**Document Location**

This document is only valid on the day it was printed.

The master and control version of this document will remain with the Head of Excellence.

This document is a controlled document and should only be distributed as stated below from the Head of Excellence.

**Revision History**

**Date of this revision:** 01/06/2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revision date</th>
<th>Previous revision date</th>
<th>Summary of Changes</th>
<th>Changes marked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>05/09/2011</td>
<td></td>
<td>Copy document into new BMC document template</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05/04/2016</td>
<td>05/09/2011</td>
<td>Updated to reflect the new College structure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/06/2018</td>
<td>05/04/2016</td>
<td>Updated to reflect Open University requirements and to extend the guidelines until 2021</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Document Approval/Planned Revision**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>L Lavery</th>
<th>Position:</th>
<th>Curriculum Quality Assurance Manager – Centre for Excellence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signature:</td>
<td>L Lavery</td>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>01/06/18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Planned Revision Date:** June 2021

**Distribution**

This document has been distributed to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date of Issue</th>
<th>Version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Heads with HE programmes</td>
<td>05/09/11</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HE Quality Group</td>
<td>07/06/18</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DOCUMENT HISTORY

EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

THE EC1 FORM

STRESS AND EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

FAILURE OF IT EQUIPMENT AND EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

JUDGING EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

WITHDRAWAL OF EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

FALSE CLAIMS FOR EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

DATA PROTECTION

EC1 FORM

SECTION 1

SECTION TO BE COMPLETED BY COURSE CO-ORDINATOR
EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

Extenuating Circumstances

Belfast Metropolitan College is committed to providing students with the right to present evidence of Extenuating Circumstances that have affected their performance or ability to submit work.

Extenuating Circumstances refer to something **UNFORESEEABLE OR UNAVOIDABLE** e.g. you couldn’t write because you suffered a broken arm just prior to an examination. They are normally circumstances beyond the student’s control which either prevent the student from taking an examination(s) or submitting coursework, or which affect academic performance in coursework or examination(s). Extenuating Circumstances will usually be health related or of a personal nature.

**Examples of Extenuating Circumstances that may be accepted by an Examination Board:**

- An illness in the run-up to an examination or coursework deadline, or during an examination;
- A serious or prolonged illness of you or a member of your immediate family;
- A bereavement in the run-up to an examination or coursework deadline (normally a close relative i.e. parent, child, partner or sibling);
- A serious sudden illness or emergency in connection with a family member or dependent;
- A Civil disturbance (rioting, intimidation, bomb-scares, bus and rail disruption);
- A traumatic event (e.g. being assaulted, or witnessing an accident or assault);
- An extreme weather condition preventing either study or travel;
- Domestic upheaval (fire, burglary, eviction);

**What circumstances are NOT taken into account?**

It is not possible to list every circumstance that the Examination Board would not take into account. Unless there are extraordinary circumstances, general pressure of academic work is not taken to be circumstances beyond your control, as you are expected to plan your work schedule.

Examples of Extenuating Circumstances that would not normally be accepted:

- Employment commitments limiting time available for study (although greater flexibility may be applicable to part-time students in full-time employment)
- Pressure of other academic work e.g. other coursework due around the same time
- Having to take a pre-arranged holiday
- Wedding preparations
- Sporting commitments (although exceptions might sometimes be made, e.g. if you were representing your country, or the College)
- Missing a bus
- Moving house
- Failure of IT systems, or inability to gain access to IT systems, when you have not taken adequate precautionary measures – e.g. failure to keep copies or save back-up versions, or ill-judged reliance on friends’ or classmates’ equipment, or leaving it to the last minute to seek access to college facilities. In all such cases, these difficulties could have been foreseen and avoided at an earlier stage.

*NB These examples are not definitive, and are intended only as a guide. In all cases, the Examination Board has the ultimate authority to use its discretion, taking into account the full circumstances of a particular case.* A claim form (EC1) should be completed by a student affected by extenuating circumstances.
THE EC1 FORM

Obtaining an EC1

The form is available from the BelfastMet website in the Extenuating Circumstances Guidelines on page 9-12 below. The form is also available from the course coordinator and the Academic Department Administration Office.

Submission - When

It is your responsibility to inform the Course coordinator about Extenuating Circumstances that affected your academic performance by completing an EC1 form.

Although you may have previously discussed your difficulties with staff in your Academic Department, this does not in itself constitute the submission of extenuating circumstances.

The form should be returned at the earliest opportunity and, save in exceptional circumstances, no later than
- 5 working days* following the submission date of coursework or
- 5 working days* after the date of examination.

(* please note that this is 7 working days for Belfast Met’s Open University programmes)

If circumstances are such that you are going to be unable to submit an assignment on time, then you should complete an EC1 form without delay. Your Academic Department may require you to submit work done to date. If documentary evidence is unavailable, the form should still be submitted by the due deadline with a note to say that this evidence will follow.

NB: Once the Examination Board has met, it is too late to submit an EC1 form unless in very exceptional circumstances such as an emergency hospital admission preventing the submission of an EC1 form. Where this exceptional circumstance arises an exceptional Extenuating Circumstances panel will be convened.

Appeals - How

Information about how to appeal against the decision of the Examination Board about your Extenuating Circumstances is available from the College website, course co-ordinator or Academic Department Office.

Submission - Where

The completed form must be submitted to the Academic Department Administrator and a receipt obtained. It may be sent by post if you are unable to attend the College, or emailed to the Academic Department Office. Proof of postage must be obtained. Evidence that is not immediately available should be forwarded as soon as possible.

Submission - Detail

The circumstances should be described clearly. The EC1 form should contain the essential information to enable an informed decision regarding the circumstances to be made. You should only include on the form details of the specific coursework or examinations that have been affected by illness, personal difficulties etc.
Make sure you explain the impact these circumstances had on your performance (e.g. how long you were unable to attend due to illness).

It is not the role of the Examination Board to assess the impact or to seek further information on your behalf. Try to make your submission clear and concise. You are also asked on the form to specify what outcome you would, within reason, consider desirable. This will normally be either a first sit of examination or class test, or an extension of time to submit coursework.

There is no point in asking for additional marks to be awarded to compensate for your Extenuating Circumstances as marks cannot be adjusted in this way.

You may find it helpful to discuss your application with your Course Co-ordinator, Pastoral Care Tutor or another appropriate member of academic staff prior to submitting your claim form. You will not have to disclose sensitive personal details if you prefer not to. Great care is taken over the confidentiality of information provided by students and it is vital that you do not withhold evidence.

**Additional Evidence**

It is your responsibility to supply the appropriate evidence to support your claim. This documentary evidence is normally required to accompany the EC1 form when it is submitted to the Course co-ordinator or Academic Department administration office and a receipt obtained. Examples of appropriate evidence include: a medical certificate, a discharge letter from a hospital, a letter from a college/personal counsellor, from the PSNI or a solicitor. There are exceptional cases where such evidence is inappropriate or unavailable, for example because your doctor does not provide certificates for minor illness. However, in all other cases, students will be expected to provide documentary evidence.

**Where it is reasonable to expect such evidence and that evidence is missing, it is unlikely that the application will be successful.**

A letter from your GP stating that you were seen on a particular date and you told him/her that you HAD BEEN ill will not normally be accepted by the Examination Board.

If you have been receiving treatment for a serious or long term medical condition which you believe has seriously affected your work over a prolonged period, you must submit appropriate evidence. Please seek guidance from your Course co-ordinator if you are in doubt about what would be appropriate evidence.

**Confidentiality**

The meetings of the Examination Board are absolutely confidential, and members have wide experience of the full range of problems that students can encounter. The minutes of the Examination Board will only record whether or not extenuating circumstances were considered and/or accepted/rejected – the nature of the circumstances will not be minuted.

While there may be some factors which you would prefer not to commit to paper, you should reveal these by means of a private meeting with your Pastoral care lecturer or Course co-ordinator. If satisfied, the Pastoral care lecturer or Course co-ordinator may then report (without full disclosure) that in their professional opinion you have legitimate Extenuating Circumstances.

However, the onus is always on **you** to specify the degree of detail that you wish to have disclosed, *and this will need to be sufficient to satisfy the Examination Board*. 
STRESS AND EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

A certain degree of stress, anxiety and pre-examination nerves, and associated psychosomatic symptoms, are very common in the run-up to examinations. Coping with this pressure is part and parcel of the student experience. Presented with evidence of pre-examination stress, an Examination Board will be entitled to take into account:

- the extent to which this stress prevented you from performing to your full potential;
- the extent to which this stress is of a different nature to that experienced by all students at examination time, or prior to assignment submission;
- the extent to which this stress was self-inflicted, i.e. a consequence of failure to work steadily throughout the year;
- the extent to which this stress is likely to recur.

If you experience pre-examination stress, or have a disability that might impair your performance, you are encouraged to consult the College’s Student Services.

FAILURE OF IT EQUIPMENT AND EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

There are some circumstances when failure of IT equipment will NOT be taken into account. The following list is not exhaustive:

- Failure affecting a single workstation in a lab or a single failure in a dedicated lab;
- Failure of your personal computer or network link;
- Failure to access IT equipment and/or printing facilities in a timely manner;
- College's systems incompatible with home computer;

It would be expected that you should check that work brought in from home could be printed at the College well before assessment deadline. Regarding the theft of a home computer, students are expected to make suitable electronic back ups copy of all their work. This should be stored separately from the computer. A claim submitted on this basis would be considered at the discretion of the Examination Board.

JUDGING EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

All claims will be judged at the discretion of the preliminary exam board which includes consideration of all extenuating circumstances in advance of the formal Examination Board. The College seeks to determine whether, and to what extent, Extenuating Circumstances have affected your academic performance, and what action, if any, can be taken.

In assessing the significance of Extenuating Circumstances the College will normally take into account:

- the severity of the problem and the length of time involved;
- any supporting documentary evidence;
- whether it is possible to gauge the effect of the Extenuating Circumstances upon academic performance;
WITHDRAWAL OF EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

An EC1 form cannot normally be withdrawn after receiving a mark for the work in question. However, if you have submitted an EC1 form in advance of an assessment and your circumstances improve you may withdraw the EC1 form before it is too late as follows:

- by submitting the coursework within the deadline, along with an accompanying statement that you wish to withdraw the EC1 form, and/or;
- by attempting the examination after submitting a statement to the effect that you wish to withdraw the EC1 form.
  - This statement can only be submitted to the Course co-ordinator, Pastoral Care Tutor or School administration office **before the start** of the examination, and must be witnessed and signed off to this effect, with the **precise** time recorded.

FALSE CLAIMS FOR EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

You should note that submitting a false claim could be regarded as an attempt to gain unfair advantage and could constitute a breach of discipline under the College’s Disciplinary Policy.

DATA PROTECTION

The College is careful in ensuring that personal information is properly safeguarded in accordance with all legal requirements including the new General Data Protection Regulations that came into effect on 25th May 2018.
SECTION 1

Course Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Student ID</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Code</td>
<td>Course Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year of study</td>
<td>Course co-ordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>College email</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Module Information

Please provide the information below for each module affected by Extenuating Circumstances. You should read the following notes carefully before completing this section:

Type and Date of Assessment

The following codes only should be used to indicate Type of Assessment:

- CT – class test;
- ES – essay;
- EX – examination;
- PR – project;
- PT – presentation;
- O – other;

A separate entry should be provided for each type of assessment listed.
The date entered should be the date of the examination or class test, or submission deadline for coursework.

Type of Circumstance

The following codes only should be used to indicate Type of Circumstance:

- N – Non-attendance at examination or non-submission of coursework.
- P – Performance affected by extenuating circumstances.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module Name &amp; Code</th>
<th>Assignment Type</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Type of Circumstances (Codes Above)</th>
<th>Module Lecturer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eg – Maths for technicians</td>
<td>ES</td>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>J Jones</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                      |                 |       |                                     |                 |
|                      |                 |       |                                     |                 |
|                      |                 |       |                                     |                 |
|                      |                 |       |                                     |                 |
|                      |                 |       |                                     |                 |
### Details of Extenuating Circumstances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of Difficulty</th>
<th>Illness</th>
<th>Other Personal circumstances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔ Tick as required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates which affected</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Absence from study</th>
<th>Were you absent from the College for more than three (3) working days as a result of your Extenuating Circumstances?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supporting Evidence</th>
<th>Do you have medical certificate(s) or other supporting evidence?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- If affected by flu do you have a supporting statement? Yes / No
- If ‘YES’ to the above. Is the evidence attached? Yes / No

If you do not have objective evidence you should explain below the nature of your difficulties.

### Effect of Extenuating Circumstances

Please explain the effect of the Extenuating Circumstances on performance in the assessments listed at “Type of Circumstance”. *(You may continue on a separate sheet if necessary).*

Please state what your preferred outcome would be (e.g. specify the length of extension requested for coursework).

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge the information given on this form is a true and accurate statement of my personal circumstances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signed</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Please complete the details below in relation to the evidence presented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module Name and Code</th>
<th>Consideration of Evidence</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Further Comments:**

Name of Course Co-ordinator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>