



The Union Advice Service

Guide to Extensions and Extenuating Circumstances

Extenuating Circumstances is for situations where your performance in an assessment is **significantly** affected by an event that was unavoidable, unexpected and beyond your control.

- ✓ The Extenuating Circumstances claim form can be completed electronically within **eVision**.
- ✓ There is a short video on how to submit Extenuating Circumstances and Coursework Extension Requests and we strongly suggest you watch it: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S3KzhMzKNnU&feature=youtu.be>
- ✓ Extenuating Circumstances must be submitted within **5 working days** of the impacted assessment deadline.
- ✓ Extenuating Circumstances is for any student **on a taught programme**.
- ✓ **Research students** should contact their supervisors for guidance if they encounter any difficulties which affect their studies.
- ✓ If the Board of Examiners have met then you will need to appeal on the basis of ECs, please see our **Advice Service Guide to Academic Appeals**.

An extension Request is for situations where your progress in an assessment is affected by an event or circumstance that was unavoidable, unexpected and beyond your control, **but** you are able to submit the impacted assessment **within a specified period of time**.

- ✓ You can request **a 5 working day extension**, and this should be submitted **at least 48 hours before the submission deadline**, in accordance with the Coursework Submission Policy.

- ✓ You can request an extension electronically within **eVision**.
- ✓ An extension of up to **14 working days may be given for a major project**, e.g. the Final Year Project, and up to 4 weeks for a Masters' dissertation. of the Deputy Dean (Academic Affairs) or the Associate Dean Quality Assurance.
- ✓ **The Coursework Submission** Policy sets out the penalties for late submission.
- ✓ Work submitted more than **5 days after the deadline** will not normally be accepted for marking.

More detailed information can be found below.

About this Guide

This Guide will tell you how to prepare your Extenuating Circumstances Claim (ECs) or Extension requests in the best way.

Senate Regulation 4 outlines the process for Extenuating Circumstances for both undergraduate and postgraduate students.

It is essential that you familiarise yourself with the process by looking through the links we provide in this guide. You can then use the tips contained in our guide to make sure your ECs explanation does your case justice.

Before you start

Before you start to draft your Extenuating Circumstances or Extension Request you must first consider whether these options are the most appropriate avenue for addressing your concerns.

Other possibilities to consider could be:

- If the circumstances are ongoing and likely to continue you may want to consider taking some time out (Please see our [Change of Plan Guide](#) which can be found in the University Procedures section of our website.)
- Is it something that can be dealt with informally with a simple discussion?
- If you did not do so well in an assessment but do not have serious or significant circumstances, then you should seek feedback on the assessment in question to better understand where you went wrong.

- If you did not do so well in an assessment but do not have serious or significant circumstances, then have you asked whether your work was moderated and sent to an External Examiner?
- You could submit a Formal Complaint about the circumstances if the issues are concerning someone's behaviour or your student experience. **Please see our Guide to Complaints.**

What are Extenuating Circumstances?

Extenuating Circumstances (ECs) are significant unforeseen events, outside your control, which have negatively affected your ability to study and your performance in an assessment.

The University defines ECs as:

“A significant event which negatively affects a student's ability to submit work, attend an assessment or perform to their usual standard in an assessment of any type. It should be unavoidable, unexpected and beyond the control of the student.”

Extenuating Circumstances are usually health-related or serious personal or family situations that affect you. You may have ECs if your circumstances:

- Have caused you to miss a lot of lectures/seminars or labs.
- Have prevented you from spending the same amount of time as you would normally do on coursework, preparing for seminars/labs or revising for exams.
- Prevent you from demonstrating everything you have learnt on the course and meeting the required learning outcomes as specified in the module outline.

ECs are not a replacement for trying to resolve the problem at the time it occurs and/or pursuing the complaints procedure if relevant.

If you experience medical, personal or course difficulties that you believe will and have affected your performance in assessments, it is very important to let your College know as soon as possible.

It is vital that your College is continually aware of any ongoing problems or issues that have occurred. The information you provide will be used in relation to your

assessment for the affected modules and will be retained confidentially as part of your student record.

What is an extension request?

An extension Request is for situations where your progress in an assessment is affected by an event or circumstance that was unavoidable, unexpected and beyond your control, **but** you are able to submit the impacted assessment **within a specified period of time.**

- ✓ You can request **a 5 working day extension**, and this should be submitted **at least 48 hours before the submission deadline**, in accordance with the Coursework Submission Policy.
- ✓ You can request an extension electronically within **eVision**.
- ✓ If your extension request is considered serious and/or long term then your department may suggest you claim for Extenuating Circumstances instead.
- ✓ If your request for an extension is not accepted, you will **not** normally be able to apply for ECs in relation to that missed deadline.
- ✓ An extension of up to **14 working days may be given for a major project**, e.g. the Final Year Project, and up to 4 weeks for a Masters' dissertation. of the Deputy Dean (Academic Affairs) or the Associate Dean Quality Assurance.
- ✓ **The Coursework Submission** Policy sets out the penalties for late submission.
- ✓ Work submitted more than 5 days after the deadline will not normally be accepted for marking.

Can I self-certificate?

If you have been **ill for 7 days or less and did not visit a doctor**, you may self-certify, and sign your own certificate confirming that you were ill.

- ✓ If you submit ECs evidenced by self-certification more than once in the academic year, you will be asked to meet with your Personal Tutor, who may require you to obtain further evidence, and who will discuss with you the ways in which the University can support you.
- ✓ If there is reason to doubt what you have written in your self-certification, you may be asked to provide further medical evidence.

The Extenuating Circumstances - Self-Certification Form can be found here

Can I submit retrospective Extenuating Circumstances?

Only in exceptional circumstances. Brunel University believes that if you attend an assessment or submit coursework on time, you are declaring yourself to be in a position to do so. However, if you have a good reason for engaging with the assessment, rather than following the normal ECs procedure then this may be acceptable by your College.

- If you do believe you have retrospective ECs then you should make a claim for ECs as soon as possible, and no later than 5 working days after the date of the assessment or deadline.
- If you are submitting Retrospective ECs, you may wish to submit evidence to support your 'good reason' and we would highly recommend that you do.
- Speak to the Advice Service about what evidence may be useful to submit.

Who do I speak to in my College?

If you have access to a Personal Tutor then we suggest you meet with him/her to discuss your situation. In the absence of a Personal Tutor, you can discuss the situation with a course leader, module tutor – any academic related to your Course essentially.

You are responsible for informing your College of any ECs that you want to be considered.

If you have a meeting or conversation with your tutor or other person in your College, it is advisable to follow this up with an email to confirm that you did inform them about your circumstances. This may later form a part of your evidence.

If you are experiencing particular difficulties with disclosing your circumstances, please speak to an Advice Service Student Adviser; we are a non-judgmental, confidential service and we will guide through the process in a sensitive manner.

When should I tell my College about my situation?

It is very important to submit your Extenuating Circumstances Form before you sit the exam or submit the assessment that you think might be affected. You should never wait until results have been published to inform your College.

If you can't submit the Extenuating Circumstances Form in advance, then it must be submitted not later than 5 working days after the assessment deadline or exam date. If you submit your ECs claim late (more than 5 working days after the assessment deadline or exam date), you must have a good reason and you must explain the reason for lateness, otherwise your claim will be rejected.

In addition to the ECs form, you must tell your College or the Invigilator if you are experiencing anything that may affect your assessment on the day. If you cannot come in- email your TPO, if possible. If you did come in, but are still affected by something serious, report this to the Invigilator.

If you choose to take an examination, or continue with it whilst knowing that you have ECs, but do not submit a claim for ECs, you will normally only be offered the opportunity for reassessment if you fail it.

Longstanding and chronic health conditions

If you have ongoing health conditions that you can foresee will affect your assessments, you should already be receiving support from the University, such as through Student Wellbeing.

We advise you to:

- ✓ Get in touch with the Welfare Team via the Student Centre.
- ✓ Register at the Disability and Dyslexia Service.
- ✓ Arrange for a Support Profile to be compiled which will indicate reasonable adjustments made as a result.

What should I put in my Extenuating Circumstances personal statement?

There are 4 crucial points you must explain:

- Whether the circumstance could reasonably have been foreseen. This means whether it could have been expected or predicted using common sense.
- The duration and timing of the circumstance- especially whether the timeframe could have affected the assessment or revision period.
- The impact of the circumstance on your ability to undertake the assessment. In cases of medical circumstances, you will be expected to provide evidence from health professional, explaining not just the diagnosis but the potential effect of this diagnosis on your ability to study, revise, focus and perform well in assessment.

- Description of the evidence provided and what you believe it shows/substantiates.

How do I explain impact and be clear in what I am saying?

- ✓ It has to be clear, concise and in chronological order. Timeframe format will help you draft your circumstances and fill in any gaps.
- ✓ Dates are vital, if you are not clear about when things happened, it is unlikely your ECs will be accepted. This goes for statements and evidence.
- ✓ It is also important that you are clear on what assessments have been affected and why. If you have had 6 assessments but only 2 were impacted, why?
- ✓ Is there someone who can support your statement? Think about whether you spoke to anyone in your department or college about the circumstances you mention and what advice you were provided with.
- ✓ Don't just explain what happened to you but try to show the impact on your academic progress. We are all affected differently by certain situations, so be clear about your personal experience.
- ✓ Do not assume that the person looking at your case knows anything about you (even if you have previously submitted ECs for the same circumstances); you should ensure you provide all of the detail necessary regardless of who will be making a decision on it.
- ✓ When drafting your statement ensure that all of the information is there, your department will not read between the lines or make their own conclusions - if the information and evidence is not there then it will not be considered.
- ✓ Going over distressing, personal events can be difficult and upsetting so you may need to revisit your draft more than once, and perhaps talk it over with a friend or an Advice Service Student Adviser.
- ✓ It is better that you provide too much information as opposed to not enough but make sure it is relevant (talking about your hamster dying 3 years ago is not going to hold much weight).
- ✓ If the circumstances are still ongoing and are likely to be for some time, you need to explain how things will be different and how you plan to cope with the situation (for example you are now receiving therapy etc).

- ✓ You should refer to supporting evidence and explain its relevance to your case.
- ✓ If you are submitting your ECs after the assessment, you must explain why you have not notified your College about your difficulties sooner. The University regulations state that you must inform someone when there are circumstances which impact on your studies as soon as possible; if you have not, you must give a good reason.

What supporting evidence do I need to submit?

This all depends on the individual circumstances and whether you are applying for ECs or an Extension.

An Extension Request requires less evidence than an Extenuating Circumstances Claim but evidence will be needed either way.

All Extenuating Circumstances claims must be substantiated by original documentary evidence which should confirm the following:

- The detailed nature of the circumstances, clearly indicating dates (timeline format).
- When and for how long you were affected and how this links with the assessments in question.
- How the circumstances were likely to affect/have affected your ability to study or perform in assessments, detailing the direct impact.
- What you have done to support yourself in this situation and how (if appropriate) the matter has improved.

If you are registered with the Medical Centre then you can complete the **Medical consent form**. You need to complete your section and ask your College to complete the other section and then hand the form into the Medical Centre.

If you have evidence that needs to be **translated**, then you should factor this in. We advise you to submit your ECs and confirm the evidence is being translated, it would be useful if you could provide an idea of what date the evidence will be submitted.

It is unlikely staff in your College will be able to contact external parties, for example your doctor (if registered externally, i.e. not with the University's Medical Centre) on your behalf for any information supporting your ECs. It is your responsibility to ensure you provide adequate evidence including dates you were

affected by your ECs. Under NO circumstances can you expect the Panel to do this for you.

If you are unable to submit evidence at the same time as your ECs form, you should explain this and say when are you expecting to be able to forward additional evidence.

Your College may wish to verify your extenuating circumstances with an objective third party such as a doctor or counsellor. The University may also wish to verify authenticity of the evidence. All students suspected of submitting falsified documents are subject to disciplinary action. **Please see the Advice Service Guide on misconduct.**

How will my Extenuating claim be considered?

Generally, your department will arrange ECs Panels at least monthly, but you can always check with your Taught Programmes Office (TPO) when the next ECs Panel will meet.

The Panel will assess your claim and decide on whether it is accepted or not. You will be notified of an outcome via email to your Brunel Student email account.

Your ECs submission and evidence will be treated sensitively, will be securely held, and will not be shared with anyone beyond those directly involved in considering your claim.

Please be aware that the University routinely checks evidence. Falsifying documents is a serious offence and could have severe consequences. Please see our Guides on Misconduct for more information.

How will my Extension Request be considered?

The Chair of the ECs Panel shall consider your extension request in a timely manner, and usually within **48 hours**.

The EC Panel Chair may:

- Consider the reason for the extension not to be significant and decide that the normal deadline and any normal late submission capping should apply.
- Decide that the request should be accepted, and specify a revised submission deadline of up to 5 working days: or
- Decide that the reason for the request is serious and/or long term, suggest that the student seek further academic and welfare support, and ask the student to submit a claim for ECs instead.

I cannot get the evidence in time?

You should upload your evidence at the same time as your EC Form, but you should keep the original documents in case they are required at a later date.

If your evidence is not available at the time of submitting your EC Form, you need to indicate when you will be able to upload it. If waiting for your evidence means you will miss the EC deadline, do not wait to submit your EC Form.

Please be aware that the University routinely checks evidence. Falsifying documents is a serious offence and could have severe consequences. Please see our Guides on Misconduct for more information.

What happens if my claim for Extenuating Circumstances is accepted?

If your ECs claim is accepted, the Board of Examiners will look at your grade profile and decide on how to address the impact that your ECs may have had on your performance.

Every students' case is individual and therefore each case is considered carefully on its individual merits.

What happens if my claim for Extenuating Circumstances is not accepted?

If your ECs were concerning an examination, you will be assigned a grade of NS (non-submission):

- ✓ If you did attend the examination, your work will be marked as usual.
- ✓ If you fail, the usual reassessment regulations for your programme will apply.

If you did not submit your coursework, or you submitted it late:

- ✓ The University's Policy for Coursework Submission will apply. Please contact your TPO.
- ✓ Any work you submitted by the original or any revised deadline will be marked as usual and that mark will be awarded.
- ✓ If you fail, the usual reassessment regulations for your programme will apply.

If your performance/attendance was affected on Placements and fieldwork:

- ✓ Attendance was inadequate, you will fail the placement.
- ✓ The usual reassessment regulations for your programme will apply. Please contact TPO.

What outcome can I expect?

Possible outcomes for accepted ECs could be (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Offering another assessment attempt (this may be capped or uncapped, depending on whether the ECs have affected a first or second attempt).
- Taking the ECs into account when determining a degree classification.
- Set aside or waiver the need to get credit for a module assessment but only if the programme learning outcomes have been met through the student's other assessments.
- Assign a P Grade to allow for an Intermediate Award.

It is important to remember that you will still need to be assessed and ECs are not a replacement for a grade or a mark. Your progression to the next Level will still depend on you fully satisfying progression criteria. ECs are only there to help to overcome any disadvantages you might have had during that progression.

We recommend that you discuss your circumstances with your personal tutor and whether the outcome you are hoping for is realistic.

You should always speak to an Advice Service Student Adviser if you find yourself in a situation where you have passed your assessment but your result is much lower than your usual grade profile.

What advice and help can I expect to receive from the Advice Service?

- Helping you to decide if ECs or an Extension is the best course of action for you.
- Explaining how the process works answer any questions you may have
- Helping you to consider what outcome you would like.
- Helping you think of evidence to provide.
- Advising you on how to structure your ECs statement.
- Advising you on next steps if necessary.
- Explain the ECs procedure and answer any questions you may have
- Consider your options so that you can work out the best course of action
- Check your completed ECs Form and advise on your statement.
- Identify what evidence you may need to support your claim for ECs

If you would like advice on Extenuating Circumstances or Extensions then please complete our online enquiry form on Brunelstudents.com and a member of the Advice Service Team will get in touch!