

Extenuating Circumstances Policy

		This policy is effective from	<u>21 February 2018</u>
Approval body	<u>Academic Council</u>	Approval date	<u>21 February 2018</u>
Owner	<u>Head of Academic Affairs</u>	Next review date	<u>February 2019</u>

1. Purpose

- 1.1 Students are expected to meet the academic demands of their chosen programme. However, they may experience a range of serious and unanticipated difficulties, which adversely affect their ability to study, complete assessments, or attend their required classes and other learning activities.
- 1.2 The NCAD Exams Boards can consider such circumstances in reaching decisions about a student's academic performance subject to the impact of those circumstances being described and appropriately verified. To support the Exams Boards in fulfilling this responsibility requires the definition of appropriate policy and procedure in respect of extenuating circumstances.
- 1.3 This policy chiefly draws on the UCD Extenuating Circumstances Academic Policy, of which the latest version was approved by UCD's Academic Council on 10 December 2009. Any update or revision to the UCD policy will require this NCAD policy to be reviewed accordingly.

2. Context

- 2.1 All students need to be treated equitably as part of the assessment process. To assist the Exams Boards in their decision-making process, it is necessary to have an appropriate evidence base to inform the judgements which can be made. This policy sets out the definition of extenuating circumstances, policy principles for extenuating circumstances and provides a suggested format and process for the consideration of these circumstances.
- 2.2 The extenuating circumstances process is aligned with the current responsibilities of the Exams Boards and the Assessment Appeals procedure.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 The definition of extenuating circumstances is the occurrence of unforeseen events which have:
 - Prevented a student from attending a substantial number of classes,
 - Affected their ability to study or complete assessments,
 - Resulted in assessment deadlines being missed, or
 - Adversely affected performance in any assessments undertaken.

<i>Doc version</i>	<i>Approval date</i>	<i>Modified by</i>	<i>Summary of modifications</i>
V1	21 February 2018	N/A	N/A

- 3.2 Such circumstances include serious illness, hospitalisation, accident, family bereavement or other serious personal or emotional circumstances.
- 3.3 Extenuating circumstances do not cover events which are foreseen, e.g. sporting or cultural commitments. Where appropriate, the student should follow procedures under the Policy on Late Submission of Coursework.
- 3.4 Extenuating circumstances and this policy do not cover events directly in relation to students' diagnosed and recognised learning difficulties. While allowances may be given to students with learning difficulties in assessing them, these are separate from extenuating circumstances which may arise, as defined in this section.
- 3.4 Assessment includes any tasks that contribute to the achievement of credits (summative assessments), including (but not limited to) projects, assignments, essays, or examinations.

4. Scope

- 4.1 This policy applies to all NCAD students registered on credit-bearing programmes at all levels, including continuous education, undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. This policy by nature does not apply to audit-only (non-credit) courses, where students are not assessed.

5. Principles

- 5.1 This policy is to be applied to students enrolled on a programme leading to a recognised award.
 - 5.2 All students must be treated equitably.
 - 5.3 Students' right to privacy and confidentiality will be maintained at each step of the process. All information provided in relation to extenuating circumstances will be treated in strictest confidence and such information will be limited to the personnel directly involved in administering and evaluating the circumstances.
 - 5.4 The application should be dealt with as quickly and as locally as possible. To expedite the processing of applications during a semester, the School Exams Boards may delegate authority to a sub-committee or standing committee of its members.
 - 5.5 Applications for recognition of extenuating circumstances must be submitted as soon as the student becomes aware of the extenuating circumstances, as close as possible to the assessments affected and no later than 10 working days after the date of examination or after the submission date of an assignment.
- Retrospective applications may be considered only in exceptional cases where there are valid reasons for non-submission within the usual timeframe of no later than 10 working days after the examination date or after the assignment submission date.

- 5.6 NCAD reserves the right to investigate the validity of applications. In cases where there is a suspicion that an application may have been submitted fraudulently, the issue may be referred to the College's disciplinary process.
- 5.7 The decision on the impact of the extenuating circumstances on the student's performance is a matter of academic judgement on the part of the Exams Boards.
- 5.8 The decision taken by the College Exams Board is final. A student may appeal a decision through the NCAD Assessment Appeals route.

6. Process

- 6.1 Students are required to make a formal statement of circumstances which have affected them, outline the impact of these circumstances and support this statement with appropriate written verification. The Extenuating Circumstances Form must be used to present this application.
- 6.2 This verification must comprise a statement from an appropriate professional or other recognised person verifying the circumstances described in the application and indicating their impact on the student's ability to meet the demands of the programme.
- 6.3 Following the submission of an application to the School Office or Head of Department or designated nominee¹, it is processed in accordance with the procedures set out below.
- 6.4 All decisions are ratified at a meeting of the NCAD Exams Board.

¹ Head of Department may designate nominee in respect of Extenuating Circumstances from amongst tenured academic staff of the Department.

7. Process for dealing with applications for recognition of extenuating circumstances

Student completes the Extenuating Circumstances Form and submits it to the School Secretary or Head of Department or nominee, together with supporting documentation as soon as possible following the occurrence of the assessment or following the occurrence of the circumstances if prior to an assessment.



The School Secretary or Head of Department or nominee notifies the student of receipt of the Form and supporting documentation. Submission of incomplete documentation can result in delays in processing the application and/or the application form being returned.



Where necessary, the School Secretary forwards the application to the Head of Department. The School Secretary or Head of Department or nominee ensures that all members of the assessment team are cognisant of the details of the application, and where appropriate, **prior to assessment taking place.**



The Head of Department presents the application to the School Exams Board for consideration.



If the School Exams Board agrees to recommend approval of the application, the application is included in the students' results to the College Pre-exams Board meeting. On the School Exams Board's recommendation, the College Exams Board approves or declines the application. The applicant's transcript of results is modified accordingly.



The School Secretary or Head of Department or nominee notifies the student of the decision of the College Exams Board.



If the student does not agree with the outcome, she/he may appeal the outcome under the Assessment Appeals Policy.