

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This policy sets out the principles for ensuring that students who are legitimately prevented from making a fair attempt at an assessment are afforded other opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes.

1.2 Scope

a. To whom does the policy apply?

This policy applies to students undertaking Hibernia College programmes, including those validated by QQI leading to awards on the National Framework of Qualifications.

b. Who is responsible for implementing the policy?

Directors of Programmes or nominees from faculty are responsible for determining if a student's circumstances qualify as extenuating circumstances for the purposes of an assessment.

1.3 Definitions

a. Extenuating circumstances are:

- i. Unexpected factors or emergencies arising **close to or during** a summative assessment event (normally up to three days in advance) having a material effect on the student's preparation for or performance in that summative assessment task, where the student can provide evidence for them

b. Extenuating circumstances are not:

- i. The usual difficulty or workload of an academic programme
- ii. Pre-existing factors which are known to the student
- iii. Normal life events that do not affect ability to undertake an assessment
- iv. Factors which **do not arise** close to or during a summative assessment event
- v. Factors affecting an entire cohort (these are dealt with by the Board of Examiners directly)

2 Context

2.1 Legal or Regulatory Context

a. QA guidelines

This policy generally supports the implementation of our regulatory obligation to have policy and procedures in place to support the assessment of learners¹.

2.2 Policy for Assessment

This policy is designed to support the principle of fairness set out in our *Policy for Assessment, Grading and Certification*.

3 Policy Statements

3.1 Principles for Considering and Managing Applications for the Consideration of Extenuating Circumstances

a. Fairness

- i. Students are entitled to undertake assessment in a fair and reasonable context, in equivalent circumstances to their peers. Where unforeseen circumstances arise which negatively impact on a student's performance, they have the right to seek particular consideration in respect of the submission and marking of a particular assessment task.
- ii. No student can be deemed to have passed any module or programme unless the learning outcomes have been achieved. In deciding that a student's performance may have been adversely affected by unforeseen circumstances, the mechanism to provide fairness may involve offering a student a repeat attempt, without any penalty, i.e. for grading purposes treating the repeat attempt as if it were the original attempt.
- iii. Normally, an application for the consideration of extenuating circumstances in the allocation of a final mark to a student is considered at the end of a stage by the Board of Examiners as one can adjudicate on the application in the context of the student's overall performance.

b. Student responsibility

Students are responsible for:

- i. Providing original and verifiable evidence of the factors affecting their efforts in their application
- ii. Making reasonable use of the policies and procedures and support services available in Hibernia College to defray any impact of personal circumstances on their efforts (applying for reasonable accommodation, for instance)

c. Fit to submit

¹ Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2016), 'Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines', Section 6 Available at: <https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Core%20Statutory%20Quality%20Assurance%20Guidelines.pdf> [Accessed 28/08/2018]; Quality and Qualifications Ireland, 'Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013', Section 2. Available at: https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Assessment_and_Standards%20Revised%202013.pdf [Accessed 28/08/2018].

- i. A student who attempts an assessment, without having made use of the policies, procedures and support services offered by the College is normally understood to have deemed themselves fit to carry out the assessment task.

d. Possible unfair advantage

- i. In applying for consideration of extenuating circumstances in the marking of an assessment, no student may seek to gain an unfair advantage over other students or to evade, or attempt to evade, demonstration of the learning outcomes for the piece of learning being assessed.

3.2 Possible Outcomes of Applications for Extenuating Circumstances

Students following the *Procedure for Applying for Mitigation of Extenuating Circumstances* may be granted:

a. No mitigation

Where students are required to complete the assessment as normal, which will be graded as normal

b. An extension

A revised deadline for completion of an assessment task

c. Use of a repeat opportunity as a first fair attempt

d. A recommendation to the Board of Examiners

To revise a mark in light of the circumstances evidenced and the original grade for the assessment task (which is not a comment on the soundness of any original academic judgement)

e. Another outcome agreed in writing with the College and approved by the Director of Programme

4 Document Control

Document Title	Policy for Extenuating Circumstances		
Author	QA Officer		
Version	V.1	Adoption Date	28/06/2018
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Related Policies	Policy for Assessment, Grading and Certification Policy for Reasonable Accommodation		
Related Procedures	Procedure for Applying for Mitigation of Extenuating Circumstances		
Related Resources			