

EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES PANEL

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1.0 Purpose and function

- 1.1 An Extenuating Circumstances Panel shall be appointed to consider claims in respect of extenuating circumstances submitted by students studying on taught undergraduate and postgraduate programmes of the University.
- 1.2 Extenuating circumstances are defined as circumstances beyond the student's control which either prevent the student from submitting a piece of course work or sitting an examination, or cause a student to perform less well in his or her course work or examinations than he or she might otherwise have been expected to do (on the basis of other work).
- 1.3 The Extenuating Circumstances Panel will have delegated authority to act on behalf of award and progression Boards of Examiners to review individual student submissions by School and programme and determine whether the extenuating circumstances under consideration are valid or invalid.
- 1.4 In so doing, the Extenuating Circumstances panel will judge each submission against the criteria for acceptable extenuating circumstances outlined in the University Extenuating Circumstances Policy.
- 1.5 The provisions of the regulations may not be varied without the explicit agreement of the University Secretary.

2.0 Membership

- 2.1 The composition of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel shall be as follows:

Convener:

The Deans of the Schools shall convene the Panel on a rotational basis.

Members

- Heads of Division and Programme Leaders from each School are to be considered as an eligible pool of resources for each Panel, unless there are particular reasons for excluding their participation.
- A minimum of two Heads of Division or Programme Leaders from that pool (one from each School) will attend the Panel on a rotational basis. It is anticipated that, once chosen for the Panel, the Panel member will serve on 3 of 4 Panels over a 2 year period.
- University Secretary or delegate.

Secretary:

Appointed by the University Secretary

2.2 The minimum composition of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel shall be the Convener, two members and the Secretary. Should it be determined by the Convener and the Secretary that the business of the panel is such that it would be advantageous to increase the composition to five members, then two additional panel members shall be appointed to serve.

2.3 The Extenuating Circumstances Panel shall meet two or three times a year as appropriate, usually in May, August, and February (if required).

3.0 Operation of Extenuating Circumstances Panel

3.1 The focus of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel will be to determine the validity of the evidence of extenuating circumstances for individual students by reviewing the evidence presented to it.

3.2 Decisions will be made by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel in the light of the evidence before it and taking into consideration the severity of the problem and the length of time involved, any supporting documentary evidence, whether all work in the same period appears to have been equally affected, whether it is possible to gauge the effect of extenuating circumstances upon academic performance, whether achievement is consistent with past performance (as far as is evidenced from the evidence submitted by the student) and the type of assessment affected.

3.3 The Extenuating Circumstances Panel may decide not to uphold a claim on the basis that the student has not made a case, has not provided supporting evidence, that the supporting evidence does not support the claim, or that the student had no good reason for not advising of the circumstances prior to the assignment or examination for which extenuating circumstances are sought.

3.4 The Extenuating Circumstances Panel will not review claims considered and agreed by Programme Leaders previously, nor will it review claims previously considered and rejected by Programme Leaders. Exceptionally, it may consider claims previously rejected where new evidence has been provided.

3.5 The Extenuating Circumstances Panel will not recommend to the Board of Examiners that an individual student should receive additional marks, nor will it amend marks from previous years of study or annotate the statement of results/transcripts with any comments about the existence of extenuating circumstances.

3.6 Decisions of the Extenuating Circumstances panel will be accepted by the Board of Examiners without referral back to the Extenuating Circumstances Panel.

3.7 Students shall be notified after the Panel meeting if their claim has not been upheld by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel. Students shall be formally notified of any award decisions affecting them after the Board of Examiners has ratified these decisions. In any prior communication of results to students, it shall be clearly indicated that they are subject to formal ratification.

3.8 The Secretary shall produce draft minutes within two working days of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel sitting and shall provide these to the Convener for approval.

3.9 The Convener may, at their sole discretion, take Convener's action in relation to claim forms received after the Panel has met. The form must be accompanied by sufficient reason as to why it was not submitted prior to the deadline.

- 3.10 Any Extenuating Circumstances forms and supporting evidence submitted for review by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel together with the minutes of the meeting shall remain confidential at all times as per the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998. Copies of the minutes shall be provided to the Assistant Secretary, Registry and Academic Administration, and the School Office for recording in student files. In the event of an appeal against the decision of the Board of Examiners, the Secretary shall refer to the minutes to note whether the extenuating circumstances submitted were considered valid and whether all matters raised on appeal were known to the Extenuating Circumstances Panel.

4.0 ORDER OF BUSINESS

To ensure that the Extenuating Circumstances Panel considers all relevant issues a model agenda (as per the style attached hereto) identifies good practice.



Queen Margaret University

EDINBURGH

**EXAMPLE AGENDA
EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES PANEL**

DATE :
TIME :
VENUE :

CONVENER :
SECRETARY :

If you are unable to attend this meeting, please e-mail Secretary at xsecretary@gmu.ac.uk

AGENDA

- 1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**
- 2. CONFIRMATION THAT MEETING IS QUORATE**
- 3. VALIDATION OF NOTIFIED EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES**
To consider the evidence on extenuating circumstances from students (as per the attached)
- 4. RECOMMENDATIONS TO BOARD OF EXAMINERS**
- 5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**
- 6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**