



**ACADEMY**  
Online Learning Ltd

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# Extenuating Circumstances Policy

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# 1.0 Introduction

USP has a policy of taking into account circumstances, which have affected a students' academic study and results. These "extenuating circumstances" are situations that could not reasonably be foreseen and are outside of the student's control. They may prevent a student from taking an examination or submitting assignments by the deadline.

## *1.1 Definitions*

Extenuating Circumstances: any unforeseen situation, outside of a student's control, which affect studies.

# 2.0 Persons Affected

ALL learners studying with USP on the online Access to HE Diploma.

# 3.0 Responsibilities

- 3.1 Learners should endeavour to inform their tutor as soon as possible when if they think extenuating circumstances have affected their studies.
- 3.2 Tutors will respond to extenuating circumstance requests promptly, in line with this policy.

- 3.3 The Quality Manager will review requests for extenuating circumstances and make this information available to SEG Access as requested.

## 4.0 Policy

Where a learner feels that extenuating circumstance are affecting studies, they should inform their tutor as soon as possible and submit either an Extension Request Form (where the Learner requires more time to complete an assignment due to unforeseen circumstances out of the learner's control) or an Extenuating Circumstances Request Form (where the learner believes that extenuating circumstances have affected their performance in an assignment). For all requests, evidence should be submitted in support of the request.

The following guidelines should be used to establish whether extenuating circumstances apply:

Non-extenuating circumstances	Possible extenuating circumstances
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• IT and printing problems at home or organisation</li><li>• Not being able to get hold of books/resources</li><li>• Child care and other routine family/carer commitments</li><li>• Because English is not a learner's first language</li><li>• Coughs, colds, minor chest infections, other minor illness</li><li>• House moving or house sale</li><li>• Coursework deadline dates set close together</li><li>• Planned GP, dentist or other health appointments</li><li>• Pressures of employment in which learners are engaged</li><li>• Where the timing of the circumstances cited would not have adversely affected the submission of the learner's work</li><li>• Holidays</li><li>• Family events</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sudden, short term illness: medical note, letter or certificate from GP, hospital consultant</li><li>• Death of a family member or close friend shortly before an examination or coursework deadline.</li><li>• Sudden illness or emergency involving a close family member</li><li>• On-going mental health issues, provided that these have been diagnosed or recognised by a doctor or other professional, e.g. a counsellor.</li><li>• Theft or burglary: crime report and number</li><li>• Exceptional work commitments: letter from employer</li><li>• Personal or domestic problems</li><li>• Criminal investigation or proceedings, litigation, other legal matters: solicitor's letter</li></ul>

# 6.0 Procedure

- 6.1 A request may be submitted in the following circumstances:
- The learner is struggling to complete an assignment by the deadline and would like an extension to the original deadline.
  - The learner has missed an appointment for an examination and needs to reschedule.
- 6.2 It is the learner's responsibility to inform the tutor of any extenuating circumstances as soon as possible. In the case of completed assignments, it is not permissible to wait for the grades to be awarded before submitting a request for extenuating circumstances.
- 6.3 A request should be made by completing either an extenuating circumstances request form or an extension request form (both available from the VLE) and uploading it (with the supporting evidence) to the VLE. Please note that discussing the circumstances with a tutor via telephone or email does **NOT** constitute the submission of an extenuating circumstances request.
- 6.4 Extenuating circumstances will only be considered for the dates that you put on the form. So if you have a health/personal problem that lasts for a long period of time you will be required to fill in a form for each assessment period effected.
- 6.5 On receipt of an extension request, in the first instance these should be dealt with by the tutor, providing the following applies:
- 6.51 The request is for no more than a week's extension.
- 6.52 The request does not apply to an assignment which has already been submitted.

In these cases, the tutor will approve or deny the request in line with the policy as stated in 4.0, by completing Section D of the appropriate request form and uploading to the Learner's VLE.

- 6.6 Where a Learner makes a request for more than a week, against a submitted assignment or is making subsequent requests, these should be reviewed by the Quality Review Team who will review the request in line with the policy as stated in 4.0, by completing Section D of the appropriate request form and uploading to the Learner's VLE.

## 7.0 Aegrogat Awards

- 7.1 Where a learner faces extenuating circumstances towards the end of the programme of study, SEG Access may consider an extenuating circumstances request and recommend an aegrotat award. The recommendation for an aegrotat award must be approved by the committee and the Final Awards Body, based on the verification of the evidence of achievement presented to the moderator for the credits which will count towards the award. Going 'on hold' for long periods of time and therefore not having enough time to complete the qualification is not acceptable.
- 7.2 In making a recommendation to SEG Access for an aegrotat award, the Final Awards Body would take account of a learners' performance during the programme of study and other relevant evidence which would demonstrate suitability for progression into HE. In this case, a learner would receive a credit transcript showing the credits achieved and an Access to HE Diploma. However, this will clearly state that an aegrotat award has been made and this may not lead to acceptance onto a degree programme. Before making a request in relation to an aegrotat award, it is advised the learner should speak to potential HEIs to determine if it would be accepted as part of the course entry requirements.
- 7.3 To apply for an aegrotat award the learner should first speak to the Director of Student Services to establish eligibility and then apply to SEG Access via the Aegrotat Award Application.

# 8.0 False Claims

You should note that submitting an Extenuating Circumstances Form that contains false information e.g. forged medical letters will be regarded as an attempt to gain an unfair advantage in your studies. This is academic misconduct and if proven you will immediately be removed from the course/programme or pathway of study.

# 9.0 Supporting Documentation

It is the learner's responsibility to obtain and submit the appropriate independent evidence to substantiate any claims made. If this is not available at the time of submitting the form, it should be indicated that these have been requested for submission at a later date. The submission of a request form should not be delayed because evidence isn't presently available. However, requests are likely to be rejected if they are not supported by independent evidence.

9.1 There may be circumstances where it is difficult or impossible to gain independent evidence; however for circumstances where it is reasonable to expect evidence and it is missing your claim will be rejected.

9.2 Examples of appropriate evidence include:

9.21 A medical certificate clearly stating that you were unfit to study or were ill at the time of writing the assignment.

9.22 Letter from a counsellor.

9.23 A death certificate/funeral director's letter.

- 9.3 The evidence submitted can be verified copies of original documents, but original documents must be made available should they be requested.
- 9.4 If evidence is not in English, an authenticated independent translation must also be attached.

If you are unsure about any request for extenuating circumstances being taken into consideration, please contact Amy Green.