

IBCM Policy on Extenuating Circumstances

1.0 Purpose

IBCM aims to provide a positive and enjoyable learning experience for all students. We do not want any student to be disadvantaged in their studies by serious, significant circumstances which are beyond their control.

IBCM encourages students to become resilient and thriving individuals. This means, that while studying with us, we expect students to be equipped to deal with the ups and downs of life, including minor illnesses or personal issues, so that they don't affect their studies and, in particular, their ability to attend or complete assessments. Sometimes however, students will face a serious situation (as defined above) which can have a significantly negative impact on their studies. These are considered "extenuating circumstances" and this policy describes how the College seeks to support students by recognizing their effect..

2.0 Scope

- This policy applies to all students participating in programmes at IBCM, whether these are full time or part time, or via face to face, blended learning or distance learning programmes
- The Scope of extenuating circumstances is detailed in 4 below.

3.0 Responsibilities

- **Principal**

The Principal will have responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy and for liaising with staff and students in respect of any reasonable adjustments which are required.

- **Academic & Quality Manager**

In conjunction with Programme Leaders will assess all student requests for extenuating circumstances and identify the considerations and adjustments that can be made (see below for examples) liaising with the Principal as needed.

- **Welfare/ Customer care Co-ordinator**

Will assist with student liaison as required and offer college support, help and signposting to other services as needed.

3.0 Definitions

3.1 Extenuating Circumstances are defined as situations that are:

- have a significant impact on a student's ability to attend or complete assessment(s)/examinations and
- are exceptional and
- are outside a student's control and
- occurred during or shortly before the assessment in question

4.0 Policy Implementation

- If any student feels that they are experiencing extenuating circumstances, the College can take these into account by allowing the student to
- Submit an assessment later than the published deadline
- not submit an assessment, but have the chance for re-assessment at a later date without penalty, or
- not attend a time specific assessment, such as an examination, test, or presentation, but have the chance for re-assessment at a later date, without penalty.

The exact outcome of a valid extenuating circumstances claim depends on the nature of the assessment to which the claim applies and whether it is self-certified or supported by evidence. In some cases, the decision of the Academic Board may be relevant. This document cannot therefore be definitive about specific situations.

- Specific Awarding Body requirements will also be taken into account when dealing with each extenuating circumstances claim and making the decision about the option available to the student.
- IBCM will operate a "fit to sit" approach for time-specific assessments such as examinations or presentations. If a student attempts the assessment it is presumed that they are fit to do so, therefore if any learner feels that their ability to attend or complete the assessment is being affected by extenuating circumstances, it is important not to sit or complete the time-specific assessment and to submit an Extenuating Circumstances form.
- or changing the assessment method, for example using large print or braille, coloured paper or audio format.

5.0 Extenuating Circumstances

5.1 What might be considered extenuating circumstances? People are affected differently by circumstances, which makes it difficult to provide a definitive list of extenuating circumstances. However, examples of serious significant situations that the College is likely to consider valid extenuating circumstances include

- Health problems including a major accident or injury, acute ailments, hospitalization (including for operations)
- Personal or psychological problems for which you are receiving counselling, or have been referred to a counsellor or similarly qualified practitioner
- Clinical depression or other significant mental health issue
- Pregnancy-related conditions and childbirth (including a partner in labour)
- Bereavement causing significant impact
- Separation or divorce of yourself or your parents
- Recent burglary, theft or serious car accident
- Jury service which cannot be deferred
- Representing your country at international level
- For part-time students in full-time employment, exceptional pressure of work or permanent change of employment circumstances
- Late diagnosis of, for example, dyslexia, meaning you have not had the appropriate support for assessment, including provision in exams
- Disruption in an exam or assessment, such as a fire alarm going off, or excessive noise from building works
- Significant positive life events such as weddings of close family members, where you can show that **no** alternative arrangement, such as the date of your attendance, is possible.
- You have symptoms of Covid-19 and have not been able to take test prior to the assessment date.

5.2 What might NOT be considered valid extenuating circumstances?

The key issue in determining if a claim is valid in respect of extenuating circumstances is whether it meets any of the criteria listed above. It should be possible to plan for many situations, such as minor illnesses or personal issues, so these are not usually considered to be extenuating circumstances.

Examples of circumstances that the College is NOT likely to consider valid include:

- You slept in or your alarm clock did not go off
- Your car broke down, or your train or bus (or equivalent) was delayed or cancelled
- Child care problems or problems with similar caring responsibilities which could have been anticipated
- Minor illness such as cough/cold/sore throat or minor infection unless the illness is incapacitating and at its peak at the time of a time-specific assessment such as an exam or

test (if you suspect you have COVID-19 you should arrange a test at the earliest possible opportunity and do NOT come into college)

- Accidents or illness affecting relatives or friends, unless serious or you are a sole carer
- Financial problems but excluding cases of exceptional hardship or significant changes in financial circumstances since enrolment on the course.
- Family celebrations, holidays, house moves or similar events, in which you have input to, or control over, the date, or may choose not to participate
- Computing problems such as corrupt data or media, poor internet connectivity, printer failure or e-submission of an assessment file in an incorrect format
- Misreading timetables, or time management issues of any kind, such as close assessment deadlines
- Appointments of any kind, including legal or medical appointments which could be rearranged
- Sporting, recreational or voluntary commitments unless representing your country at international level
- For full-time students, normal pressures of any employment, because by enrolling as a student, you have made a commitment to make time available to study

6.0 Disability

IBCM has a reasonable adjustments policy which details all the adjustments that will be made for students with disabilities, so that their learning and achievement is not disadvantaged as a result of their condition.

We do recognize that exceptional circumstances may arise, related to your condition which mean you require consideration beyond the adjustments already in place. In this case you may wish to make a claim for extenuating circumstances.

For extenuating circumstances unrelated to your disability, this policy will apply in full.

7.0 Long term health conditions

A long-term health condition is a physical or mental condition that:

- Is persistent, typically lasting for more than three months and is often life-long
- Cannot be resolved in a short time, or which will recur regardless of action, or which needs to be managed on a long-term basis
- May require you to seek help with some activities, but is not otherwise disabling
- Can be managed, but can “flare up”

We would expect any students with a long-term condition to advise the College of this at the time of enrolment onto their programme and to keep the college updated on a regular

basis, with supporting statement/evidence from your GP, consultant or appropriate specialist responsible for your treatment. If a significant flare-up affects your ability to attend or complete an assessment, you should use the Extenuating Circumstances Form.

8.0 Special consideration

Special consideration refers to consideration given **following assessment** for learners who were present at the assessment but were disadvantaged in some way (injury, temporary illness, adverse circumstances) or who missed part of the assessment due to circumstances outside of their control. Students should treat this as extenuating circumstances and complete the extenuating circumstances form accordingly.

9.0 How to make a claim for Extenuating Circumstances

To make a claim for extenuating circumstances, where possible, please discuss the situation with your Programme Leader or an appropriate Manager. You will be provided with a form to complete. (see attached)

You should submit the form as soon as possible, preferably 72 hours prior to any formal assessment deadline (in exceptional circumstances - see 7.0 above – no later than 10 days after the formal deadline) or no later than the Monday after the date of any formal exam.

It is important that you fill in the form accurately and completely. We can take your circumstances into account only if you give us the right information, including the dates that the circumstances occurred and of the assessments. With this in mind, please note that unless there are exceptional circumstances, late or retrospective claims for extenuating circumstances will be deemed to be invalid.

You may **self-certify** if your extenuating circumstances affect you for five working days or fewer. You still need to complete the form and provide full details of what the extenuating circumstances are, but do not need to provide further evidence.

For any extenuating circumstance affecting you for more than five working days you must supply appropriate corroborating evidence such as

- a medical note confirming a health condition,
- a letter from a counsellor confirming a psychological or emotional problem,
- an official document such as a police report, court summons or other legal document.
- A letter from a solicitor, social worker or other official agency
- An insurance claim document supported by a letter from the insurance company
- For part-time students wishing to make a claim based on exceptional pressures in their employment – a letter from your employer that confirms the particular circumstances, explains why they are exceptional and outside your control and formally supports your claim. (Independent evidence must be provided if you are self-employed)

The College reserves the right to verify any evidence provided without notifying you beforehand. Your claim may not be accepted if the College is unable to authenticate the evidence provided. Evidence should meet the following standards:

- Written by appropriately qualified professionals who are independent to the student – evidence from family/friends will not be accepted
- Be written in English
- Be on headed paper and signed/dated by the author – evidence presented by email is acceptable if the email has been sent by the author from the official domain name of the author's organization
- Confirm specifically that the circumstances were witnessed on the relevant date, not reported retrospectively
- Be unaltered by the student – documentation that has been amended for any reason will not be accepted
- Be original.

Exceptionally, IBCM may accept evidence provided by College staff.

IBCM will consider upholding a student's claim of extenuating circumstances of five or more days when, in their opinion, all of the above conditions are fully satisfied.

10.0 Dealing with claims for Extenuating Circumstances

Each claim will be considered individually and all students will be treated fairly and equitably. The decision will take into account the nature, timing and severity of the problem and the impact it has had on assessment.

If the claim is considered invalid you will receive an explanation for the decision. You have the right to appeal against any such decision and should submit your appeal to the Principal in writing within 10 working days of being notified of the decision. Appeals can only be made on the following grounds:

10.1.1 That the college did not consider all the information available

10.1.2 There was demonstrable procedural irregularity in the extenuating circumstances process

Appeals will not be considered on the following grounds:

10.1.3 Dissatisfaction with the reasonable judgement of the College in its consideration of the extenuating circumstances process

10.1.4 Late submission of an application or late submission of evidence to support an application – where there are no compelling grounds why the application was late.

The outcome of any appeal is final.

If your claim is valid you will normally be allowed to complete or attend assessments at a time when you are not affected by the extenuating circumstances.

The opportunities for resubmission/re-assessment will be agreed with you and with the appropriate awarding body. They will be confirmed by the Academic Board (for Pearson the Assessment Board must agree the action to be taken)

If you are making a claim about assignments, do not wait until the decision before submitting your assignment once it is finished.

If an extension is not possible, or your extenuating circumstances last for a long period of time (i.e. after the time your module/programme would finish) the Principal will agree the course of action with you. This could include the opportunity to attend IBCM and re-submit in another term/academic year and the provision of appropriate academic and assessment support. Awarding Body requirements will be adhered to at all times.

11.0 Reference Points

The following policy and procedure documents support the information in this policy:

- IBCM Equal Opportunities Policy
- IBCM Reasonable Adjustments Policy
- IBCM Attendance Policy
- IBCM Student Welfare Policy
- IBCM Assessment and IQA Strategy
- Student Handbook
- IBCM Assignment Submission Procedures
- IBCM Student Charter

These policies & procedures can be found at [IBCM Policies & Procedures](#).

10.0 Version History

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Originator	Debby Dawson
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