



POINT BLANK

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HIGHER EDUCATION ASSESSMENT DEFERRAL, INTERRUPTION AND WITHDRAWAL POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy applies to students studying a higher education programme at our London or online school and provides guidance on assessment deferral, temporary interruption of studies and if you wish to withdraw from your studies.

2. ASSESSMENT DEFERRAL

If you have exceptional circumstances that prevent you from meeting an assessment (e.g. coursework, presentation) deadline/attending an examination, you may be entitled to a short extension or deferral of assessment.

A deferral of assessment is the postponement of the date you are due to submit an assessment or sit an examination until the next opportunity and without penalty.

It is each student's personal responsibility to undertake the required assessments for their programme of study at the required time. Failure to take a required assessment will result in the assessment being regarded as an attempt with a recorded FAIL mark of 20 unless the following procedure is followed and the evidence to support the claim of extenuating circumstances is accepted by Point Blank.

Students should note that they must provide valid evidence, a description of the impact on their assessment, including timeframe, confirmation of any previous requests or any ongoing issues, and specify what the preferred outcome is thus taking responsibility for the management of their extenuating circumstances claim.

Students must report any extenuating circumstances as soon as possible for Point Blank to consider.

An extenuating circumstance claim must be submitted by the deadline for completion of the assessment component. Where the extenuating circumstances occur unexpectedly at the point of submission/attendance, the extenuating circumstances form may be submitted up to 5 working days after the submission deadline of the assessment or date of the exam or assessment.

Students are required to provide evidence to support claims from an independent third party. Point Blank expects absence through illness to be supported by independent, contemporaneous and explicit corroboration from a registered GP, hospital or other medical practitioner. Where such evidence is submitted to support a claim, the university reserves the right to verify these claims. However, Point Blank will not contact medical practitioners to generally discuss a student's medical circumstances. The burden of proof to support a claim under this policy lies with the student at all times.

Point Blank also expects all claims for retrospective extenuating circumstances to be supported by independent, contemporaneous and explicit corroboration from a registered GP or mental health practitioner. Where such evidence is submitted to support a claim, Point Blank reserves the right to verify these claims.

However, Point Blank will not contact medical practitioners to generally discuss a student's medical circumstances. The burden of proof to support a claim under this policy lies with the student at all times.

Point Blank expects all late extenuating circumstances claims to be supported by evidence that demonstrates why it would have been impossible for the student to have submitted a claim by the deadline published. The burden of proof to support a claim under this policy lies with the student at all times.

Any work that is submitted after the assessment deadline, or after an agreed extension or an agreed deferred assessment date will be considered a non-submission and will receive a mark of 20, unless there has been a subsequent successful claim for extenuating circumstances.

Please see Appendix A for further information on evidence to support an extenuating circumstances claim.

3. TEMPORARY INTERRUPTION OF STUDIES

A student who wishes to interrupt the programme of study before completion must give notice by completing a temporary interruption form. Students who interrupt their studies should be aware that their current academic programme cannot be guaranteed to resume following re-admission as if no interruption had occurred and that it is their responsibility to make themselves familiar with any changes in assessment policy or practice in the programme of study syllabus that may have taken place during their absence. Students may interrupt their course for up to two years.

Before interrupting, students should seek advice from Student Services for guidance on how an interruption may affect their funding and visa (if applicable)

4. WITHDRAWAL

4.1 Before you withdraw

Leaving a course is not a step which should be taken lightly. We advise you to talk with a member of Student Services before making any decisions. The school also has a number of support services available if you would like some guidance or advice. You may also wish to make use of the schools counselling service. Some or all of these people may be able to give help and support which enables you to overcome your difficulties. It is important to remember that all students have problems, but some are more affected by them than others. Seek help early, before a problem gets out of hand.

If all else fails, and after having considered your other options such as interrupting your studies for a period or transferring to another programme, you may feel it is in your best interests to withdraw from your programme at Point Blank. Be sure about what you are doing, and be clear about the consequences – you may, for example, be risking your future entitlement to help with paying your tuition fees.

4.2 Withdrawing from your studies

Withdrawal from studies will of course have an impact on your tuition and accommodation fees and it is therefore important that you let us know formally what you are intending to do as soon as possible. If you do decide to withdraw, you will need to:

- Complete a Withdrawal Form and have this approved by Point Blank. Completion and approval of this form will ensure that the University can inform the Student Loans Company promptly.
- Write formally to the Student Loans Company to let them know about your withdrawal (if applicable)

Failure to inform the University in this way means that tuition fee liability continues to accrue. Please refer to our Finance & Refund policy for more information about liability periods and what fees you might owe.

If you are an international student studying on a Tier 4 visa and you withdraw from your studies, Point Blank will report your withdrawal to the UK Home Office and you will be required to leave the UK immediately as your Tier 4 visa will be curtailed (cancelled).

APPENDIX A

Examples of Valid Extenuating Circumstances and evidence required

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 student's application falls within the above definition, it shall be treated under this policy.

Normally acceptable	Suggested sources of evidence	Notes
Illness, accident or severe trauma or an unexpected deterioration in an ongoing illness or chronic medical condition	Medical 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 confirmation.	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	Learning Support Form (LSF) detailing significant fluctuations are expected as part of the ongoing condition/illness. Medical certification or independent verification	Where relevant statements are included in the LSF University Disability and Mental Health Advisors should be consulted as appropriate.
Recent death (< month) of someone close	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 very close.
Serious levels of prolonged stress or anxiety	Medical certification	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.

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.
If evidence of a declared disability is provided too late to be taken into account in the deadline for assessment .	Corroboration from a Disability or Mental health Advisor	If evidence of a disability is provided too late to be taken into account in the delivery or assessment of the module.
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.

Examples of invalid 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 without supporting evidence	Claims will not be accepted without appropriate medical evidence.
Alleged medical conditions without contemporaneous evidence or sufficiently detailed subsequent evidence	If a student does not consult a medical practitioner at the time of the illness, 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.)

Minor ailments and other conditions	Coughs, colds, sore throats, sprains (other than in the writing hand/arm). Long-standing medical conditions for which special arrangements could have been made or treatment anticipated and taken. Accidents/illness affecting relatives or friends unless serious or the student is the sole carer.
Pregnancy and associated responsibilities	Pregnancy in itself, and expected caring responsibilities, would not normally be considered an extenuating circumstance. However, illness, complications during pregnancy or unforeseen caring responsibilities may be considered with supporting evidence.
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 examination timetable or other assessment details, poor time management.
Study-related	Computer difficulties, losing work not backed up on computer disk, deadline congestion, examination congestion, missing books, examination rescheduling, late distribution of materials by the Faculty/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 Faculty.