POLICY 006
EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

If you have a disability which makes reading this document or navigating our website difficult and you would like to receive information in an alternative format, please contact: anddegree@acm.ac.uk

Policy 006: EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

1. PURPOSE

This policy is designed to support students whose learning has been adversely affected by circumstances that are unforeseen, exceptional and outside the control of the student. Its aims are to:

- Ensure fair and equal treatment of all students when considering their extenuating circumstances and determining how best to support them;
- Make clear the types of adverse factors that ACM shall consider as extenuating circumstances;
- Create a culture of enhancement seeking to learn from extenuating circumstances and improve the student experience, including through appropriate training for decision-makers;
- Ensure clarity in language and process;
- Uphold fairness, consistency and natural justice in the treatment of the student body as a whole, as well as for particular individuals including by:
    - Ensuring decisions are taken by those without conflicts of interest;
    - Ensuring that students are neither disadvantaged nor overly advantaged as a result of the process;
- Maintain awareness through collaboration with support services (academic and welfare), targeted local campaigns, and visible and accessible central information highlighted to students at relevant key points in the academic year.

2. POLICY DETAILS

2.1 The following principles underpin ACM's approach to extenuating circumstances (Middlesex University Regulations D8.2):

- No student shall be put in a position of unfair advantage over other candidates; the aim should be to enable all students to be assessed on equal terms.
- All work submitted by students for assessment shall be grades on its merits without consideration of any extenuating circumstances known to the marker. Extenuating circumstances will not be used by the ACM Assessment Board (Tier 1), or the ACM Progression Board to alter the grades of students.
- Students must submit extenuating circumstances with appropriate, dated documentary evidence, by the specified deadline as per the published guidance. Extenuating circumstances submitted after the deadline specified will normally be considered only if the student was unable or, for valid reasons, unwilling to disclose them before the deadline and submit documentary evidence to support this.
- Extenuating Circumstances will be considered by Panels, or its delegated nominee, convened on behalf of the ACM Assessment Board who may make a decision based on the published guidance.

- The outcomes of the extenuating circumstances panel, which may include an agreed extension to a coursework deadline or deferral of assessment to the next opportunity, will be provided to the Assessment Board to support their decision making:
    - ○ In considering whether a student may progress to the next stage of the programme;
    - ○ In determining the classification for a qualification where the student is borderline or there are conflicting classifications in the profiles of grades; ○ Consideration for an aegrotat award.
- Normally, extenuating circumstances shall not be taken into account where the circumstances have already been allowed for (for example, by Reasonable Adjustments (see ACM's Reasonable Adjustments Policy)). Reasonable adjustments should be agreed at enrolment in cases of known disability and in any case agreed with the student before an assessment period begins.

2.2 The following are **not** normally considered to be acceptable extenuating circumstances:

(a) Alleged medical conditions without appropriate, dated supporting evidence;
(b) Alleged medical conditions without contemporaneous evidence or sufficiently detailed subsequent evidence;
(c) Social activities;
(d) Temporary self-induced conditions;
(e) Minor ailments and other conditions;
(f) Foreseeable responsibilities associated with pregnancy
(g) Examination stress;
(h) Domestic or personal disruptions which could have been anticipated or planned;
(i) Study-related (including computer difficulties, losing work not backed up etc.);
(j) Examination conditions.

Further details on the circumstances which are and are not considered to be acceptable can be found in the Extenuating Circumstances Procedure.

2.3 Only formal extenuating circumstances applications submitted via the Extenuating Circumstances Google form will be accepted. This can be found on the Assessment Module on Canvas, and can also be provided by a Student Relations Officer.

2.4 The ACM Assessment Board (Tier 1), ACM Progression Board (Tier 2) and Finalist Examination Boards may consider the full history of summarised extenuating circumstances, as recommended by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel. Where necessary, the Chair or Clerk will obtain the original evidence from the Programme Team prior to the commencement of the Board.

2.5 Students taking part in an assessment by attending a live assessment or submitting work for an assessment are declaring themselves well enough to do so and are therefore 'Fit to Sit.' A request for additional consideration relating to that assessment will not normally be granted.

Not a controlled document when printed

2.6 Examples of the potential outcomes of an Extenuating Circumstances request are as follows:

- Upheld - 14-day extension under self-certification;
- Upheld - 14-day extension;
- Upheld - deferral to next assessment period (with supporting evidence only);
- Upheld with Action - candidate for Reasonable Adjustments;
- Not Upheld - request for further supporting documentation;
- Not Upheld - no grounds for Extenuating Circumstances.

2.7 In order for an assessment to be deferred to the next assessment opportunity, a student must submit an Extenuating Circumstances form with contemporary, relevant supporting documentation. For example, if the application states that the student is suffering with a significant medical issue, a letter from their GP would be required.

2.8 ACM considers it to be unreasonable, in some cases of illness that do not require medical attention, to request a medical note as supporting evidence for an extenuating circumstances application. In these cases, students may self-certify illness for up to 14 days.

2.9 Self-certification for digital submissions will only be considered for illnesses within 4 weeks of the assessment deadline. Self-certification will not be accepted for illnesses affecting the student for longer than 7 days, in which case the student will be subject to the items outlined in section 2 of this policy.

2.10 Self-certified extenuating circumstances applications must be submitted using the Extenuating Circumstances request form and will be considered by the Chair of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel.

2.11 Where self-certified extenuating circumstances are approved, the student will be awarded until the end of the late window 14 days after the original assessment deadline) to submit the assessment for the module affected by extenuating circumstances. For practical assessments and written exams, the student will be required to sit these at the next available opportunity.

2.12 Students can self-certify an extenuating circumstances application no more than twice in an academic year. Further requests to self-certify will incur the implementation of ACM's Fitness to Study Policy.

2.13 Where applications, including self-certified applications, are found to have been fraudulent, disciplinary action in line with ACM's Student Disciplinary Policy may be taken.

4. POLICY SCOPE

4.1 This Policy applies to students studying on the Foundation Year, and FHEQ Levels 4, 5, 6 and 7 at all ACM campuses.

5. RELATED POLICIES

- Academic Appeals Policy
- Student Complaints and Grievances Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Fitness to Study Policy
- Student Disciplinary Policy

6. POLICY OWNER

6.1 This Policy is under the responsibility of the Academic Board. The responsible committee will ensure the cyclical review of this Policy is carried out under ACM's Quality Assurance Framework.

7. PROCEDURES

7.1 The procedures that accompany this Policy can be found at: acm.ac.uk/policies

8. EXHIBITS/APPENDICES/FORMS

8.1 The Extenuating Circumstances Form can be found here: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdmqzGo3Tck5MNB2r7Y-aREvurWh13rmgIO52KmFRMku9C5YQ/viewform

9. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- QAA Quality Code
- OIA Good Practice Framework
- Middlesex University Regulations
- ACM Extenuating Circumstances Policy

10. DOCUMENT HISTORY AND NEXT REVIEW

Version: 3.2

Approved on: 01 September 2023

Approved by: Academic Board

Date of next review: August 2024