you need to apply for:
 - an extension to an assessment.
 - consideration of extenuating circumstances; and/or
 - Deferral or withdrawal from the course

This document should be read in conjunction with the [Learning Support and SEND Policy](#) and is written in accordance with the College's statutory obligations under the [Equality Act 2010](#).

Scope

- 2.1 This policy covers all students completing Higher Education (HE) courses at Tameside College with the exception of those studying on Collaborative Provision courses with Chester and Huddersfield University (see Glossary). Students studying on Collaborative Provision courses are required to follow the relevant University's procedures found in the [Appendix 1 - University Partner Conditions](#).
- 2.2 This document will apply to you if your health and/or personal circumstances have a significant impact on your ability to complete or submit your assessment or your overall performance in a unit/module or assessment.
- 2.3 If you have any queries relating to this policy and procedure, please contact your Head of Department or the HE Quality Officer, Helen Booth, helen.booth@tameside.ac.uk.

Purpose

- 3.1. This policy aims to support you with extenuating circumstances by offering you the opportunity to present your case for consideration and ensuring that you are not unduly disadvantaged due to circumstances beyond your control. The policy seeks to promote your well-being, maintain academic integrity, and foster an inclusive and supporting learning environment.
- 3.2. The policy objectives are:
 - To ensure that you as a student are appropriately supported when extenuating circumstances are brought to the attention of the College in a timely manner.
 - To ensure that all students are treated fairly and equitably in the light of the extenuating circumstances.
 - To outline your responsibilities in informing the College of circumstances which are affecting your performance.

Policy principles

- 4.1. The information below sets out the core principles for self-certification extensions, evidenced-based extensions, extenuating circumstances requests, deferrals, and withdrawals.

Self-Certification Extensions

- 4.2. Self-certification extensions may be offered where you have experienced a temporary, unexpected circumstance that means you are unable to complete a particular assessment on time.
- 4.3. These circumstances will normally relate to your health and/or a personal circumstance of a sufficiently serious and significant nature to result in you being unable to attend, complete or submit an assessment on time.
- 4.4. The circumstances will be expected to be:
 - Unforeseeable, in that you could have had no prior knowledge of the event concerned; and/or
 - Unavoidable, in that you could have done nothing reasonably within your power to prevent or avoid such an event.

- 4.5 You may not self-certify for the following:
- Dissertations, Independent Research Studies/Projects
 - Group work assessments.
 - Exams
- 4.6 Applications for self-certification extensions must be submitted before the submission date and they can be made a maximum of four weeks prior to the submission deadline -, otherwise the expectation is for you to have made up the lost time.
- 4.7 When you self-certify (with a valid reason) you will be given an automatic 5 working days extension if you are within your self-certification extension limit for the academic year. You will receive a confirmation email within 2 working days to confirm your new submission deadline.
- 4.8 Extensions for multiple assessments may be requested on the same self-certification application if they are due within 5 working days of each other.
- 4.9 Self-certification extensions will not be accepted for foreseeable or avoidable reasons such as those outlined in clause 4.21.
- 4.10 Self-certification extensions will only be accepted for a maximum of two occasions over an academic year, with no more than one application per semester and they will not be longer than 5 working days each. If a longer extension or more than two extensions have been requested, you would need to apply for an evidence-based extension instead.

Evidence-based extensions

- 4.11 Evidence-based extensions may be offered where you have experienced a longer term, unexpected circumstance that requires an extension for longer than 5 working days or have previously received a self-certification extension for the same assessment/s, or you have already applied for two self-certification extensions in an academic year.
- 4.12 You can apply for an evidence-based extension up to 4 weeks before the submission deadline and wherever possible applications should be submitted

before 12pm on the date of the submission deadline. You will receive an email with confirmation of receipt within 5 working days and will be emailed details of agreement or refusal and new submission date confirmation (if applicable) within 10 working days of the application.

- 4.13 The amount of additional time you can ask for should be proportionate to the time lost through the circumstances given in the request.
- 4.14 Evidence-based extensions will not be accepted for foreseeable or avoidable reasons.
- 4.15 You should continue working on your assessment while your evidenced-based extension is being considered.
- 4.16 Evidence may include official documentation to support the reason you are giving to request an extension to your deadline. This could include, but not limited to, details of a hospital stay, doctors/hospital letter, letter from a landlord/eviction notice.
- 4.17 You may not apply for an evidenced-based extension for the following:
- Dissertations, Independent Research Studies/Projects
 - Group work assessments.
 - Exams
- 4.18 You may be referred to extenuating circumstances in addition to the evidence-based extension if your performance has been significantly adversely impacted by a serious health/personal circumstance.
- 4.19 An evidence-based extension will not count towards your self-certification limits (maximum two self-certification applications per academic year, with no more than one application per semester).
- 4.20 If multiple evidence-based extensions are requested in an academic year, the Programme Leader or Head of Department may contact you to discuss your support options. This may include a support plan, or proceeding with other options, such as applying for extenuating circumstances, deferral, or withdrawal from study.

Extenuating Circumstances

- 4.21 An Extenuating Circumstance is an exceptional situation outside your control, which you feel affected your performance in any of the assessed tasks.
- 4.22 You may apply for consideration of extenuating circumstances if your performance has been significantly adversely impacted by a serious health/personal circumstance. It will be explained in a conversation with your Programme Leader or Head of Department what options are available if your extenuating circumstances request is approved.
- 4.23 If your extenuating circumstances occurs during the academic year your Head of Department will decide the best course of action, in collaboration with you. This could include providing you with a support plan to assist with your future studies. If it is considered that the circumstances affected your performance in your previously submitted work your application may be passed onto the Board of Examiners to consider when reviewing your final results.
- 4.24 You should continue working on your assessment while your extenuating circumstance is being considered.
- 4.25 If your extenuating circumstances occur or only become apparent when you have completed your assessments, your application will be passed onto the Board of Examiners to consider when reviewing your final results.
- 4.26 You may decide, after a discussion with your Programme Leader or Head of Department, that your extenuating circumstance is impacting you in such a way that a deferral or withdrawal from studies is the best option. In this case, please refer to the [Deferral](#) and [Withdrawal](#) sections below.

Examples of Circumstances likely to be accepted.

- 4.27 The below examples are of circumstances that would **likely** be accepted as a reason for a self-certification extension, evidenced-based extension, and extenuating circumstances request. This list is not exhaustive:
- Serious short-term illness or injury.
 - Worsening of an ongoing illness or disability, including mental health conditions.

- Symptoms of an infectious disease that could be harmful if passed on to others.
- Death or significant illness of a close family member or friend.
- Unexpected caring responsibilities for a family member or dependant.
- Significant personal or family crises leading to acute stress.
- Witnessing or experiencing a traumatic incident.
- A crime which has had a substantial impact.
- Accommodation crisis such as eviction or the home becoming uninhabitable.
- An emergency or crisis that prevents you from attending an exam or accessing an online assessment.
- A technical problem that prevents you from accessing online teaching or assessment.
- Safeguarding concerns.

Examples of Circumstances unlikely to be accepted.

4.28 The below examples are of circumstances that would **unlikely** be accepted as a reason for a self-certification extension, evidenced-based extension, and extenuating circumstances request. This list is not exhaustive:

- Holidays, house moves or other events that were planned or could reasonably have been expected.
- Assessments that are scheduled close together.
- Misreading the exam timetable.
- Poor time management.
- Minor transport disruption.
- Computer or printer failure where you should have backed-up your work.
- Normal exam stress.
- Attending family and/or friend celebrations.

- Religious observance. As the date of a religious observance is known in advance it is not covered as an urgent cause. If you feel that you may require adjustments during these periods, you should discuss your concerns with your teacher well in advance of any assessment deadlines.

Evidence Standards

- 4.29 For evidence-based extensions and extenuating circumstances, you will be required to submit supporting evidence to support your application.
- 4.30 Please refer to [Appendix 2](#) for a list of example evidence standards.

Data Protection of Evidence

- 4.31 Your supporting evidence will only be shared with staff who are directly involved in deciding the outcome or the administration of the extension or extenuating circumstances application. These are:
- HE Quality Officer
 - Your Head of Department
 - Head of Quality
 - Head of HE
 - Senior Leadership Team
 - Your teacher/s
- 4.32 Your application and any material relating to your case will be managed and stored in accordance with our [Data protection Policy and Data retention policy](#)

Late Requests

- 4.33 Late requests will be considered only if the reason on the application would have prevented the application from being made before the submission date, this would include if illness/hospitalisation had prevented you accessing or completing the application form. Contact with the teacher by email or phone would be recommended in this instance.

4.34 Late requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If it is considered that you do not have reasonable grounds for submitting your request late you may incur in a late penalty, such as a reduction in marks.

Extensions within the final month of the course

4.35 You will not be able to apply for an extension within the final month of your course. You will need to apply for an extenuating circumstance instead. Your Programmer Leader or Head of Department will be able to provide support and advice should you require it.

Potential Outcomes

4.36 There are three possible outcomes for an extension or extenuating circumstances request:

- **Approved** – you will receive an outcome letter detailing the next steps whether that be an extended deadline, support plan or referred to the Board of Examiners.
- **More evidence requested** – you will be contacted to supply more evidence. This may delay the consideration of your case.
- **Refused** – you will receive an outcome in allotted time frame for the request. If you are unsatisfied with the outcome, you have a right to appeal the decision if you have grounds to do so.

Deferral

4.37 There may be times when you would like to take a break from study, this is called a deferral. To defer your studies, you must complete the Deferrals form. You will receive information, advice, and guidance from the student support team on the potential impact of a deferral, for example external benefits, council tax reductions, etc.

4.38 The point at which you have been permitted to return to your studies and the agreement with your Course Leader will impact on whether any of the marks you may have taken prior to your interruption will remain on your profile.

4.39 Where you are expected to return and complete the year again, including all assessments, you will be subject to the usual Student Finance charges. Please

refer to the [Tuition and refund of tuition fees policy](#). If your application to defer is refused, you have the right to appeal this decision in line with the [HE Customer Care Policy](#).

- 4.40 There are different types of deferrals. You may choose to defer the commencement of your course at the start of an academic year, for example if you intend to take a year out of study and commence the year after. Deferrals can be short term, for example if you wish to commence your studies later within the year to have a break from study for a term. Deferral of an assessment is when you take an assessment at a later date.
- 4.41 Deferrals are different from withdrawals; a deferred student is still a student at the college whereas withdrawal means you are no longer a registered student. A deferred student will still be able to access all the benefits of being a student (e.g., IT systems, social events, and access to the buildings).

Withdrawals

- 4.42 Withdrawal is when a student is removed from a course. This can be at the request of the student or following the college process to withdraw a student. If you are withdrawn, you will no longer be considered a student at the College and you will not be permitted to resume your programme within the same academic year..
- 4.43 If you decide you would like to study with us again, you will need to re-apply to the College through the usual admissions process. Depending on when you withdraw, you may still be liable to pay a portion of your tuition fees, please refer to the [Higher Education refund and Compensation policy](#) .
- 4.44 Circumstances for withdrawal by the College may include:
- Failure to attend college.
 - Failure to follow [Acceptable Behaviour policy](#).

Support Available

- 4.45 If you require advice and guidance on any of the processes set out in this policy, you should contact your teacher in the first instance. Help and support regarding mental health or other health concerns is available from our [Progress and Welfare Advisors](#).

- 4.46 If you are unable to complete the one of the applications forms yourself, due to your circumstances, you may appoint an advocate to do this on your behalf. This can be a friend, family member or member of staff.

Complaints and Appeals

- 5.1 Your right of appeal: If you are unhappy with the outcome of your extension or extenuating circumstances request, please refer to [HE Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure](#).

Your right to complain: If you are unhappy with the outcome of your deferral or withdrawal decision, please refer to the [HE Customer Care Policy](#).

Procedures for Each Circumstance

Applying for a Self-Certification Extension

- 6.1 When applying for a self-certification extension you should:
- Contact your teacher(s) in the first instance to discuss the need for an extension, so they are aware you will be submitting your work late.
 - Failure to do this may result in your assignment being classed as an unauthorised late submission and lead to a reduction in marks, for example your work being capped at a Pass.
 - Please copy in the HE Quality Officer (helen.booth@tameside.ac.uk) to any email correspondence relating to the extension request.
- 6.2 You must include details of the module/s and assessment/s affected and submit your Self-Certification Extension application form by email to HE Quality Officer (helen.booth@tameside.ac.uk) **before 12pm** on the original submission deadline. You do not need to supply supporting evidence as part of the self-certification application.
- 6.3 Extensions for multiple assessments can be simultaneously requested on the same self-certification extension application. However, only one application may be made per semester and only a total of two applications across the academic

year. If you are submitting an extension request for multiple assessments simultaneously, you will need to submit the request **by 12pm** of the earliest submission deadline.

- 6.4 You will be automatically granted a 5 working day extension if you meet the requirements for a self-certification extension (short-term illness or other urgent cause) and have not exceeded your limit of self-certification extensions.
- 6.5 Your extension will be 5 working days from the date of your original submission date or previously extended submission date.
- 6.6 Confirmation of your self-certification extension will be emailed to you within 2 working days.
- 6.7 A record will be kept by the HE Quality Officer of the number of self-certification extensions granted to you to ensure you are not requesting more than two in any academic year. If you apply to self-certify more than twice in an academic year, the application will be refused, and you will not receive an automatic 5 working day extension. You will be signposted to apply for an evidence-based extension and the need to provide supporting evidence.
- 6.8 You may withdraw the self-certification extension request if you are able to submit the assessment/s by the original deadline and this will not count towards the two permitted self-certification extension requests.

If your application is refused for reasons other than applying more than twice per year you may appeal the decision via the [HE Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure](#).

- 6.9 Late requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If the reason for the late submission of the application is acceptable the application will be processed in the standard way.

Applying for an Evidence-Based Extension

- 6.10 When applying for an Evidenced based extension you should:

- Contact your teacher in the first instance to discuss the need for an evidenced-based extension, so they are aware you will be submitting your work late.

- Failure to do this may result in your work being capped at a Pass as an unauthorised late submission.
- Please copy in the HE Quality Officer (helen.booth@tameside.ac.uk) to any email correspondence relating to the evidence-based extension request.

- 6.11 You must include details of the module(s) and assessment(s) affected and submit your Evidence-based Extension application form by email to the HE Quality Officer (helen.booth@tameside.ac.uk) **before 12pm** on the original submission deadline.
- 6.12 You will need to provide supporting evidence for your extension request. For further information on the evidence required please see [Appendix 2: Evidence Standards](#).
- 6.13 Extensions for multiple assessments can be simultaneously requested on the same evidenced-based extension application. If you are submitting an evidenced-based extension request for multiple assessments simultaneously, you will need to submit the request **by 12pm** of the earliest submission deadline.
- 6.14 An acknowledgement email will be sent to you within 5 working days of making the application. Confirmation of the outcome and the new submission date, if applicable, will be emailed to you within 10 working days.
- 6.15 You should continue working on your assessment while your evidenced-based extension is being considered.
- 6.16 Late requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If the reason for the late submission of the application is acceptable the application will be processed in the standard way.

Outcomes

- 6.17 If more evidence is required, you will be contacted by the HE Quality Officer by email as soon as possible asking for further information or clarification. If this is not provided, your application will be considered on the evidence provided and this could result in a refusal of the application.

- 6.18 If your application is approved, you will be informed of your new submission date within 10 working days of when the application was received.
- 6.19 If your application is refused, you will be informed of the reason and be expected to submit your assessment(s) by the submission deadline date. Assessments submitted late may suffer the consequences of a late submission (e.g., assessment capped at a pass).

Applying for Extenuating Circumstances

- 6.20 Completed Extenuating Circumstances application forms should be emailed to the HE Quality Officer (helen.booth@tameside.ac.uk) and must be accompanied by supporting evidence. Application should be submitted as soon as possible, preferably before the submission deadline or as soon as possible after an assessment deadline or exam. You should continue working on your assessment while your extenuating circumstance is being considered.
- 6.21 Your application should be made as soon as the circumstances you are concerned about are known to you and no later than 10 working days after your final results are confirmed.
- 6.22 You will need to provide supporting evidence for your extenuating circumstance request. For further information on the evidence required please see [Appendix 2: Evidence Standards](#).
- 6.23 Your application will be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt and you will be notified of the decision within 10 working days.

Outcomes

- 6.24 If your application is approved your Head of Department will decide the best course of action. This could include providing you with a support plan to assist with your future studies. If it is considered that the circumstances affected your performance in your previously submitted work your application may be passed onto the Board of Examiners to consider when reviewing your final results. If your extenuating circumstances occur or are only known by you when you have

completed your assessments, your application will be passed onto the Board of Examiners to consider when reviewing your final results.

- 6.25 If your application is refused, you will be emailed the reason for this decision to the email address on your application form. Should you wish to appeal a decision regarding an extenuating circumstances request, please refer to the HE academic appeals policy and procedure.
- 6.26 Outcomes will be recorded [on your student record] and stored in line with our Data Protection Policy and Student Privacy statement.

Deferral

- 6.27 You must consult with the programme leader or Head of Department for your course and then complete the Deferral application form to Head of Department and copy in the HE Quality Officer (helen.booth@tameside.ac.uk).
- You will receive an email acknowledgment of receipt of the application within 3 working days. The Programme team will meet with the HE Manger to discuss your application and you can expect to receive a decision via email within 10 working days of your request being acknowledged.
- 6.28 If your request is refused you will be given the reason why, this could be because your course will not be in place the next academic year. Should you wish to complain about the decision regarding a deferral request, please refer to the [HE Customer Care Policy](#)

Withdrawal

- 6.28 You must consult with the Programme Lead or Head of Department for your course explaining your reasons for wanting to withdraw from your course. They will give you advice and guidance to help you make a decision, including information on any potential fee liabilities.
- 6.29 To request to be withdrawn from your course you should submit a withdrawal form to your Head of Department and HE Quality Officer by email. You will need to give your reason for withdrawal on the form.

- 6.30 You will receive an acknowledgment of receipt of the application by email within 3 working days. The Head of Department will review your request and make a decision based on the information provided.
- 6.31 You can expect a decision from the HE Quality officer within 10 working days of your application to withdraw.

Review and Monitoring

- 7.1 We work closely with our university partners, students, and other stakeholders to ensure that our procedures are reviewed and updated on an annual basis. A regular report will be provided to Senior Leadership Team by the Head of Quality and an annual report will be presented to the Governors as part of the College's quality assurance arrangements.
- 7.2 We actively incorporate the [QAA Quality Code](#) into our policy review and monitoring processes to ensure continuous improvement and adherence to the highest standards of education.

Glossary

Collaborative Provision- all learning opportunities which lead or contribute to the award of academic credit or qualification that are delivered, assessed, or supported through an arrangement with one or more organisations other than the degree-awarding body.

Self-Certification Extension – If you experience temporary, unexpected circumstances, you may self-certify for an extension of 5 working days without providing evidence.

Evidence-Based Extension – If you experience temporary, unexpected circumstances, you may self-certify for an extension longer than 5 working days. They must provide evidence.

Extenuating Circumstances – An Extenuating Circumstance is an exceptional situation outside your control, which you feel affected your performance in any of the assessed tasks.

Withdrawal – A withdrawal is when you are removed from a course permanently. You are no longer a student at the College.

Deferral – A deferral is a delay of the commencement of your course until a later teaching period.

Semester - Semester One runs from the start of the new academic year in September, ending before February break; Semester Two starts in February and runs until the start of the summer break, which is normally in July.

Related Documents

[HE Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure](#)

[HE Customer Care Policy](#)

[Higher Education refund and Compensation policy](#).

[Tuition and refund of tuition fees policy](#).

[Data protection Policy and Data retention policy](#)

[Acceptable Behaviour policy](#).

[Learning Support and SEND Policy](#)

Appendix 1: University Partner Conditions

Partnership University – Regulations for taught students

Course code	University	Link to regulations	Section
MHF018MQ MHF019MQ MHF020MQ MHF027MQ	Huddersfield	https://www.hud.ac.uk/policies/registry/regs-taught/	Extensions and Extenuation circumstances 8
MHF018MQ MHF019MQ MHF020MQ MHF021MQ	Huddersfield	https://www.hud.ac.uk/policies/registry/regs-taught/	Interrupting or Withdrawing 5
MHF009MQ MHF017MQ MHF021MQ	Chester	https://www.chestersu.com/adv/ice/academic/extensions	Extension + referrals (including deferrals)

Appendix 2: Evidence Standards

The below guidance applies to all applications for an evidence-based extension, extenuating circumstance, deferral or withdraw request. Any evidence submitted must give a clear indication of the time period during which you were impacted by the circumstances, be dated, and provided in English.

Acute illness or injury

Acute illness is a term that can cover a very wide range of severity of situations, including what might be considered a minor illness for example a debilitating illness that would reasonably be considered an absence from work for an employed person.

Medical evidence

It is expected that medical certificates are provided by a doctor, but hospital letters are also considered as acceptable evidence. Letters for appointments and other health care professionals may be accepted if it can be shown that it would be possible or reasonable to rearrange the appointment.

Exacerbation of a chronic condition

For students with disabilities or chronic illnesses that fluctuate, may use their support plan as evidence to request a short extension up to 14 days. However, if more time is needed a discussion will need to take place with your teacher about how you can be supported further.

Urgent cause (other than illness)

Bereavement

If you have suffered a bereavement an order of service, obituary, news report or supporting letter from your teacher or family member will be accepted as evidence for an extension. The date of the bereavement and/or funeral will need to be stated on the supporting evidence.

Victim of a crime

If you are a victim of a crime, you can support your request with a police report, incident number, insurance letter and a statement of how the crime impacted your ability to work on your assessments. The date of the crime will need to be stated on the supporting evidence.

Jury Service or requirement to participate in legal proceedings

Requests regarding this should be supported by a jury service letter, a letter from the court or a letter from your solicitor. All the evidence should include the dates of the relevant legal proceedings.

Significant adverse personal or family circumstances

If you are impacted by significant adverse personal or family circumstances you may be able to request an extension if the impact of the circumstances are exceptional, unexpected, and time-limited. Requests can be supported by a statement from you and an independent person describing the impact of the circumstances has had on your ability to complete your

work. The independent person could include a solicitor, chaplain or similar, therapist or counsellor, family member's doctor, teacher, or welfare support officer.