

## Extenuating Circumstances Policy (Adopted)

**Policy Title:** Extenuating Circumstances Policy (Adopted)

**Document Reference:** LAAT-STD-POL-A04

**Department / Function:** Academic Quality & Standards

**Policy Owner:** Academic Dean, Dr Manoj Ponugubati

**Oversight Committee:** Academic Quality Panel

**Approving Body:** Academic Board (recommended) /Board of Governors (final Approval)

**Version:** v1.0

**Status:** Adopted

**Date Approved:** 06/02/2026

**Review Date:** Annually from the approval date

**Supersedes:** None

### Regulatory Alignment with Office of Students (OfS) Conditions

The **Extenuating Circumstances Policy (Adopted)** forms part of the London Academy for Applied Technology's (LAAT) academic governance and assessment framework and supports the fair, consistent, and transparent consideration of significant, unforeseen circumstances that may adversely affect a student's assessment performance or progression.

The policy aligns with **OfS Condition B4 (Assessment and Awards)** by ensuring that decisions relating to assessment outcomes and progression are made in accordance with approved academic regulations and do not compromise the integrity, reliability, or comparability of assessment standards. The policy provides a structured and evidence-based process for considering extenuating circumstances, ensuring that academic judgement remains protected while procedural fairness is upheld.

The policy also aligns with **OfS Condition C1 (Consumer Protection Law)** and **Initial Condition C5 (Treating Students Fairly)** by providing students with clear, accessible, and accurate information about the grounds on which extenuating circumstances may be claimed, the evidence required, applicable timescales, and how decisions will be communicated. This ensures that students are treated equitably and consistently across programmes.

Oversight of the policy is maintained through LAAT's academic governance arrangements, supporting **OfS Condition E3 (Accountability)** by ensuring appropriate monitoring, record-keeping, and reporting to relevant academic panels and committees

This policy is informed by relevant sector reference points, including the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and the OIA Good Practice Framework, and is implemented through LAAT's academic governance and quality assurance arrangements to ensure consistency, fairness, and effective oversight.

## Term of Reference

### 1. Purpose

This policy sets out how the London Academy for Applied Technology (LAAT) considers and manages **Extenuating Circumstances (ECs)** to ensure that:

- Students are treated fairly and consistently
- Academic standards are protected
- Decisions are transparent, proportionate, and evidence-based
- Practice aligns with Plymouth Marjon University regulations

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All students registered on LAAT higher education programmes validated by Plymouth Marjon University
- All summative assessments, including coursework and examinations

This policy does **not** apply to:

- Minor short-term issues covered under the **Assessment Extension Policy**
- Appeals against academic judgement (see Academic Appeals Policy)

### 3. Definition of Extenuating Circumstances

Extenuating circumstances are:

- **Serious, unexpected, and unavoidable** events
- **Beyond the student's control**
- That significantly impair academic performance in one or more assessments

These circumstances must relate directly to the affected assessment(s).

### 4. Examples of Acceptable Extenuating Circumstances

Examples may include (but are not limited to):

- Serious illness or injury
- Hospitalisation or emergency medical treatment
- Bereavement of a close family member
- Acute mental health crisis
- Significant personal trauma
- Serious domestic or safeguarding issues
- Unavoidable legal obligations (e.g., court appearance)
- Significant disruption beyond the student's control (e.g., major transport disruption, natural disaster)

All claims must be supported by **appropriate independent evidence**.

### 5. Circumstances Not Normally Accepted

The following are **not normally accepted** as valid extenuating circumstances:

- Poor time management or workload pressure
- Employment or travel commitments
- Minor illnesses without evidence
- IT or printing issues that could reasonably have been anticipated
- Misunderstanding of assessment requirements
- Stress related to examinations (unless clinically evidenced)

## 6. Student Responsibilities

Students are responsible for:

- Submitting a claim **as soon as possible** and normally **before the assessment deadline or examination date**
- Providing **independent and verifiable evidence**
- Ensuring that the information submitted is truthful and complete

Late submissions may be considered only where there is a valid reason for the delay.

## 7. Evidence Requirements

Students must provide **verifiable evidence** that:

- Covers the period affected
- Clearly demonstrates the impact on assessment performance

Evidence may include:

- Medical notes or letters
- Official third-party documentation
- Professional statements (e.g. counsellor, support service)

False or misleading evidence may result in disciplinary action.

## 8. Application Process

- Applications must be submitted using the approved **Extenuating Circumstances Form**
- Claims should normally be submitted **before or as soon as possible after** the affected assessment
- Late submissions may be considered only where justified

Students are encouraged to seek advice from Student Support before submitting a claim.

### Process of Extenuating Circumstances Claim

#### Submission of a Claim

Students who believe that valid extenuating circumstances have affected their ability to complete or perform in an assessment must submit an Extenuating Circumstances (EC) claim using the approved institutional EC claim form. Claims should normally be submitted **before the assessment deadline** or **as soon as reasonably practicable** after the affected assessment.

Students are encouraged to seek advice from Student Support Services prior to submission to ensure the claim is appropriate and supported by suitable evidence.

#### Evidence Requirements

All claims must be supported by **independent, verifiable evidence** that:

- Covers the period affected by the circumstances, and
- Demonstrates a clear impact on the student's academic performance.

Acceptable evidence may include medical documentation, professional statements, or other official third-party records. Claims submitted without evidence will normally be rejected.

Submission of false or misleading evidence may result in disciplinary action under the Academic Misconduct Procedure.

### **Timing of Claims**

Extenuating circumstances claims must be submitted **within the timeframe specified by the Academic Calendar**. Late claims will only be considered where the student can demonstrate good reason for the delay. Claims submitted after marks have been confirmed by the relevant Assessment Board will not normally be accepted.

### **Consideration and Decision-Making**

All decisions regarding the validity of extenuating circumstances are made by the **designated Registry / Academic Quality function**, in accordance with Plymouth Marjon University regulations.

No individual member of academic staff, including Module Leaders or Programme Leaders, has authority to approve or reject an extenuating circumstances claim.

Decisions are made on the basis of:

- The nature and severity of the circumstances
- The timing and relevance to the affected assessment
- The adequacy and credibility of the supporting evidence

### **Notification of Outcome**

Students will be formally notified in writing of the outcome of their claim. Where a claim is accepted, the decision will be recorded in the Student Record System and communicated to the relevant Module Assessment Board (MAB) and, where appropriate, the Progression and Award Board (PAB).

## **9. Decision-Making Authority**

- All decisions on the **validity of extenuating circumstances** are made by the designated **Registry / Academic Quality function**, in line with PMU regulations
- Academic staff, Module Leaders, or Panels **cannot independently approve** extenuating circumstances

## **10. Possible Outcomes of Approved Extenuating Circumstances**

Where extenuating circumstances are accepted, the following may apply:

- Waiver of late submission penalties
- Deferral of assessment to a later assessment point
- Deferral of decision at Module Assessment Board (MAB) or Progression and Award Board (PAB)

No marks are adjusted or inflated as a result of extenuating circumstances.

### 11. Fit to Sit Principle

By submitting an assessment or attending an examination, a student is deemed “**fit to sit**”. Extenuating circumstances will not normally be considered **after submission or attendance**, unless exceptional evidence is provided.

### 12. Recording and Assessment Boards

- Approved extenuating circumstances are formally recorded in the Student Record System
- Relevant decisions are notified to the **Module Assessment Board (MAB)** and **Progression and Award Board (PAB)**
- All decisions are minuted in accordance with PMU regulations

### 13. Right of Appeal

Students may appeal an extenuating circumstances decision **only on procedural grounds**, in line with the **Academic Appeals Policy**.

Disagreement with academic judgement does not constitute grounds for appeal.

### 14. Data Protection and Confidentiality

- All information is handled in accordance with the **Data Protection Act 2018**
- Sensitive information is treated confidentially and accessed only by authorised staff

### 15. Governance, Monitoring, and Review

- Oversight is provided by the **Academic Quality Panel**
- Annual review ensures continued alignment with:
  - Plymouth Marjon University regulations
  - OfS requirements
  - Sector good practice

### 16. Responsible People/ Roles include

- **Academic Dean (Policy Owner):** Dr Manoj Ponugubati  
Overall accountability for policy implementation
- **Academic Quality:** Dr Vishwanath Kokkonda  
administration, guidance, and procedural oversight
- **Program Lead:** Mr. Amarjeet Singh  
Implementation, compliance and coordination
- **Assessment Support officer:** Ms Nuzhat Rifa  
Monitors email and notifies the dean

## List of people and contacts

Role	Name	Contact email
Chair – Academic Dean	Dr Manoj Ponugubati	manoj@laat.ac.uk
Academic Quality	Dr Vishwanath Kokkonda	vishwanath.kokkonda@laat.ac.uk
Program Lead	Mr Amarjeet Singh	amarjeet.singh@laat.ac.uk
Assessment Support Officer	Ms Nuzhat Rifa	nuzhat.rifa@laat.ac.uk

## 17. List of Documents (LoD)

This policy should be read in conjunction with

- PMU Assessment Regulations
- Assessment and Examination Policy
- Academic Appeals Policy
- Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy

## 18. Evidence

- Extenuating circumstances form
- Notification of Outcome
- PMU Assessment Regulations
- Assessment and Feedback Policy
- Academic Appeals Policy
- Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy

Evidence Item	Purpose / What it Demonstrates	Relevant OfS Condition(s)
Extenuating circumstances form	Provides a clear, fair, and accessible mechanism for students to disclose mitigating circumstances and request formal consideration, ensuring consistency and transparency in academic decision-making	<b>B4</b> (Assessment and awards), <b>C1</b> (Consumer protection law), <b>C5</b> (Treating students fairly).
Notification of Outcome	Formally communicates decisions to students following assessment, extenuating circumstances including reason for decision.	<b>C1</b> (Consumer protection law), <b>C5</b> (Treating students fairly), <b>E3</b> (Accountability)
PMU Assessment Regulations	Demonstrates alignment with the validating partner's approved assessment regulations and sector-	<b>B4</b> (Assessment and awards), <b>B5</b> (Sector-recognised standards), <b>E1</b> (Public interest governance).

	recognised academic standards governing assessment, progression, and awards.	
Assessment and Feedback Policy	Sets out institutional principles for assessment design, marking, moderation, and timely feedback, supporting reliable academic standards and a high-quality student learning experience.	<b>B1</b> ( <i>Academic experience</i> ), <b>B4</b> ( <i>Assessment and awards</i> ), <b>C1</b> ( <i>Consumer protection law</i> )
Academic Appeals Policy	Provides students with a transparent, fair, and structured process to challenge academic decisions, including defined grounds, timescales, and escalation routes.	<b>C1</b> ( <i>Consumer protection law</i> ), <b>C2</b> ( <i>Student complaints scheme</i> ), <b>C5</b> ( <i>Treating students fairly</i> )
Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy	Ensures secure, lawful, and confidential handling of personal and sensitive data within academic and regulatory processes, including assessment and appeals.	<b>C1</b> ( <i>Consumer protection law</i> ), <b>E2</b> ( <i>Management and governance</i> ), <b>F2</b> ( <i>Information controls</i> )