



Extenuating Circumstances

The University considers extenuating circumstances to be unforeseeable or unpreventable circumstances that could have a significant adverse effect on the academic performance of a student.

The University of Reading has created a comprehensive guide on extenuating circumstances which we would recommend reading. Find out more [here](#).

What are considered Extenuating Circumstances?

- Serious ill health (not already covered by special, pre-arranged examination provision – those with ongoing health issues are likely to benefit from contacting the Disability Support Office for an assessment as these cannot usually be considered under this procedure);
- Personal accident or injury;
- Death or serious illness of family members or close friends;
- Major household problems, e.g. fire;
- Acute personal or financial or emotional trauma, e.g. acute anxiety or depression, family breakdown, breakdown of close personal relationship;
- Major and unplanned changes to employment circumstances or patterns of employment (except full-time students);
- Impact of natural disaster, civil disruption or other major hazard;
- Absence for jury service or maternity, paternity or adoption leave.

This list is not exhaustive and other circumstances are considered appropriate so long as the circumstances meet the definition above.

What are NOT considered Extenuating Circumstances?

- The University are not likely to consider colds or known conditions such as hay fever (unless the effects are unusually severe);
- Normal exam stress or anxiety (unless corroborated by medical evidence as a chronic condition and undergoing treatment);
- Moving house; change of job; holidays; weddings; normal job pressure;
- Minor financial difficulties;
- Oversleeping;
- Work commitments (full-time students);
- Study related circumstances (equipment failure including computing/printer difficulties);
- Failure to have taken back up copies for work stolen or corrupted;
- Bunching of deadlines/examinations; missing books;
- Poor time management;
- Misreading the examination timetable; taking the wrong examination.

What evidence do I need to provide?

- Professional medical/health practitioner's letter/report is needed if an examination or an assessment/performance is affected for medical reasons (**medical practices may charge**).



- If undergoing treatment or getting support for any issue that may be affecting your studies, you should attach a supporting letter from the University/private Counselling and Wellbeing Service and/or Disability Advisory Service.
- Other relevant evidence types might include a death certificate/order of funeral services, official sports body letter, social services letter/statement or any other professional's statements/letters as appropriate to your situation.

You can read more about the specific evidence required to support different extenuating circumstances in **Annex 1** of the University's policy on and procedures relating to extenuating circumstances. If you are unsure or have questions on what evidence is applicable, you can seek advice from a RUSU Adviser or your Student Support Centre.

COVID-19: Due to changes in the availability of certain evidence, the University has agreed to relax the requirement for external evidence where it cannot be obtained. You will need to make a clear case yourself explaining the circumstances and impact. Find out more about this on the University [page](#).

*All supporting evidence must be in English (or a professional English translation provided). **Without supporting evidence, any decision regarding your case will be delayed.***

When should I make an Extenuating Circumstances request?

Firstly, it is important that you keep your Academic Tutor and School/ Department informed if you feel that you are experiencing difficulties which are affecting your performance. You may also wish to visit your [Student Support Coordinator](#), based in your [Student Support Centre](#), as they may be able to discuss with you whether an extension or rescheduling of an examination is a more appropriate option for you.

- **For coursework/assignments/in-class tests:** you must normally submit an extenuating circumstances form (ECF) to your school or department **before** the deadline for submission of the coursework/assignment/in-class test.
- **For exams:** Due to the changes in study and assessment, the University has introduced **post-results extenuating circumstances process**. If you believe that your performance in examinations has been affected by an extenuating circumstance in the **Summer Term 2021 or Resit Period 2021** or if you have missed one or more examinations **in this period** due to an extenuating circumstance you are then able to submit an Extenuating Circumstances form following publication of results. Find out more about this on the University [page](#).
- **Submitting an ECF after the relevant deadline:** Extenuating circumstances submitted after the relevant deadline may still be considered, but only with credible and compelling evidence as to why the circumstances were not known or could not have been known beforehand. If you are not able to submit an ECF due to insurmountable circumstances, such as hospitalisation, incarceration or equivalent physical or mental incapacity, then a statement which details the reason for the lateness must be submitted as well as the ECF.

How can I make an Extenuating Circumstances request?

Extenuating Circumstances requests are currently made via RISIS. You will need to do the following:

- Login to the [RISIS Portal](#)
- Open the 'Actions' tab, then select 'Extenuating Circumstances' from the list.
- Please read the guidance and complete the online form, following the instructions provided
- The status/outcome of your request will be displayed on RISIS



When can I expect to hear back regarding an Extenuating Circumstances outcome?

Students will be notified of a decision, through their University email address, as soon as possible and **normally within 10 working days** from the date on which the complete application (form and supporting evidence) had originally been received, unless the request is subject to consultation with a Teaching and Learning Dean or External Examiner or has been referred for a University-level decision (in which case the student will be advised of the process being followed and an indicative timeframe for a decision).

Appealing the outcome of your Extenuating Circumstances request

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your ECF, you can appeal the decision. If you do choose to submit an appeal, a RUSU Academic Adviser can offer support and guidance throughout the process.

- To appeal a decision made at School-level by a **Senior Tutor** you will need to submit a completed 'Appeal of an extenuating circumstances decision' form to the Student Appeals and Academic Misconduct Officer (ecfappeals@reading.ac.uk) **within five working days** of receiving the Senior Tutor's decision in writing (this is usually sent by email). Your appeal will then be considered by the Extenuating Circumstances Appeals Board (ECAB).
- To appeal a decision made by the **University Standing Committee on Special Cases (USCSC)**, you will need to submit a completed 'Appeal of an extenuating circumstances decision' form to the Student Appeals and Academic Misconduct Officer (ecfappeals@reading.ac.uk) **within five working days** of receiving the USCSC's decision in writing (this is usually sent by email), **or in the case of USCSC decisions notified in the Summer Term, the day following the final day of the relevant exam period.** Your appeal will then be considered by the Extenuating Circumstances Appeals Board (ECAB).
- In order to submit an appeal, you will need to demonstrate one or more of the following grounds:
 - There was a procedural irregularity;
 - The outcome was not fair and reasonable given all the circumstances;
 - You have new evidence which you were unable to provide earlier in the process for a valid reason and the new evidence is relevant to your ECF outcome.
- You will need to provide a clear and detailed account of why you are appealing your ECF outcome and provide any supporting documentation (if possible) regarding the ground(s) on which you are appealing.

Extenuating Circumstances Policy

You can access the Extenuating Circumstances Policy [here](#).

Support

You may wish to seek support in relation to your Extenuating Circumstances request from your Academic Tutor or [Student Support Centre](#).

RUSU Advice

If you have further questions or would like specific advice, please get in touch with the RUSU Advice Service. The specialist Advisers offer a confidential service, independent from the University so they can discuss your case with you in private.

Contact us by email at advice@rusu.co.uk or complete an online client form at www.rusu.co.uk/getadvice.

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