

# EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES POLICY AND PROCEDURE

<b>Version</b>	4.0
<b>Effective date</b>	September 2024
<b>Date for review</b>	August 2025
<b>Policy owner</b>	Head of Quality
<b>Reference points</b>	QAA Guide to Assessment: <a href="https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/2018/advice-and-guidance-18/assessment">https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/2018/advice-and-guidance-18/assessment</a>
<b>Audience/handling notes</b>	Academic, Staff, Students, External
<b>Dissemination and implementation plan</b>	<p>This Extenuating Circumstances policy will be published on the NHAM website, staff and student portals for reference by students and in the student handbook.</p> <p>Lecturers will receive training in how to apply this policy and its procedures. They will also be directed to where it is published. The Programme Leader will be responsible for the dissemination of the policy and procedures to academic staff; the Academy Manager will be responsible for training support staff on extenuating circumstances for those involved in pastoral or personal tutoring.</p> <p>Records of Extenuating Circumstances applications will be kept securely by the Academy Manager.</p>
<b>Linked Policies, Procedures and Forms</b>	Assessment (Policy), Deferral of Assessment (Policy), Student Handbook, Disability Disclosure (Policy), Engagement & Attendance (Policy), Equity Diversity & Inclusion (Policy), Extenuating Circumstances Form.
<b>Date approved</b>	September 2024

## 1 Introduction

This policy describes how the Notting Hill Academy of Music (NHAM) looks upon the issue of Extenuating Circumstances. This policy applies to all students, whichever programme or course they are undertaking. The Head of Quality is responsible for managing and reviewing this policy and the Academy Manager is responsible for the effective administration of the Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedures outlined below.

The content of this policy aligns with the regulations of NHAM's collaborative partner (validating institution) and other external stakeholders to whom NHAM must make reference.

Extenuating Circumstances have a direct link with:

- Academic Appeals
- Assessment
- Engagement & Attendance
- Deferral of Assessment
- Equity Diversity & Inclusion

## 2 Purpose

To explain in an open, transparent and accessible way, how NHAM will treat students who wish to submit a request for Extenuating Circumstances and to describe the steps of the Extenuating Circumstances process.

### 3 Extenuating Circumstances

Extenuating circumstances are the reporting and recording of one or more personal difficulties, such as ill health, submitted by a student and supported by acceptable evidence and will be considered and may be taken into account by the Education Committee and Final Exam Boards in determining submission of assessments, the classification of awards and the progression of students.

Extenuating circumstances will not normally include:

- Proximity or number of assessments or examinations
- Pressure of paid or unpaid employment
- Misreading of examination timetables
- Poor time management
- Scheduling of holidays or time abroad

No student shall be put in a position of unfair advantage over other candidates; the aim should be to enable all students to be assessed on equal terms.

Students disclosing Extenuating Circumstances and applying for additional support from NHAM as a result of those circumstances will be required to submit to the Academy Manager evidence using the Extenuating Circumstances form.

Being granted extenuating circumstances can lead to a range of interventions and support from NHAM and its collaborative partner (validating institution). These can include:

- Deferral of assessment (see policy of the same name)
- Resubmission of assessment without cap or penalty
- Additional support from an academic tutor
- Additional support from NHAM's collaborative partner (validating institution)
- Authorised absence
- Reasonable adjustments (that are not covered by long term disability disclosure)
- Financial support (where eligible)
- Referral to mental health and wellbeing services (national and through NHAM's collaborative partner, where available)

A log of interventions and support for extenuating circumstances will be documented and kept confidentially and securely by the Academy Manager.

Students must submit extenuating circumstances to the Academy Manager, with documentary evidence, by the deadline of the last day of the assessment period for the term in which the assessment is due.

Normally, extenuating circumstances shall not be considered where the circumstances have already been allowed for (for example, by special assessment arrangements). Special assessment arrangements should be agreed at enrolment in cases of known disability and in any case agreed with the student before an examination period begins.

Due to the environment in which NHAM operates, many students have confidential circumstances which sometimes do not generate the type of official documentation (e.g. doctor's note, police records) but are nevertheless serious enough to affect a student's learning and progression. Under these circumstances, students are to book to see the Academy Manager who will evaluate the student's circumstances confidentially and write an assessment, which can be evaluated at the Education Committee or Final Exam Boards.

The student's extenuating circumstances will be recorded by the Academy Manager at the time of the affected assessment, noting what documentary evidence has been supplied and the summary will be made available to the Education Committee and Final Assessment Boards in the comments section of the results



spreadsheet. Access to the original evidence is restricted to the Chair and External Assessor of the Final Assessment Board, unless the student declares otherwise.

Only extenuating circumstances submitted directly by the student to the Academy Manager will be recorded and considered by the Education Committee and Final Assessment Boards. Lecturers and other staff should advise students accordingly. Informal disclosure of particular circumstances may not be considered, academic and pastoral staff are trained to encourage formal disclosure of circumstances to students to ensure that they can be supported as fully as possible whilst at NHAM.

Regular meetings with students will be scheduled and held by the Academy Manager to ensure that NHAM is aware of any changes to circumstances, which could in turn change the support required by students.

## 4 Assessment

Students who are granted Extenuating Circumstances may find that this changes submission deadlines, or resubmission attempts granted for their assessment. Therefore, the Academy Manager will make the Head of Quality aware of students with Extenuating Circumstances where these will change the final mark awarded to a student during the moderation process. If a student is allowed to defer the submission or resubmission of an assessment, the Deferral of Assessment policy and procedure will apply.

All work submitted by students for assessment will be graded on its merits without consideration of any Extenuating Circumstances known to the first marker. Extenuating circumstances will not be used by the Education Committee and Final Exam Boards to alter the grades of students. However, Extenuating Circumstances may be applied at the moderation stage by the Head of Quality to ensure that where a student has been granted Deferral of Assessment or the opportunity to resubmit, this can take place without normal penalties or caps for non-submission, late submission or resubmission.

Extenuating circumstances brought to the attention of the Head of Quality, Education Committee or Final Exam Board after the deadline specified should normally be considered only if the student was unable or, for valid reasons, unwilling, to disclose them before the deadline.

In considering Extenuating Circumstances, or Deferral of Assessment, the Head of Quality may wish to:

- Note whether acceptable evidence has been supplied.
- Consider whether the student has performed unexpectedly badly in a given module or modules; whether there is a significant difference between the student's performance in the year in which they experienced difficulties and their previous or later performance; and whether it correlates with the evidence provided.
- Where the Head of Quality considers extenuating circumstances submitted and which have not been considered by the Education Committee and Final Exam Boards, the Head of Quality will follow the procedure and may make a decision in the student's favour or advise the student to submit an academic appeal to the Programme Leader.

## 5 Academic Appeals

Students have the right to appeal the decision of an Extenuating Circumstances submission. Please refer to the Academic Appeals policy for details.



## 5 PROCEDURES (Extenuating Circumstances)

Student completes Extenuating Circumstances form attaching supporting evidence as required:

Illness or injury – an original medical certificate must be provided and be signed, dated and stamped by an approved Doctor/Surgery/Hospital. It must state what you are suffering from, the period of time affected and how it may affect your academic performance.

Death of a relative or friend – a copy of the death certificate is normally required.

Burglary or theft – a Police crime report or case reference number is required.

Public transport delay of over 1 hour – a statement from the Operating company is required.

Private transport problem – will only be considered if acceptable authoritative evidence is supplied.

Student support evaluation – where serious confidential circumstances apply, the student will see the Academy Manager, who will write an evaluation and recommendation for consideration by the Education Committee and/or Final Exam Board.

Student submits Extenuating Circumstances form and supporting evidence to the Academy Manager no later than 5pm on the day of the deadline specified. Supporting evidence should be submitted no later than 20 working days after submission of the Extenuating Circumstances form, otherwise the request may be rejected.

The Academy Manager logs Extenuating Circumstances form and supporting evidence.

The Academy Manager passes the summary of Extenuating Circumstances and supporting evidence to the Head of Quality who will consider, with the Academy Manager, any support interventions to be applied.

The Academy Manager will inform the student directly about the result of the Extenuating Circumstances submission and any student services, academic or assessment support that will be put in place.

At this stage the student is entitled to appeal the decision of the Academy Manager and/or Head of Quality – please refer to the Academic Appeals policy for details.

## 6 Enforcement, Monitoring and Review

Students applying for and being granted Extenuating Circumstances will be monitored by Student Services to ensure that they are adequately supported. If NHAM's academic extenuating circumstances process has not resolved the issue, it may be that students are referred to discuss whether suspension or withdrawal might be more suitable for their circumstances. Student Services will monitor students who regularly apply for or require Extenuating Circumstances and liaise with personal tutors and support services from NHAM's collaborative partner (validating institution) where required.

The nature, volume, impact and resolution of extenuating circumstances will be considered as a standing agenda item at NHAM's Governance Committee to ensure oversight of student issues at the institution. It will provide an annual statement on extenuating circumstances as part of its annual monitoring and programme review processes.

Every two years, the Academy must review this policy to ensure that:

- it remains up to date and continues to meet the expectations of the UK Quality Code and Office for Students, applicable legislation or guidance;
- areas of improvement, or any concerns, raised by students, relevant external colleagues, or professional bodies have been addressed; and
- opportunities to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy have been taken.