



Oakswood College

Empowering Through Education



Extenuating Circumstances

Policy

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Oakswood College
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Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedure

Document Control & Version History

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Related Policies	Assessment Policy, Academic Appeals Policy, Student Attendance and Engagement Policy, Student Support and Wellbeing Policy, Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy
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Related Appendices	Appendix A: Extenuating Circumstances Request Form Appendix B: Extenuating Circumstances Board Decision Checklist

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1. Introduction

1.1 Oakwood College recognises that students may experience serious, exceptional, unforeseen or unavoidable circumstances that adversely affect their ability to prepare for, complete, submit, or attend assessment.

This policy sets out the principles and procedures by which students may request consideration of Extenuating circumstances so that academic decisions fairly reflect their true level of achievement.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

- Students are treated fairly, consistently, and compassionately.
- Academic standards are maintained.
- Reasonable academic adjustments (mitigation) can be made where justified.
- The Academic Board receives clear recommendations.

This policy applies to all students enrolled at Oakwood College except for students studying on a Buckinghamshire New University (BNU) programme of study, for whom the [BNU Mitigating Circumstances and Extensions Policy and procedures](#) apply.

1.2 Applications from students for extenuating circumstances will be considered by the **Extenuating Circumstances Board** on behalf of the **Quality and Standards Committee** where they are submitted in line with the procedures set out in this annex.

1.3 For the purposes of this Policy, referrals to ‘assessments’ includes all types of summative assessment including examinations, timed tests, presentations etc. It is not normally necessary for students to seek Extenuating Circumstances for formative assessments as these do not normally carry any weighting towards awards and qualifications. However, in exceptional circumstances, a student may request Extenuating Circumstances for formative assessments, and these requests will be considered by the College on an individual basis.

2. Principles

2.1 Extenuating circumstances are circumstances beyond the student’s reasonable control that have had a **demonstrable negative impact** on academic performance, attendance at assessment, or timely submission. **Mitigation** is the action taken to reduce the negative impact caused by those circumstances.

2.2 The focus is on the **impact on assessment**; The **Extenuating Circumstances Board** will consider the impact of the circumstances on academic performance rather than the seriousness of the personal circumstances alone.

2.3 Extenuating circumstances do **not** result in additional marks being awarded.

2.4 Instead, the College may apply proportionate academic measures to ensure the marks/credit awarded for that learning accurately reflects the student's achievement.

2.5 Any action taken must preserve:

- Learning outcomes.
- Threshold academic standards.
- Fairness to all students.
- Professional, statutory or awarding body requirements.

2.6 Students should normally disclose circumstances as early as possible using the Extenuating Circumstances Request Form (Appendix A, which can be located on the College's website at <https://oakwoodcollege.co.uk/policies-and-procedures.php>) so that supportive interventions can be arranged.

3. Eligibility

3.1 Extenuating Circumstances are usually unforeseen and/or unpreventable circumstances that could cause any only of the following and be grounds for application:

- 3.1.1. Cause the student to perform below an accurate reflection of their capability in relation to the learning outcomes
- 3.1.2. Prevent the student from submitting work or prevent the student meeting submission deadlines
- 3.1.3. Prevent the student from attending an exam, presentation or viva.
- 3.1.4. prevent the student from participating in a placement or a practical assessment.

Extenuating Circumstances Normally Considered:

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- serious illness or injury.
- hospitalisation.
- acute deterioration of an existing health condition.
- receiving a diagnosis of a significant health condition.
- bereavement of a close family member or significant person.

- severe family or personal crisis.
- being a victim of crime.
- significant caring responsibilities arising unexpectedly.
- serious mental health episode.
- major unforeseen domestic disruption.
- other exceptional circumstances that the College accepts would have a substantive impact on a student's studies.

3.2 Circumstances Not Normally Accepted

The following would not normally be accepted unless accompanied by exceptional justification:

- poor time management.
- pressure of multiple deadlines.
- minor illness not affecting performance materially.
- usual employment commitments.
- transport delays where alternative arrangements were possible.
- IT failure due to lack of backup.
- holidays or personal travel.
- financial pressures that are ongoing and foreseeable.

4. In-Year Applications

4.1 Extensions

4.1.1 Students may request an extension where circumstances affect their ability to meet a deadline.

4.1.2 Requests should normally be submitted **before the assessment deadline** using the College's Extenuating Circumstances Form. Where this is not possible, requests should normally be submitted within 5 working days of the assessment date or missed deadline. Requests received after 5 working days of the assessment date will not normally be considered, and the student will have recourse to the respective academic appeals procedure once the assessment result(s) have been formally confirmed and published.

4.1.3 The Module Leader or nominee may approve extensions of **up to 5 days** where:

- Learning outcomes remain assessable.
- Internal moderation timelines are not compromised.

- The extension is in the student's best interests.

4.1.4 Extensions requests longer than 5 days will require satisfactory evidence and approval by the chair of the **Extenuating Circumstances Board** or their nominee. They must be submitted early enough for the board to review them prior to the relevant Exam Board¹ meeting pertaining to the assessment(s) in question.

4.1.5 Where a student is unable to meet a deadline prior to the relevant Exam Board meeting the College may move the assessment(s) to deferral status. A deferred assessment means a student will receive a new submission deadline without academic penalty, but this may mean they cannot progress with their cohort to the next term or year. Students should ensure they understand the full implications of this, which may include financial implications/additional costs (see below).

4.1.6 Deferring assessments may impact progression, student funding and visa status (for international students).

4.1.7 Extensions on grounds of extenuating circumstances may also be granted with respect to reassessment deadlines.

4.2 Alternative Assessments and Adjustments

4.2.1 Where appropriate, students may be offered:

- Revised assessment dates.
- Deferred to practical activity.
- Alternative mode of assessment.
- Remote participation arrangements.
- Reasonable adjustments aligned with support plans.

4.2.2 Students with declared disabilities or ongoing support needs will normally be referred into the informal/formal Support Through Studies procedures and should work in partnership with Student Support Services and academic staff to collaboratively manage their studies.

4.2.3 Students demonstrating repeated Extenuating Circumstances applications will normally be referred into the informal/formal Support Through Studies procedures as deemed appropriate by the College, to ensure that support needs are identified and managed collaboratively with the student. In exceptional cases a student may be referred

¹ In light of the fact that awarding body assessment and award confirmation arrangements can vary, in this Policy 'Exam Board' means any formal meeting / mechanism via which provisional academic results and decisions are formally confirmed.

into Stage 3 of Support Through Studies where there is a critical concern about their ability to engage with, or succeed on their programme of study.

5. Reassessment and Uncapped Re-sits

5.1 Where mitigating circumstances materially affected an assessment attempt, the **Exam Board** may approve an **uncapped re-sit or deferred first attempt**.

5.2 This decision will be informed by recommendations from the Extenuating Circumstances Board.

5.3 Where a student is unable to attempt reassessment in the normal period, a later valid opportunity may be arranged.

6. End-of-Year Applications

6.1 Students whose performance, progression or award classification may have been affected should submit a formal extenuating circumstances form before the published annual deadline. The annual deadline for end-of-year claims will normally be **5 working days before the relevant Quality and Standards Committee meeting**, unless otherwise published.

6.2 Late claims will only be considered where the student can demonstrate valid reasons why earlier disclosure was not reasonably possible.

6.3 The College may also consider claims initiated through:

- Academic Tutor referral.
- Student Support referral.
- safeguarding or welfare escalation.
- evidence received after serious incidents.

7. Extenuating Circumstances Board

7.1 Purpose

The Extenuating Circumstances Board acts as delegated authority from the **Quality and Standards Committee** (or any delegated assessment authority established by the College).

7.2 Membership

The Board will normally include:

- Head of Academic Affairs (Chair)
- Programme Lead

- Head of Governance, Quality, compliance and Information Systems
- Student Support representative
- Additional academic specialists where required

7.3 Responsibilities

The Board will:

- review all submitted evidence.
- determine whether the claim is upheld.
- assess the impact on academic performance.
- recommend proportionate outcomes.
- ensure standards are preserved.

7.4 Possible Outcomes

Possible recommendations include:

- extension approval
- removal of late penalties
- deferred assessment
- uncapped resit
- first sit as if for the first time
- disregard of an affected attempt where regulations permit
- progression decision deferral
- classification review flag
- temporary interruption / break in studies
- repeat attendance, where permitted
- referral to fitness to study or student support pathways
- no action where evidence is insufficient

7.5 Communication

Students will receive written confirmation of the outcome and rationale.

8. Supporting Evidence

8.1 Evidence Requirement

Students should provide evidence wherever reasonably possible.

8.2 Types of Supporting Evidence

Examples include:

- GP or hospital letters.

- counsellor or wellbeing professional statement.
- death certificate or funeral notice/order of service.
- police report or crime reference number.
- employer confirmation.
- support worker statement.
- official legal or court documentation.

8.3 Self-Certification

Students may self-certify for short periods of illness or acute disruption of up to **7 calendar days**, normally once per academic year.

8.4 Language and Authenticity

Evidence must be in English or accompanied by a certified translation.

8.5 Fraudulent Evidence

Submission of false or altered evidence will be referred under the **Student Disciplinary / Non-Academic Misconduct Policy**. Where falsified evidence is suspected, consideration of the claim may be paused pending investigation under the Student Disciplinary Procedure.

9. Appeals

9.1 Students may appeal decisions arising from extenuating circumstances only through the **Oakwood College Academic Appeals Policy**, on permitted grounds such as:

- Procedural irregularity.
- New material evidence.
- Unreasonable decision-making.

9.2 Dissatisfaction with academic judgment alone is not valid grounds.

10. Records, Confidentiality and Monitoring

10.1 All claims, evidence and outcomes will be treated as confidential personal data and managed in line with UK GDPR and the College's Data Protection Policy.

10.2 Only staff with legitimate academic or welfare responsibilities may access records.

10.3 The College's Quality team will maintain a secure register and records of:

- Applications.
- Decisions.

- Trends.
- Repeat cases.
- Equality impact themes.

10.4 Annual thematic reporting will be presented to the Academic Board via the Quality and Standards Committee to support quality enhancement, and student success and wellbeing, as well as informing College strategy, policies and practices. Reporting should normally be anonymised and include trend analysis by programme, protected characteristics, timing, and assessment type to identify potential barriers to student success.