

Extenuating Circumstances

This leaflet explains the university procedures for extenuating circumstances. For full details on shuspace click on the 'University Life' tab to find a link to the regulations at the foot of the page.

If you think you have Extenuating Circumstances you should seek advice immediately. Please see the end of this section for details of who to contact.

What are Extenuating Circumstances?

The University considers Extenuating Circumstances (ECs) to be those things which cause an exceptional interference with academic performance. They could be:

- an exceptional family emergency
- a sudden, severe illness
- Exceptional stressful life events e.g. homelessness, burglary, assault, relationship break-up.

The University states that distressing and difficult life events are considered to be a normal part of life and therefore not all circumstances will be accepted as exceptional. The following examples would not usually fall within the University's definition of ECs:

- losing work not backed up on computer disk
- normal work commitments on behalf of an employer
- Being unable to get hold of books/resources.

What can I do if I have ECs and I am due to sit an exam?

Each Faculty has an EC Panel. If you believe your ECs will have an adverse affect upon your academic performance and you want the University to consider this you must submit the following to your Faculty Office for the Panel to consider:

- An EC1 form. Available from Faculty Offices, Student & Learning Services Centres and shuspace. This is your opportunity to explain as fully as possible your circumstances and how they have impacted upon your ability to study or submit work; *and*
- A self certification form (EC2) if your extenuating circumstances relate to a short illness lasting between 1-5 days, and/or supporting documentary evidence from a third party e.g. letter from your GP or counsellor. It should ideally be a letter from someone who knows you in a professional capacity.

This should ideally be submitted before the exam but no later than 5 days after the exam. If your ECs are accepted, you would be granted the chance to be reassessed without a cap of 40% (this is known as deferral).

What if ECs are affecting my ability to do coursework?

The same criteria as explained above apply. The EC1 form should be submitted before the coursework deadline. If your ECs are accepted, you would be granted the chance to be reassessed without a cap of 40% (this is known as deferral).

What if I only require a short extension?

Alternatively, if you require only a short extension to your coursework submission date, you can submit an **Exceptional Extension Request Form (EER1)** to your faculty. The form is available from the student intranet. If it is accepted that you have valid exceptional circumstances, a short-term extension of up to 10 working days can be granted for the submission of set coursework. You may be given a longer extension in some very limited circumstances (e.g. post graduate studies).

Your EER1 form should be supported by independent documentary evidence. It is considered by a member of staff appointed by the Faculty and the outcome of the request should be given within 48 hours. If an extension may not mitigate the effects of your circumstances fully you should submit an EC1 in addition.

If your circumstances relate to illness or disability and are likely to affect your studies for a prolonged period you should also contact Student and Learning services to see if a 'Learning Contract' is appropriate.

What if I sat my exam more than 5 days ago and did not submit an EC1 form?

It is possible to submit an EC1 form more than 5 days after the exam, but it is unlikely the ECs will be accepted unless you have a valid and substantiated reason why you were unable to submit the EC1 form within the time limit.

A note on confidentiality. If you believe your ECs are of an unusually delicate or personal nature, and you do not wish to document them in detail on Form EC1, you should make them known to an appropriate member of staff instead in good time. This will enable the Panel to realise the genuineness of the case without all its members knowing all the details. You would still need to complete the relevant parts of Form EC1 and obtain appropriate supporting evidence.

What happens after I have submitted my EC1 Form?

The EC Panel will notify you whether they accept or reject the extenuating circumstances. The Awards Assessment Board will also be notified of the Panel's decision.

My ECs have been accepted. What do I do next?

The relevant assessment components on your results transcript will be identified using a **deferral** code (an explanation of the codes used will be included with your results). This means that the Extenuating Circumstances Panel decided that those components might have been adversely affected by your ECs. In respect of each individual assessment you have the following choice:

- If you have passed despite your circumstances you can choose to keep the mark achieved and do no further assessment in that assessment component, or
- If you have failed, or do not want to keep your pass mark, you can take the assessment again and so obtain a new mark. If you do this the first mark will become void. You may therefore need to think carefully about your options.
- **You must notify your Faculty of your decision.**

My ECs have been refused. What can I do next?

If you wish to appeal the EC Panel's decision, you must do so within 10 working days of receiving the decision.

Your appeal must have 'grounds'. In the case of EC's the only grounds you can use to appeal the refusal of EC's are that:

- **There has been an administrative or procedural error.**
- **The decision is not in accordance with the regulations**
- **That you had good reason for not previously submitted an EC1 and want to do this now**
- **That you disagree with a refusal to accept as valid circumstances you have already submitted**

You can check the regulations on shuspace, or seek further advice from us, if necessary.

For further details, please see our Appeals leaflet.

Further advice is available from:

Advice Centre

The HUBS
Paternoster Row
Sheffield
S1 2QQ
Tel: 0114 225 4148
Fax: 0114 225 4943
Email: advicecentre@shu.ac.uk
Web: www.hallamunion.org/advice

Student & Learning Services

Sheffield Hallam University
City Campus:
5th Floor, Owen Building
Tel: 0114 225 3813
Collegiate Crescent Campus
Heart of the Campus
Tel: 0114 225 2491

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)

OIA, 3rd Floor
Kings Reach, 38-50 Kings Road
Reading RG1 3AA
Tel: 01189 599 813
www.oiahe.org.uk