

What are Individual Extenuating Circumstances?

Students will experience difficulties, problems and illnesses which are part of normal life. Such issues do not constitute Individual Extenuating Circumstances (IECs). IECs must be extraordinary in nature and more specifically they must:

- Be unexpected
- Be beyond the student's control
- Have a significant impact on assessment performance

It is not possible to be entirely prescriptive in relation to what does and does not constitute valid IECs. However the following sections provide some guidance to assist staff and students in determining if particular circumstances may be accepted as valid IECs.

Circumstances that qualify as IECs

The following examples would be likely to be considered as valid IECs if the timing were such as to have a significant impact on the student's assessment(s):

- Death, or sudden serious illness, of a close relative or friend.
- A serious or incapacitating injury, illness, or medical condition (or a sudden, marked deterioration in an on-going or longer-term condition), or an emergency operation.
- Serious unexpected disruption of personal life.
- Premature childbirth (self or partner), or related post-natal care.

Circumstances that do not qualify as IECs

Normally, the following would be unlikely to be considered as valid IECs:

- On-going or longer-term conditions or circumstances are not IECs, and should normally be handled by disability support and/or special assessment arrangements: they are only likely to give rise to valid IECs claims if they first come to light or are diagnosed, or become unexpectedly and markedly worse, at assessment time.
- IECs claims without appropriate, independent supporting evidence.
- Minor illnesses or ailments (e.g., coughs, colds, hangovers).
- Personal/domestic events which could have been anticipated and/or planned otherwise (e.g., moving house; marrying; routine childcare).
- Choices and preferences in personal life (e.g., attending a wedding; holidays; attending social events, sporting fixtures).
- Poor management of time (including oversleeping) or misunderstanding deadlines/dates.
- Examination nerves, self-diagnosed stress.
- Failure of computer or other equipment being used to produce work to be assessed, including work not backed up.
- Individual transport/travel problems (unless due to strikes or disruptions which could not be foreseen or worked around).
- Relative cost of travel arrangements.
- Financial difficulties (if very serious, suspension of study might be appropriate).

- Demands of paid or unpaid employment, and job interviews (unless exceptional circumstances prevail in work that is undertaken as a condition or necessary counterpart of the programme of study).
- Failure of others to submit group assignments.
- Multiple examinations within a short period.
- Language of assessment not being the student's main language.
- Late applications for IECs (unless good evidence of the unavoidability of the delay is also provided).
- Long-term illness or disability where earlier disclosure would have allowed appropriate adjustments to be made.
- Assessments already subject to special arrangements to accommodate disabilities or other known conditions.
- IECs claims which fail to make clear how performance in assessment was significantly affected.

2.3 Other Extenuating Circumstances

From time to time, a structural problem will occur with an assessment. For example, a fire alarm may disrupt an examination taking place. These circumstances are referred to as General Extenuating Circumstances and will usually have impacted upon a group or cohort of students. These may not be used as part of a claim for IECs and should be addressed by another means.