

## **EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES AND REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS POLICY – Subject to Approval**

This policy is effective from April 2024 and should be read in conjunction with the Terms and Conditions. It applies to all applicants for/students on LMA courses validated by Regent’s University London.

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. We recognise that there are circumstances beyond your control that may impact on your ability to engage with your studies, preparation for assessment, or both. We group these circumstances into two categories:
  - i. **Extenuating circumstances:** are for unforeseen and, usually, temporary events (for example you or a or close family member fall ill, substantial disruption to your home or work arrangements (including childcare)). They should be applied for where you think you may be unable to submit or attend an assessment.
  - ii. **Reasonable adjustments:** are usually associated with chronic conditions including disability (including neurodiversity) and other significant circumstances including pregnancy, maternity/paternity (including adoption), gender reassignment or other temporary circumstance that cannot be accommodated through the extenuating circumstances approach alone. We agree reasonable adjustments with you and while they can be temporary, they often will often apply throughout your studies.
- 1.2. You can use reasonable adjustments and extenuating circumstances together; for example if you routinely receive extra time to submit assignment as a reasonable adjustment, but something unforeseen happens just before the extended deadline, you can apply for Extenuating Circumstances too.
- 1.3. The policy and procedures for students to use and benefit from extenuating circumstances and reasonable adjustments are outlined within this document.
- 1.4. Both reasonable adjustments and extenuating circumstances are designed to support you to engage with your studies, including assessment, according to your needs and they are designed to support your timely progression wherever possible. **They do not change the criteria for assessment, the pass mark, or change a mark you have received.**

## 2. Extenuating Circumstances

### What Extenuating Circumstances do

- 2.1. If you apply for, and are granted, extenuating circumstances (ECs) they will do one of the following:
- i. Provide you with another opportunity (a deferral) to complete the work without penalty;
  - ii. Provide an extension of 5 working days;
  - iii. Remove a cap for submitting work within the 3 day late work window (Note: this only applies where the circumstances occurred before the published (or your adjusted) deadline and ultimately led to you submitting late.)
- 2.2. The actual effect of ECs will be determined by:
- i. The nature, timing and duration of the event; and
  - ii. Where you are in your studies at the time of application.
- 2.3. Because of this, where we grant ECs, they may have a different effect on different assessments and on one or more modules. We will tell you what effect ECs will have for you if we grant them.

### What counts as Extenuating Circumstances

- 2.4. Extenuating circumstances can relate to any **unexpected and temporary** event that impacts your ability to engage with and submit your challenge assessment. This can include, but is not limited to:
- i. A short period of illness around the time of your assessment;
  - ii. Bereavement
  - iii. A flare up of an existing medical condition normally managed with or without reasonable adjustments;
  - iv. A relationship breakdown;
  - v. Being a victim of crime;
  - vi. Jury duty;

vii. Caring responsibilities for a family member;

2.5. You should bear in mind that we may require additional information or evidence of your circumstances.

### How to apply for Extenuating Circumstances

2.6. You can apply for Extenuating circumstances using the online form [here](#).

2.7. You must apply for extenuating circumstances **before** the assessment deadline(s). You may only apply for extenuating circumstances retrospectively with good reason (e.g. you were so ill you could not tell us).

2.8. It is important in your application not only to identify what happened but what its impact was on your ability to engage with your studies and assessment.

### How we consider Extenuating Circumstances

2.9. We take a proportionate and professional approach to considering your ECs. This means that:

- i. Your application for ECs will be considered by the Director of Registry (or nominee).
- ii. We keep your information confidential to those members of staff that reasonably need to know about your circumstances. This includes usually the person considering your application, members of the assessment board, and your tutor or Head of Subject.
- iii. We trust you to be professional and, in the same way as you would not have to provide evidence to an employer (e.g. for short terms sickness), we will not usually require evidence. However, to ensure we can appropriately support your studies, we reserve the right to do so and where we do require you to provide evidence this must objectively support, and be aligned with the timing of, your application. We are more likely to require evidence for second and subsequent EC applications.

- iv. If you submitted your EC request after the published deadline for the assessment we will first consider whether you had good reason to submit the request late, before considering whether the ECs are valid.
- v. We will consider your application “on the balance of probabilities” that your circumstances have materially impacted your ability to engage with assessment as much as might have otherwise been expected. To do this we will look at your application and what we can reasonably understand about your personal circumstances. For example: we may look at previous EC applications you’ve made, the , or discuss the matter with your Head of Subject or Tutor.
- vi. We may refer you to the student support if we believe you may be better supported with reasonable adjustments in addition to, or instead of, your requested ECs.
- vii. We may also refer you to the Health Wellbeing and Support for Study Policy where we believe that you may benefit from additional support because of the nature of you EC or where we observe persistent use of ECs.

2.10. We will inform you within 5 working days whether:

- i. your EC application has been granted and what it’s effect will be;
- ii. If we need more information or require evidence. This case we will specify the information we require and/or provide illustrative examples of objective evidence.
- iii. If your EC application has not been granted and the reasons why.

2.11. Where we need further information or evidence, we will make our decision on your EC application within 5 working days of receiving the requested information/evidence. We will normally disregard applications for ECs where we have made a request for information and not heard from you within 10 working days of our request.

2.12. If we do not approve or disregard your application for extenuating circumstances, you can appeal our decision using the Appeals Policy.

### 3. Reasonable Adjustments

#### What are reasonable adjustments

- 3.1. A reasonable adjustment relates to an adjustment that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or a physical or mental health condition, which may otherwise place the student at a disadvantage compared to others in relation to:
  - i. A provision, criterion or practice applied by (or on behalf of) LMA;
  - ii. any physical feature of premises occupied by LMA that a student requires access to.
- 3.2. Reasonable adjustments are intended to reduce the effect of an impairment, medical condition or relevant circumstance that creates substantial disadvantage in their learning, teaching or assessment situation.
- 3.3. To protect the standards of awards, reasonable adjustments must not impact on the reliability or validity of assessments, but they can still take many forms including:
  - i. Adapting teaching/assessment or the provision of teaching/assessment materials;
  - ii. Making alternative arrangements for interviews or other forms of assessment (e.g. providing more time to complete assessment)
  - iii. Altering physical premises e.g. adding a hearing aid loop or adding a ramp to improve access
  - iv. Providing additional tutoring
  - v. Providing additional materials or equipment (e.g. assistive technology)
- 3.4. Reasonable adjustments are often applied throughout your studies, but they can also be for a set period (for example while you are being treated over an extended time for a medical condition).
- 3.5. Although many people will have similar reasonable adjustments, they are always specific to you as an individual.

### Who gets reasonable adjustments

- 3.6. The definition of disability is that which is stated in the Equality Act 2010; namely that 'a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Reasonable adjustments are most commonly used to support neurodiverse students.
- 3.7. We extend reasonable adjustments beyond the requirements of the Equality Act to include students and applicants with other, enduring, circumstances that might impact on their ability to engage with their studies this could include pregnancy/maternity/paternity (including adoption), change of gender identity, menopause, care experienced/leavers and prolonged acute illness (e.g. serious injury).
- 3.8. If you think you might benefit from reasonable adjustments we would encourage you to have a confidential conversation with Student Support in the first instance.

### How reasonable adjustments are determined

- 3.9. Reasonable adjustments are determined by us, in consultation and discussion with you when considering reasonable adjustments we consider three factors:
  - i. Whether you are disadvantaged by the method of teaching or assessment?  
In considering individual cases we will consider how your impairment or circumstance interacts with the method of teaching or assessment to ensure that the adjustment requested is not just an expression of preference.
  - ii. Whether the suggested adjustments would help overcome the disadvantage?  
We will consider how effective any proposed adjustment would be in helping you to mitigate the disadvantage.
  - iii. Whether the adjustments are reasonable both in terms of proportionality and practicality/implementation?

There is no single definition of exactly what a reasonable adjustment is. Factors we will consider for this element include:

- a) Effectiveness
- b) Practicality of the changes
- c) Health and safety
- d) Confidentiality
- e) Potential impact on other staff, students, and visitors

3.10. We will not consider your potential to gain eventual employment when making reasonable adjustments (i.e. to refuse a reasonable adjustment because of customary industry practice) unless these are clearly prescribed competence standards from a recognised body.

#### How do reasonable adjustments work in practice

3.11. As part of your discussion with the Student Support they will ask you for evidence of your needs. This could include, but is not limited to:

- i. A letter from a GP or other registered healthcare professional;
- ii. a Special Educational Needs (SEN) statement;
- iii. a Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA); or
- iv. an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

3.12. Where there is a need for reasonable adjustments these will be discussed between you and the Student Support and recorded on an *support plan*.

3.13. The support plan will be shared with relevant staff that are teaching/working with you. It will:

- i. record how reasonable adjustments will be delivered and reviewed;
- ii. record what impact additional learning support are anticipated to have;
- iii. record the reviews of the effectiveness of the support and whether it should continue or change.



- 3.14. Where you have a reasonable adjustment that provides you with more time, this will not show in published deadlines, but you will still be entitled to the additional time. Other rules and policies (e.g. for late work) apply to your individual hand-in date which will be the published deadline + agreed additional time.
- 3.15. You can ask us, Student Support to review your reasonable adjustments as is reasonably necessary.
- 3.16. Reasonable adjustments may be carried forward into other activities (e.g. other policies such as the Academic Integrity and Student Conduct policies) may adjust deadlines or formats based on your agreed reasonable adjustments.

#### **4. Review of the Policy**

The Policy will be reviewed after its first year of operation and periodically thereafter. In case of questions or feedback in relation to the policy please contact the Director of Registry in the first instance.