



# POINT BLANK

## MUSIC SCHOOL

### POLICY 018

### REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION (EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES)

#### DOCUMENT CONTROL BOX

<b>People in scope:</b>					
<b>All students</b>	<b>HE Students</b>	<b>Professional Students</b>	<b>All staff and students</b>	<b>Staff only</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Sites in scope:</b>			<b>Publication:</b>		
<b>All</b>	<b>London</b>	<b>Online</b>	<b>Internal</b>	<b>Public</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Version:</b>	2	<b>Date Approved / Committee:</b>	13.08.24 / Quality and Standards Committee	<b>Date of next review:</b>	August 2025

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**Document Revision History**

**Version Log**

<b>Committee / Approval Date</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Publication Date</b>	<b>Page Reference &amp; Summary</b>
Quality and Standards Committee / 13 <sup>th</sup> August 2024	Registrar	2	October 2024	<p>Re-written and updated for clarity and in line with updates to the OIA good practice framework.</p> <p>Updated deadline for applications from 5 days before the assessment deadline to the assessment deadline itself.</p> <p>Policy renamed, previously Extenuating Circumstances Policy</p>

**Related Documentation**

<b>Document Reference No. (Policy version / Supporting doc. #)</b>	<b>Document Type</b>	<b>Link or Dept. Owner</b>	<b>Document Title</b>

## 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to outline Point Blank's approach to supporting students whose learning has been adversely affected by extenuating circumstances and wishing to request additional consideration.
- 1.2 This policy was formerly known as the Extenuating Circumstances policy and has been updated to use terminology recommended by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator's Good Practice Framework. The term 'extenuating circumstances' is used throughout this policy to refer to matters which may give rise to a request for additional consideration.
- 1.3 As the validator of Point Blank HE programmes, the general principles which underpin this policy are those outlined in section D8.2 of the Middlesex University regulations for taught programmes.
- 1.4 This policy is designed to support with acute, but shorter-term circumstances that impact on a student's performance or ability to study. If a student's circumstances have had (or are likely to have) a longer-term impact, then this policy may not be appropriate, and students are advised to speak with the Student Experience team about other support (for example, reasonable adjustments).

## 2. POLICY DETAILS

- 2.1 All students are responsible for managing their time and workload when undertaking a programme of study at Point Blank. This includes ensuring they understand when their deadlines are, and the requirements for all assessments or exams due to be submitted or sat by those deadlines.
- 2.2 It is also reasonable to expect students to be able to cope with normal life events, short-term, non-serious illness such as a common cold, and to expect a level of stress around assessment times.
- 2.3 However, Point Blank understands that a student may be adversely impacted by extenuating circumstances at any time during their studies.
- 2.4 Extenuating circumstances, in this context, are normally defined as:
  - i. Outside of the student's control;
  - ii. Unexpected;
  - iii. Short-term.
- 2.5 Students may request additional consideration where their performance and/ or ability to complete assessments has been affected by the extenuating circumstances.

### Application

- 2.6 Requests for additional consideration must be made via the Extenuating Circumstances form. Only requests made via the form, by the student and not by a third party, will normally be accepted.
- 2.7 Students must indicate all modules affected by the circumstances on the form. Listing one module out of multiple due at the same time may mean the additional consideration is only applied to the named module. It will not normally be assumed that the student meant every module for that term is affected.

- 2.8 Requests must be received by the assessment deadline, or date of the live assessment/ exam. Requests received after this time will not normally be accepted.
- 2.9 Late requests may be considered if there is a documented, compelling reason that explains why the student was not able to make the request by the deadline.
- 2.10 In the case of late requests, Point Blank reserves the right to refer the student to the Academic Appeals process, where this may be more appropriate. Information, advice and guidance on this will be provided to the student in these circumstances.
- 2.11 Students requesting additional consideration for the same circumstances on more than one occasion may have their request denied and referred to a more appropriate process instead (e.g., reasonable adjustments).

#### **'Fit to Sit' Declarations**

- 2.12 Point Blank will not normally accept a request for additional consideration once an assessment has been submitted by the agreed deadline, or a live assessment has been completed at the given time. In these cases, it is assumed that students have declared themselves 'fit to sit' (i.e., well enough to undertake the assessment).
- 2.13 However, there may be cases where the nature of the extenuating circumstances compelled the student to undertake an assessment when their performance was going to be affected. Point Blank reserves the right to consider these cases via the Academic Appeals procedure to review whether it is reasonable to rescind a student's 'fit to sit' declaration and lodge additional consideration.

#### **Supporting Documentation and Self-Certification**

- 2.14 Students will normally need to support their request for additional consideration with contemporary, authoritative documentation that evidences their claim. Examples of supporting documentation that may normally be accepted for valid grounds are outlined in appendix A.
- 2.15 Students who are found to have submitted falsified or deliberately misleading claims or supporting documentation may be referred to the student disciplinary procedure.
- 2.16 In some circumstances, it is reasonable to allow a student to self-certify their request for additional consideration. This is only accepted in cases where the student suffered a short-term illness or impairment that did not require medical attention, and where this illness/ impairment occurred within 14 calendar days of the assessment deadline.
- 2.17 Self-certification is only permitted twice per academic year. Repeated requests
- 2.18 Outcomes for self-certification will only be a deadline extension of up to 7 calendar days. Deferrals to the next assessment period, or other outcomes must be supported by documentary evidence.

#### **Consideration of requests and outcomes**

- 2.19 Requests for additional consideration, via the Extenuating Circumstances form, are reviewed by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel.
- 2.20 The Panel comprises members of the Programme and Assessments team and is responsible for reviewing applications and supporting documentation, and agreeing outcomes.

- 2.21 Requests which are upheld (i.e. accepted and approved) will normally result in one of the following outcomes:
- i. Granting an extension to a coursework deadline or removing a penalty for late submission;
  - ii. Deferring exams or other assessments, so that the student can demonstrate their performance when they are no longer affected by their circumstances;
  - iii. Allowing the student to repeat the year or individual modules or units;
  - iv. Setting another type of assessment or giving the student an oral exam.
- 2.22 In some circumstances, it may be reasonable for the Panel to agree a non-typical outcome. Point Blank reserves the right to consider this at appropriate times as guided by the OIA Good Practice Framework.
- 2.23 Requests which are not upheld (i.e. denied) will either be issued with the outcome:
- i. Not upheld due to insufficient supporting documentation; or
  - ii. Not upheld due to no grounds for extenuating circumstances.
- 2.24 Students whose requests are not upheld due to insufficient supporting documentation may be given the opportunity to supply further documentation, by a deadline given in the outcome letter.
- 2.25 Outcomes are normally communicated to students in writing via an outcome letter within 14 calendar days of submitting the request. Where delays arise, the student will be informed and kept up to date with the progress of their request.

### **Appeals**

- 2.26 Students do not have the right to appeal the outcome of a request for additional consideration simply because they do not agree with the outcome.
- 2.27 Students may submit an appeal in the following circumstances:
- i. The student believes a material error has occurred in the handling of their case, or that Point Blank did not follow its published policy and procedure; or
  - ii. The student reasonably believes the decision of the panel was affected by bias or prejudice; or
  - iii. There is further information available for the panel to consider that was not able, for good reason, to be disclosed earlier in the process.

## **3. POLICY SCOPE**

- 3.1 This policy applies to all students on programmes validated by Middlesex University at Point Blank London and Online.
- 3.2 This policy does not apply to students on Point Blank Short Courses (formerly known as professional courses).

## **4. RELATED POLICIES**

- Disability and Mental Health Support Policy
- Student Attendance and Engagement Policy
- Fitness to Study Policy
- Student Disciplinary Policy
- Academic Appeals Policy

## 5. POLICY OWNER

This policy is under the responsibility of the Student Engagement and Experience Committee. The responsible committee will ensure the cyclical review of this policy is carried out in line with Point Blank's Quality Assurance Framework.

The Student Engagement and Experience Committee delegates the operational responsibility of this policy to the following staff:

- Registrar
- Assessments Manager
- Programme and Assessment Officers
- Academic Engagement Officers
- Disability Support Coordinator

## 6. PROCEDURES

The relevant procedure(s) to accompany this policy is titled Procedure 018 Requests for Additional Consideration and can be found at [www.pointblankmusicschool.com/legal/public-policies/](http://www.pointblankmusicschool.com/legal/public-policies/).

## 7. EXHIBITS, APPENDICES AND FORMS

- Extenuating circumstances form
- Appendix A: Examples of valid grounds for Extenuating Circumstances
- Appendix B: Examples of invalid grounds for Extenuating Circumstances

## 8. REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### 8.1 Internal

- n/a

### 8.2 External

- Middlesex University Extenuating Circumstances Policy
- Middlesex University Regulations for Taught Undergraduate Programmes
- OIA Good Practice Framework: Requests for Additional Consideration

## Appendix A: Examples of valid grounds for extenuating circumstances

Listed below are examples that Point Blank would normally regard as extenuating circumstances that could have seriously affected performance and/or attendance. This list is not exhaustive and where Point Blank deems that a student's application falls within the above definition, it shall be treated under this policy.

Normally Acceptable	Suggested Sources of Evidence	Notes
Illness (More than 7 calendar days), accident or severe trauma or an unexpected deterioration in an ongoing illness or chronic medical condition	Certification of illness or serious accident of the student. It is recognised that it can be difficult to get timely verification from hospitals, but you should submit your claim, pending receipt of evidence.	Evidence to show that reason occurs at the time of an assessment. Certification must be current, and not produced retrospectively.
An unpredictable deterioration in an ongoing illness or an unexpected issue impacting on completion of assessments because of a disability or health condition	Note from a member of the wellbeing team (including student support and counselling) detailing significant fluctuations are expected as part of the ongoing condition/illness. Medical certification or independent verification	Where relevant statements are included, the Disability Support Coordinator or member of the Student Experience team may be consulted.
Recent death (< 3 month) of someone close	Order of service from the funeral, letter from a family member or religious leader, letter from a counsellor or medical professional. If possible, a copy of the death certificate.	"Close" can refer to parents (and guardians), children and siblings, a spouse/partner and it may include friends, in-laws, grandparents and grandchildren if it can be shown that the relationship was close.
Serious levels of prolonged trauma, stress or anxiety	Evidence from GP, Medical practitioner or counsellor	Could be caused by long term effects of bereavement or diagnosed conditions.
Unforeseen accident/Serious illness of a close relative	Medical certification	Could include sudden deterioration of an ongoing illness.
A significant change to the condition or circumstance of someone for whom the student has a caring responsibility	Relevant medical certification or evidence from social services	Illness or other event that precipitates more care required by the student just before or on the deadline/exam.
Serious personal disruption	Independent verification such as supporting third-party evidence	Fire, burglary, requirement to appear in Court etc. relevant to the date of the assessment event or the period leading up to it. Travel problems are not normally accepted as

		students are expected to plan ahead
Significant change of employment circumstances such as redundancy.	Employer letter providing evidence	This is not normally valid for full time students but all requests will be considered based on the facts of each individual case.
Evidence of a declared disability that is provided too late to be taken into account in the deadline for assessment.	Corroboration from the Disability Support Coordinator	This is normally only applicable where it hasn't been possible to put in place reasonable adjustments earlier in the term.
Religious Observance impact on scheduled examinations.	A letter from a religious leader explaining the nature of the obligation and the way in which it impacts on the student	Arrangements will only be made for religious days of obligations where it is prohibited to partake in examination activity.
A life changing situation has caused mass disruption, stress or delay to studying, for example pregnancy and/or giving birth	Confirmation of the birth, i.e. birth certificate, letter from a midwife or other medical practitioner	Giving birth, illness and/or complications during pregnancy or unforeseen caring responsibilities may be considered with supporting evidence. Interruption of studies may be considered.

### Appendix B: Examples of invalid grounds for extenuating circumstances

The following is a non-exhaustive list of circumstances unlikely to be regarded as falling within the relevant definition and is unlikely to be accepted as extenuating circumstances.

Not normally acceptable	Examples
Alleged medical conditions (lasting more than 7 calendar days) without supporting evidence	Claims will not be accepted without appropriate evidence.
Alleged medical conditions (lasting more than 7 calendar days) without contemporaneous evidence or sufficiently detailed subsequent evidence	If a student does not consult a medical practitioner at the time of the illness (lasting more than 7 calendar days), it is not acceptable for a student to obtain generic corroborative medical statements at a later date. A letter from a medical practitioner stating, for example, "the student informs me that he/she was unwell during..." will not be deemed acceptable supporting evidence.
Social activities	Hectic social life, parties, visits by/to friends, sporting fixtures.
Temporary self-induced conditions	Hangovers, drug taking (unless possibly for a registered medical user influenced by the medical treatment involved including prescribed medication for certain conditions where it is known that there may be adverse reactions eg. drowsiness.)



	Students with known, long-term substance abuse conditions are supported via other means.
Minor ailments and other conditions	Coughs, colds, sore throats, sprains (other than in the writing hand/arm). Accidents/illness affecting relatives or friends unless serious or the student is the sole carer.
Examination stress	Examination stress or stress in practice placement will not, by itself, be considered as an extenuating circumstance.
Domestic or personal disruptions which could have been anticipated or planned	Moving house, holidays, weddings or other events where the student either has control over the date or may choose not to participate. Change of job or "normal" job pressure (exceptional crises at work might be acceptable), failed travel arrangements, illness of pets, oversleeping, misreading examinations timetable or other assessment details, poor time management.
Study-related (including failure to sufficiently back up files and poor management of data)	Computer difficulties, losing work not backed up on computer disk or cloud services, deadline congestion, examination congestion, missing books, examination rescheduling, late distribution of materials by the School, delays in printing, photocopying and/or binding of assessed work.
Examination conditions	Disruption in the examination room: poor lighting, ventilation or heating, excessive noise, illness or behaviour of other students, noise from invigilators. Normally such conditions will have been reported by the invigilators, who will pass reports on to the assessment team.