



Union
Theological
College

Union Theological College Procedures UG Students

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Union Theological College

Extenuating Circumstances Procedures for Undergraduate Students

1. Introduction and Purpose

1.1 During a period of study, students may encounter significant personal difficulties that impact on their ability to study for or complete academic assessment(s), including examinations. The College refers to these personal difficulties as Extenuating Circumstances (EC).

“Extenuating circumstances are defined as serious unforeseen, unpreventable circumstances that significantly disrupt a student’s ability to undertake assessment.”

1.2 In order for such circumstances to be taken account of with regard to assessment, students need to make a timely EC claim, fully supported with documentary evidence. This will enable the College to make an informed decision and ensure appropriate support is offered. This document outlines the policy and procedures required to process an EC claim.

1.3 There are two levels of claim for EC, namely module level and programme level EC claim:

- (i) **Module Level** - short-term situations which require a short delay to the submission of coursework of **no more than 10 working days after the original deadline**.
- (ii) **Programme Level** - longer-term situations which will affect **main examination periods** and/or a delay to the submission of coursework of **more than 10 working days**.

2. Fit to Sit/Submit Assessment

2.1 The College recognises that there are occasions when students are too ill or otherwise affected by EC to take an assessment. Application of the EC policy will be dependent on the provision of appropriate documentation, and will not normally be applied to students retrospectively.

2.2 The College will **not ordinarily** accept claims of EC relating to an examination or other assessment event such as a presentation where the student attended the assessment event, unless they are taken ill during the



event. In such cases, a claim must still be made by the student and corroboration will be provided by the examination invigilator or the academic member(s) responsible for the assessment event.

2.3 The College will **not**¹ ordinarily accept an EC claim once an assignment has been submitted by the agreed deadline (or agreed extended deadline). In these cases, the College assumes that the student has judged themselves fit to undertake the assessment and so no concurrent or subsequent claim for extenuating circumstances relating to the assessment will be accepted. This also applies to partial submission of coursework – so an EC claim cannot be made for a piece of unfinished work submitted before the deadline.

3. Students' Responsibilities

3.1 Students are responsible for making the decision to take an assessment, or to decide that they are too ill or otherwise affected by ECs which would impede their ability to take an assessment. The EC Policy should only be used by students who experience significant, unforeseen disruptions to their studies in circumstances over which they had no control.

3.2 Students are expected to decide if they are too ill or otherwise affected by ECs to take an assessment. Students may seek advice from staff, but such advice should be limited to the procedures to be followed and the required evidence. It must place the onus clearly on the student to make the final decision.

3.3 Students are responsible for ensuring that they have read and understood this policy.

3.4 Students are responsible for reporting ECs within the assessment period/ semester of the assessments affected and by the submission date. Students are responsible for complying with the deadline(s) relevant to the assessment being claimed for. The EC submission deadlines are published at the beginning for the

¹ *The College may waive these restrictions in the case of a student with a certified illness that would have meant that the student would have been unable to exercise the rational judgement necessary at the appropriate time to deem him or herself unfit to undertake assessments, where this is confirmed by a mental health advisor, or similar practitioner qualified to make this judgement.*



academic year and will be set for each assessment period or semester. The deadlines allow for timely submission of outcomes to the Programme Examination Board.

3.5 Students are responsible for ensuring that all relevant information and supporting documentary evidence is submitted with the EC claim. Students should be aware that an EC claim can only be considered once the fully completed form and relevant supporting evidence has been submitted.

3.6 Normally, late submission of a claim for EC will not be accepted. However, it is recognised that there may be cases where a student is unable to submit a claim for EC within the normal time period (e.g. emergency in-patient hospital treatment). In this case the student can submit a claim within one semester/assessment period after the initial deadline and will need to provide evidence as to why the claim is late.

4. Ongoing Medical Condition and Disability

4.1 Students with declared long standing disabilities or on-going medical conditions, i.e. those that have lasted or are likely to last for a period of more than 12 months, are advised to inform the College Disability Officer. Where appropriate, through assessment organised by the Disability Officer, the College will agree learning and assessment strategies to try to ensure that students are provided with reasonable additional support or facilities. Where these arise after initial admission to a programme and they are likely to be of limited duration, students may be advised to suspend enrolment. Otherwise, the College will endeavour to provide reasonable adjustment for support and guidance to enable students to complete their programmes of study. Reasonable adjustment may include support for formal examination and the option of requesting extension to a submission deadline for coursework or, if necessary, deferring assessment (in line with the Study Regulations).

4.2 Where a student with a long-standing condition, including an unexpected bout of illness as a result of the chronic or long-term condition, needs to submit a programme EC claim on the grounds of their condition registered with the College Disability Officer, they will not be required to provide supporting evidence for the claim. They will need to complete the appropriate form as outlined below, so that their record can be updated accordingly. However, the *timing* of the diagnosis of such conditions may be considered a basis for following the full EC process. For example, in the event of late diagnosis of a condition and a lack of adequate reasonable adjustments made in advance of the exam/assessment, EC can be requested.



4.3 Should a student with a long-standing condition submit an EC claim based on other grounds that are not registered with the College Disability Officer, then such claims would need to follow the full procedure outlined in this policy.

4.4 Failure to disclose a known disability and seek the support of the College Disability Officer will not be accepted as grounds for EC.

5. Grounds for Extenuating Circumstances

5.1 Extenuating Circumstances are circumstances that are exceptional or unforeseen and are over and above the course of everyday experience. They may include:

- i. significant illness, accident or injury;
- ii. the death or serious illness of a close family member or dependent;
- iii. family crisis directly affecting the student;
- iv. disability i.e. where the student's disability comes to light for the first time at assessment (for long standing/on-going conditions see 4.1 above);
- v. absence caused by maternity, paternity or adoption leave;
- vi. absence caused by jury service (deferral of which has been denied by the Court);
- vii. exceptional and unforeseen financial hardship, i.e. over and above that experienced by all students;
- viii. unavoidable absence from domicile – e.g. eviction;
- ix. loss of immigration status;
- x. training camps and competition at National and International level, e.g. elite athletes;
- xi. other serious circumstances which could not be foreseen by the student.

5.2 Circumstances that will **not** normally be considered as Extenuating Circumstances include:

- i. minor illnesses (such as coughs and colds);
- ii. computer problems;
- iii. inadequate planning preventing completion or submission of coursework;
- iv. stress and panic attacks caused by examinations (that are not diagnosed as an illness or already documented by the Disability Officer);
- v. assessments or examinations scheduled close together;
- vi. personal or domestic events, such as moving house or attending a wedding;



- vii. ongoing position of being a carer for a family member or friend (however unexpected illness or an emergency of the person cared for would be considered under 5.1 above);
- viii. holidays;
- ix. travel arrangements, including scheduled public transport strikes;
- x. consequences of paid employment or voluntary work which are not part of the substantive Programme of study;
- xi. normal and/or scheduled sports activities.

Note: The above examples are for illustration only and not intended to be definitive or exhaustive.

6. Supporting Evidence

6.1 Students are responsible for providing acceptable and sufficient evidence in support of their EC claim. The College will not make enquiries to obtain evidence on their behalf. Evidence must be relevant, legible and in English. Evidence obtained overseas which is written in another language must be accompanied by a certified translation.

6.2 Any costs incurred in supplying evidence are the responsibility of the student.

6.3 Where a student is presenting medical evidence in support of their application, they must present certification by a registered medical practitioner. Such evidence must be directly relevant to the circumstances and the timing of assessments as appropriate even if concerning a long-term medical condition. The College will not accept medical evidence provided by on-line GP services.

6.4 Evidence of personal problems must also be documented, and supported by appropriate independent professional statements.

6.5 For Programme EC claims, evidence in the form of written support from the Personal Tutor may be submitted, if the Personal Tutor believes that a student has a genuine reason for not being able to provide suitable evidence.



6.6 The College cannot investigate every claim made under this policy and it trusts the honesty and integrity of its student body. However, it reserves the right to contact any person named in an application for extenuation to seek clarification or further information including checking the authenticity of the evidence submitted. This is not done to remedy omissions in the completion of the documentation by the student, or to seek supporting evidence when not supplied.

7. Confidentiality

7.1 In making an EC request, students may reveal sensitive personal information. The College treats all requests as confidential and access to this information is limited to only those members of staff in the College who are required to be involved in the administration and approval process for ECs.

8. Consideration of Claims

8.1 Claims for short-term extension to the scheduled submission deadline will be reviewed and approved or rejected by the Senior Executive Academic Administrator (SEAA).

8.2 Programme claims are submitted to the Programme Coordinator and considered by the BA Hons Theology Extenuating Circumstances Sub Board. The Board is comprised of the BA programme Co-Ordinator, Vice Principal and Registrar.

8.3 Terms of reference of the BA Hons Theology Extenuating Circumstances Sub Board are:

- i) to establish that the evidence is valid, i.e. authentic and appropriate and that it relates to the assessment in question and that it has been submitted by the required date;
- ii) to review EC claims and evidence and make recommendations to the Programme Examination Board whether or not individual claims should be accepted;
- iii) to make improvements to the effectiveness and efficiency of the procedure.

8.4 Submissions must be made with supporting evidence; where evidence is awaited, the Extenuating Circumstances Sub Board may defer decisions, and authorise the Chair to act on their behalf without calling a further panel.



9. Outcomes

9.1 A Module Level EC claim may be approved or rejected and the outcome will be communicated to the student by email no more than 5 working days of receipt by the SEAA.

9.2 A Programme Level EC claim may be approved or rejected and the outcome will be communicated by the College to the student by email within 10 working days of the Sub Board meeting.

9.3 If a claim for EC is granted on the basis of serious ill-health, it is likely that the College will require a medical note advising fitness to return to studies to be authorised, before the student can continue.

10. Right to Appeal the Decision of Extenuating Circumstances Sub Board

10.1 The decision of the Sub Board will be based on the evidence submitted with the claim. Students have the right to appeal against the decision of the Extenuating Circumstances Sub Board, if there is evidence that the procedures for the Extenuating Circumstances Sub Board and/or consideration of its recommendation to the Examination Board were not followed. See Academic Appeals Procedures: Undergraduate Degree for further details.



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Extenuating Circumstances Claim Form

To be completed by the student and submitted to the SEAA (a.eustace@union.ac.uk) . Where appropriate, this will be submitted to the EC Sub Board. All information provided will be respected by the College and treated in confidence.

To be completed by student:

Student name:
Course and year:
Module title (if applicable):

Reason why the Form is being completed:

Please indicate by ticking the appropriate box or boxes:

- Request for extension of up to 10 working days to submission deadline for coursework
- Request for extension of more than 10 working days to submission deadline for coursework
- Request regarding a class test or written examination
- Request regarding a programme level EC (Period of absence, reasonable adjustments etc.)

Nature of circumstances: *Explain the circumstances and how they impact on your study.*



Evidence submitted: *Please list any evidence attached to this application.*

Please contact the College if you require clarification on the type and quality of evidence required. Forms which are not fully completed and without the required documentary evidence will not be considered.

Signature of student: Date:

Signature of Personal Tutor:Date:

To confirm that I have seen the above-named student regarding exceptional circumstances.

FOR COMPLETION BY THE SEAA (extensions of 10 working days or fewer)	
Date Received:	
Considered on:	by:
Decision (with reasons)	
Signed:	
Date decision communicated to student:	
Additional comments:	



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FOR COMPLETION BY THE EC SUB BOARD (Programme Level Extenuating Circumstances)

Date Received:

Considered on:	by:
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Decision (with reasons)

Signed:

Date decision communicated to student:
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Additional comments:
