



Universiti Teknologi Brunei

Dealing with circumstances affecting student performance in assessments

Introduction

Situations can arise that significantly impair a student's performance during an assessment. The assessment could be an examination or coursework. The most frequent circumstances encountered are related to illness, but there are a number of other situations that may occur. It is necessary, therefore, to have a formal system that is able to deal with such circumstances in a fair and uniform way, and to try, as far as possible, to ensure that the student is not disadvantaged.

It should be noted that the circumstances must be significant in nature in order that any remedial action is taken. Minor illness, feeling slightly unwell, nervous before an examination, or just not feeling at your best are part of normal life and would not be considered under this policy. Students must also understand that they have a duty to attend at all times except for vacations and public holidays and, therefore, any arrangements they make to contravene this would not be seen as extenuating circumstances, for example, family holidays and occasions. Even during vacations, students may need to be present for some University activities and examinations, and, providing they have been properly informed, they will have to make sure they attend.

Bearing in mind the above, the required evidence to support a claim for extenuating circumstances must be of an acceptable standard. For example, a standard medical certificate simply stating that the student was "unfit for work" for that day would not be sufficient. The impact on the student's performance must be able to be properly judged from the evidence provided. Examples are given below.

This procedure does not apply to students who miss a formal examination. There is a separate procedure for this, see Appendix 12 "Procedure for dealing with Absence from an Examination". It does apply to all other assessments which may have been missed, or completed and submitted after the deadline, or completed and submitted in circumstances, which may be deemed as extenuating. The latter case applies particularly to an examination which has been attempted when the student feels their performance was affected by the circumstances.

This procedure cannot operate in isolation. It must form part of the total provision for ensuring the welfare and support of students studying at the University. All Faculties and Programme Areas need to ensure that students have access to staff, such as their personal tutor or Programme Leader, so that any issues can be raised as soon as possible before it becomes a major problem. Communication with the students is vital so that they understand the procedures, their own responsibilities and where they can go for help and assistance.

Circumstances that may be accepted as extenuating

Below are listed circumstances that may be accepted as extenuating. The evidence normally required is also provided. Occasionally, a situation may occur that is not listed

below. In this case, students should still be encouraged to submit an "Extenuating Circumstances Form".

- **Illness:** A medical certificate or letter from an appropriate medical professional which confirms the nature of the illness and its duration, so that the impact it has on the student's ability to undertake an assessment can be determined.
- **Hospitalisation:** A medical certificate or letter from the hospital confirming the dates of the hospital stay. Note, it is sometimes possible for a student to complete assessments whilst in hospital and the student should be made aware of this possibility, if appropriate.
- **Family illness:** A medical certificate or letter from an appropriate medical professional confirming the nature and severity of the illness. The impact it would have on the student's ability to undertake an assessment needs to be determined and the student will need to explain this as part of the evidence.
- **Bereavement:** This applies where there is a close relationship between the student and the deceased. A copy of the death certificate, or appropriate letter, will be required.
- **Acute Personal or Emotional Circumstances:** A medical certificate or letter would be required to support these cases. A report from the University Counseling Service will be necessary to guide academic staff. These are difficult cases that require careful and sensitive handling.
- **Victim of Crime:** A copy of the police report would normally be required. Other supporting evidence could be a medical report indicating any effects on the student which would impact on their ability to undertake assessments or a report from the University Counseling Service.
- **Others:** Dealt with on a case-by-case basis. For a circumstance not listed above, students should be encouraged, where possible, to give as much notice as possible for their claim to be dealt with.

Circumstances which are not acceptable

- **IT and/or Computer Failure.** Students must ensure that they complete their work in good time before the deadline to allow for such possibilities.
- **Transport Issues.** Students must make arrangements to ensure that they arrive for assessments, such as examinations, in good time. They should also make certain they arrive in time to hand in coursework assessments.
- **Employment related.** Full-time students are expected to attend full-time on all days except for vacations, weekends and public holidays. Further, they may be expected to attend for other matters, such as examinations or field trips, in vacations and at weekends. Any employment undertaken by the students must not interfere with this. Part-time students, who are in employment, must ensure that they can meet the attendance requirements of their Course.
- **Family holidays and occasions.** These would not normally be considered as extenuating circumstances. Exceptions may be given on a case-by-case basis for important events involving close family (parents and siblings), which cannot be arranged at any other time. In this case the student must apply in good time for the case to be considered (at least one month in advance).

Procedure

In order for a student to make a claim for extenuating circumstances the following procedure should be followed. A copy of the "Extenuating Circumstances" form is appended.

1. The student should complete an "Extenuating Circumstances" form. Forms are available from the Administration Office. If the student is unsure about any aspects of completing the form they should consult their personal tutor, programme leader or the student counseling service. The form is then submitted to the Administration Office for processing by the Quality Assurance Unit, in its capacity as Examinations Office.
2. The Quality Assurance Unit makes two copies of the form, one is given to the student, and the other is sent to the Programme Leader for the Programme being undertaken by the student.
3. The Programme Leader consults with the academic staff concerned and then writes the recommendations on the form and returns the form to the Quality Assurance Unit.
4. The Quality Assurance Unit makes a copy of the completed form, and emails the student to come and collect the copy. If the student requires any explanation of the decision they should see their programme Leader.
5. The Quality Assurance Unit keeps a copy of the completed Extenuating Form on file for consideration at the next Examination Board meeting.

Normally, the process should take no more than one to two days. For more difficult cases it may be necessary to ask for further information or to involve the student counseling service. In this case the process will take longer.

Remedies available where circumstances are deemed to be extenuating

The following remedies are available.

- **Deadline extension given to the student for a particular piece of coursework:** Approval from the Programme Leader
- **A new coursework provided for the student where an extension to the deadline is not possible:** Approval from the Programme Leader
- **An alternative laboratory/practical session organized where this has been missed:** Approval from the Programme Leader
- **A new test set for the student in place of the test affected by the extenuating circumstances:** Approval from the Programme Leader
- **Missed coursework or test is not retaken and module assessment is calculated over the remaining assessments:** Approval from the Dean of Faculty and Programme Leader
- **A candidate is allowed a first re-sit examination. Note that in this case the mark obtained will replace any previous marks:** Approval from the Board of Examiners. Effective from academic 2016/2017 students who failed any modules may be given 1 repeat opportunity for that academic year.
- **A repeat of the semester or year of study:** Approval from the Board of Examiners and the Board of the Faculty



EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES FORM

Student name:

IC Number:

Programme of Study:

Claimed Extenuating Circumstance (delete as appropriate):

Illness; Hospitalisation; Family Illness; Bereavement; Personal/Emotional Circumstances;

Victim of Crime; Other

Period of Study affected

(provide inclusive dates)

Provide a brief description outlining the nature of the extenuating circumstances

Details of Evidence Supplied

(eg, medical certificate, letter from doctor/hospital, death certificate, police report, letter from counseling service, etc)

Student's Signature:

Date:

The modules and assessments affected should be entered below by the student in rows 1-4.

Details of the action to be taken should be entered by the Programme Leader or Dean of Faculty, as appropriate, in Row 5.

Recommendation should be signed by Programme Leader, or Programme Leader and Dean of Faculty as appropriate after row 6.

The form should be returned, as soon as possible, to the Quality Assurance Unit by the Programme Leader.

If required, more than one page can be completed. Please refer to the notes for completion.

To be filled in by student:		
1. Module Title		
2. Module Code		
3. Assessment Affected (eg, coursework, project, lab, practical, test, examination, etc)		
4. Original Deadline for submission		
To be filled in by Programme Leader or Dean of Faculty:		
5. Action to be taken		
6. Recommendation:		
Programme Leader Name		
Signature		
Date		
Dean of Faculty Name		
Signature		
Date		

Explanatory Notes for Extenuating Circumstances Form

Circumstances that may be accepted as extenuating and typical evidence required

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