

HE Extenuating circumstances Procedure

1. Introduction

- 1.1. BAJ recognises that students may suffer from serious, sudden and unforeseen circumstances beyond their control which:
 - a) prevented them from undertaking an assessment task (e.g., were unable to attend an examination, give a presentation or submit a coursework assignment) OR
 - b) adversely impaired their performance when undertaking an assessment task (e.g., they became ill during an examination).
- 1.2. This document outlines the procedure to be followed when a student submits a request for extenuating circumstances.
- 1.3. The purpose of the document is to have a clear procedure that will:
 - a) apply a uniformity and consistency of treatment across BAJ
 - b) provide clear guidance on the process to be followed when a student requests extenuating circumstances
 - c) enable up-to-date student assessment information to be available
 - d) serve as a BAJ procedure statement to interested third parties
 - e) enable accurate data to be provided for statistical and audit purposes

2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy applies exclusively to all Higher Education provision offered by The British Academy of Jewellery. This does not apply to provision validated by Kingston University.

3. Related Documents

- BAJ Data Protection Policy
- BAJ HE Examination Policy
- BAJ HE Assessment Policy

4. Responsibilities

- 4.1. The Principal has overall responsibility for the procedure, but has delegated day-to-day responsibility for overseeing its implementation to the staff identified:

Current Students

- Are responsible for submitting a claim for Extenuating circumstances 7 calendar days before an assessment is due (and for providing valid evidence to support a claim when required)

Academic Support/Course Leader

- is responsible for maintaining this procedure
- Chairing the Extenuating circumstances Panel
- Tracking receipt of students claims and evidence
- Keeping students claims and evidence secure
- Updating student records and communicating the outcome of a claim to students.

5. Risk Analysis

- 5.1. This policy is required to ensure that correct procedures are in place and are followed.

Analyse risks of non-adherence to this policy

- 5.2. Failure to adhere to this policy could lead to academic failure of students, complaints and in extreme cases, legal action.

Staff training needed

- 5.3. All staff involved in this procedure are required to undertake annual training delivered by the Academic Support Team to outline the process by which they need to adhere. This training will be enhanced by annual updates provided on procedural requirements.

6. Data Protection

- 6.1. BAJ complies with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation Data Protection Act, 2018. As such, applicants' and student data are treated as confidential by all staff involved in this process and is not divulged unnecessarily or inappropriately. However, the aforementioned Act requires BAJ to release certain information to UK authorities upon request in order to assist those authorities with the prevention and detection of fraud or other crimes. We will release the requested information on receipt of an appropriate request from UK authorities such as (but not limited to) the police, Home Office (for immigration and related matters), local authorities, and the Department for Work and Pensions.
- 6.2. We may use anonymised data collected as part of an individual's application for an extension for the purpose of fulfilling statistical and reporting requirements.
- internally for reporting, evaluation, learning and training; and
 - externally for discussion with regulators in the higher education sector.

7. Procedure

Terminology used

- 7.1. Extenuating circumstances is the process by which allowance is made for any matter or circumstances which may have seriously affected a student's performance in an assessment element(s) (including an element submitted for re-assessment).
- 7.2. The circumstances should be current and have been unanticipated and beyond a student's control rather than disadvantageous conditions experienced throughout their studies (students with serious, long-term/permanent difficulties should contact a Student Advisor).
- 7.3. Extenuating circumstances claims related to a long-term/permanent condition will only be considered if evidence that demonstrates an exacerbation of the condition at the appropriate time(s) is provided. Evidence of the existence of the long-term condition in itself is insufficient for the purposes of the extenuating circumstances process.

8. Support for Students

- 8.1. Students wishing to request extenuating circumstances must complete a claim form. It is advisable for students to also meet with a Student Advisor to discuss their circumstances.
- 8.2. A student can make an appointment with a Student Advisor by:
 - Visiting Campus, emailing business-admin@baj.ac.uk, or telephoning, (+44 (0)7542847846, Office hours Monday to Friday)
- 8.3. Telephone appointments can be arranged if required, but the student will be required to sign request paperwork.
- 8.4. In cases where the extenuating circumstances process is likely to exacerbate a student's existing health problem or result in additional stress, a Long-Term Extension can be considered provided the deadline date has not yet passed.

9. Claims Deadlines

- 9.1. Extenuating circumstances claims are claimed before the summative submission deadline.
- 9.2. Claims for extenuating circumstances are submitted no later than 7 calendar days before the published (or extended) submission deadline of assessed work or the date on which an examination was held.

- 9.3. Claims for extenuating circumstances are submitted by the student, or in exceptional circumstances (e.g., when a student has been hospitalised) by a Student Advisor on behalf of the student.
- 9.4. Current students may submit a late claim. This is defined as a claim which is submitted after the standard deadline (up to five working days after the published, or extended submission deadline). In addition to the detail of the extenuating circumstances claim and the supporting evidence, students are also required to provide an explanation for the late submission of the Extenuating circumstances claim, supported by appropriate documentary evidence.
- 9.5. If a student has been discontinued by the Awards Board they must follow the Academic Appeals process if they have any extenuating circumstances they wish the Board to consider.

10. Criteria for Requesting Extenuating circumstances

- 10.1. Extenuating circumstances (late and on time claims) cannot be claimed against an (initial or re- assessment) attempt at an assessment element for which a penalty for an assessment offence has been applied. The claim is deemed null and void.
- 10.2. The following reasons are a non-exhaustive list of examples of commonly rejected grounds/reasons:
- Alleged statement of a medical condition without reasonable evidence (medical or otherwise) to support or a condition supported by 'retrospective' medical evidence – that is, evidence that is not (contemporaneous) in existence at the same time as the illness, e.g., a doctor's note which states that the student was seen (after the illness occurred) and declared they had been ill previously
 - Alleged medical circumstances outside the relevant assessment period or learning period for which extenuating / special circumstances have been applied for
 - Colds, minor illness or ailment, which in a work situation would be unlikely to lead to absence from work. Students should allow time for such circumstances within their planning
 - Failure to establish adequate arrangements in advance for the care of a child or adult for whom the student has caring responsibilities
 - If there is a reasonable case that circumstances relied on were foreseeable or preventable, i.e., the following will commonly not be accepted:
 - i. Holidays
 - i. Financial issues
 - ii. Personal computer problems or poor practice e.g., no back up of electronic documents
 - iii. Printer problems

- iv. Lack of awareness of submission dates /times and examination date / times
- v. Poor time management
- vi. Submission of incorrect document or submission of correct document to the incorrect location

- Late disclosure of circumstances on the basis that students were able but unwilling to confide in a staff member about their extenuating / special circumstances.
- Poor awareness of BAJ's Academic Regulations
- Being unaware of, or misunderstanding, a submission deadline or the date of an examination.
- Computer, USB memory stick, disk, printer or any other technical failure for which the student is responsible (students should ensure that they keep a back-up copy of their work).

10.3. A non-exhaustive list of examples of evidence accepted in support of extenuating circumstances claims:

Extenuating circumstances	Evidence Required
<p>Bereavement - the recent death, or serious illness, of a close family member, a friend or person for whom the student has a responsibility of care;</p>	<p>Letter from next of kin, an Order of Service, legal document or death certificate. If the student has a different last name to the deceased, please provide evidence of the relationship with the deceased.</p>
<p>Serious personal illness which is not a permanent condition (of a nature which in an employment context would have led to an absence on sick leave).e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Neurological (e.g., concussion, migraine, blackouts, seizure, severe pain) - Ear/eye (e.g., eye, ear infections, tinnitus, vertigo) - Respiratory (e.g., asthma attack, chest infection/pneumonia) - Digestive (e.g., stomach upset, diarrhoea, food poisoning, vomiting / nausea) - Genito-urinary (e.g., U.T.I.) - Musculo skeletal (e.g., severe back pain, broken bone) 	<p>Email/letter from health care professional confirming that the illness has had an impact on your ability to study at the time of the assessment/s being claimed.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Infectious diseases (e.g., chicken pox, flu, swine flu, measles, mumps, meningitis) - Other medical conditions (e.g., severe allergic reaction, severe toothache, panic attacks) - Pregnancy related condition 	
Evidence of a long term, fluctuating health condition/ disability	ILP or email/letter from a health care professional confirming any diagnoses/ incidents with dates.
Significant worsening in any adverse personal/ family/ welfare circumstances	A disability which emerges during a student's studies may be considered under the extenuating circumstances process at the first assessment point after it emerges. Following diagnosis and assessment of the effects of the condition BAJ will make allowance and in doing so enables the student to be assessed on the same basis as other students.
Caring responsibilities e.g., where to normal caring arrangements temporarily break down	Email/letter from organised carers confirm the breakdown in normal arrangements e.g., school, nursery, care home.

10.4. A non-exhaustive list of examples of evidence accepted in support of late extenuating circumstances applications:

- Confirmed severe mental health issues.
- Illness which has led to confirmed hospitalisation of the student and prevented the submission of an extenuating circumstances application.

11. Request for Supporting Evidence

11.1. A Student Advisor will request, at their discretion, evidence from the student to support extension requests, especially if they are regularly seeking multiple short-term extensions (i.e., for many different elements of assessment on numerous occasions).

11.2. Medical evidence (e.g., a note from a doctor or other healthcare professional confirming the illness or incident during the period in which it was apparent) will be sought for extension requests made on medical grounds.

11.3. If supporting evidence is required but not available at the time the student submits their request, the Student Advisor must inform them that they have 7 calendar working days to provide it. If it is not received by this deadline the request is automatically rejected.

12. Extenuating circumstances Panel

12.1. The Extenuating circumstances Panel meets termly. Claims received 7 calendar days in advance of the meeting are reviewed.

12.2. The following members must attend for the decisions of a meeting to be valid unless unforeseen circumstances exceptionally prevent attendance. In which case appropriate alternative arrangements should be made provided the circumstances arise an enough time in advance of the meeting:

- Course Leader (or nominee) (Chair)
- Administrator
- an independent senior member of staff

12.3. The Panel is responsible for

- ensuring students are fully aware of the extenuating circumstances process and how and when they can apply.
- considering all claims for extenuating circumstances and to determine the outcome in all cases.
- ensuring that claims are current and that the extenuating circumstances is unanticipated and beyond the students control rather than disadvantageous conditions experienced throughout their studies (students with serious, long-term/permanent difficulties should contact BAJ Student Support)
- ensuring that each submission is considered in a fair and equitable manner.

12.4. The Panel will determine

- whether a student has presented substantiated evidence of circumstances eligible for extenuating circumstances;
- whether the circumstances could have had an effect on the student's performance;
- how significant the effect of any extenuating circumstances would likely have been.
- In extenuating cases a student may request when submitting a claim for extenuating circumstances that the detail of the claim is not disclosed to the Extenuating circumstances Panel which considers the claim. In such cases only the Chair of the Panel has access to the detail of the claim and submits a recommendation to the Panel for consideration.
- The Extenuating circumstances Panel will take the following into account during their deliberations:
 - i. The nature of the claim
 - ii. the impact the proposed extenuating circumstances may have had on the assessment in question
 - iii. the relationship between the proposed extenuating circumstances and

the assessment

iv. what actions the student has taken to address the problem

- 12.5. Decisions will be made by the Panel in the light of the evidence provided and will take into consideration the severity of the problem and the length of time involved.
- 12.6. Cases may be adjourned if further information is needed. The Panel Chair must write to the student to request the information, which must be provided by a date agreed by the Panel. If the information is not provided, the application will not be granted. The student must then be informed of the Panel's decision.
- 12.7. The 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 claimed.
- 12.8. The Panel will not recommend that a student should receive additional marks or amend marks from the previous academic year of study.
- 12.9. The Panel will not review claims considered and agreed by Curriculum Leaders previously, or review claims previously considered and rejected.
- 12.10. The Panel is required to:
- a) report, by student, to the Exam Board the extenuating circumstances is considered, accepted or not accepted
 - b) on completion of the panel meeting, notify (through PICS/CANVAS) students of the outcomes and decisions that affect them
- 12.11. All Extenuating circumstances Panels must follow standard agenda items:
- 1) Welcome and apologies
 - 2) Confirmation that the Panel is quorate and therefore able to take decisions
 - 3) Confirmation that students have taken modules/units that lead to the qualifications under the jurisdiction of the Panel
 - 4) Details of any Chair's Actions taken since last meeting
 - 5) **Stage 1: Identifying Claims**
 - a. Cases received after the published claim date are identified.
 - b. Claims which are not supported by documentary evidence are identified. If there is no credible and compelling explanation for the late claim or lack of evidence, these students must be advised that their claims cannot be considered in writing sent by email.
 - 6) **Stage 2: Reviewing in-time Claims**
 - a. The Chair presents Exceptional circumstances applications on behalf of the student.

- b. Committee members consider the following
 - the nature of the proposed Exceptional circumstances
 - the evidence provided
 - the impact the proposed Exceptional circumstances may have had on the assessment in question
 - the relationship between the proposed Exceptional circumstances and the assessment
 - what actions the student has taken in an attempt to address the problem.
 - c. Cases may be adjourned if further information is needed. The Panel must contact the student by email to request the information, which must be provided by a date agreed by members. If the information is not provided, the application will not be granted. The student must then be informed of the decision.
 - d. Students must be informed of decisions within 10 working days of the Panel meeting. This should be done in writing by email. If the Panel has decided not to grant Extenuating circumstances the reasons for the decision must be clearly explained in writing.
 - e. If an extenuating circumstances application is supported, then the decision of the Extenuating circumstances Panel is reported for information to the relevant Exam Board (for KU awards) and Assessment Panel (for Pearson awards), where a new assessment submission deadline date will be set.
- 7) Reminder that discussions and decisions taken by the Panel are confidential.
 - 8) Any other business and the proposed date and time of the next meeting.

13. Panel Decision making

13.1. Applications for extenuating circumstances are considered on an individual student basis, taking into account any previous applications.

13.2. Claims are considered against two criteria by the Extenuating circumstances Panel:

- the basis of the claim is an acceptable ground for extenuating circumstances; and
- the claim is supported by documentary evidence (e.g., a certificate/letter from a medical professional in the case of illness; a death certificate in the case of bereavement etc.) which must accompany the claim wherever practicable.

13.3. Claims are considered only if both the above criteria are satisfied

- 13.4. Claims are considered by the BAJ Extenuating circumstances Panel without knowledge (whether by staff or students) of any mark attained by students and, within the context of the BAJ Extenuating circumstances Panel, in confidence.
- 13.5. Where an extenuating circumstances claim has been submitted, the Panel first determines if the student has provided a valid reason for why the claim was submitted late. Poor awareness of BAJ's Academic Regulations, or a student choosing not to submit an Extenuating circumstances claim by the standard deadline in order to wait for the publication of results, are not acceptable or valid reasons for the submission of a late claim.
- 13.6. If the Panel believes that no valid reason (supported by documentary evidence) has been provided to explain the late submission of a claim, it will be rejected.
- 13.7. If the Panel is satisfied that a valid reason for the late submission of the claim has been provided (and supported by documentary evidence), the Panel will consider the details of the Extenuating circumstances claim.
- 13.8. Students must be informed of decisions in writing by email. If the Panel has decided not to grant Extenuating circumstances the reasons for the decision must be clearly explained in writing. If the claim is upheld the student is informed and given one of three options:
- If the student has already taken the assessment and has achieved a pass mark, the student will be allowed to accept or decline the offer of a further attempt. If the student fails to indicate acceptance of the further attempt by the date agreed, the offer must be withdrawn.
 - the student will be allowed a further assessment attempt to be determined by the Assessment Board.
 - Waive late submission penalties.

14. Recording of Extenuating circumstances requests, decision and updating of assessment records

- 14.1. The Extenuating circumstances Panel is Chaired by the Academic Officer or representative from the Academic Office.
- 14.2. The Academic Officer records the date, the reason for the request and the outcome in the minutes of the Panel meeting. The detailed reason is kept confidential to members of the Extenuating circumstances Panel and the Academic Office. A log of extenuating circumstances claims and their outcome is also held where the record of reason for the request does not include specific detail. This is used to produce internally reported, anonymised data on Extenuating circumstances claims used to evaluate the service, to discuss prevention measures and for evaluation, learning and training.

14.3. The Academic Officer updates the student's record on the Student Management System (PICS) within 7 calendar days of the meeting to reflect the outcome of any decisions made by the Extenuating circumstances Panel.

14.4. The student is informed of the outcome by letter sent via the students (PICS) email account.

15. Appeals Procedure

15.1. A student can submit an academic appeal requesting a review of the decision of the Extenuating circumstances Panel. The student must follow the BAJ HE Academic Appeal Policy available from www.baj.ac.uk/policies/

15.2. If a student is not satisfied with the outcome of this process, they can make a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education provided they have been issued with a COP. That letter will explain how they can submit a complaint and the deadline for doing so is 12 months from the date of the letter.