7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 Definition

1. Extenuating Circumstances (ECs) are defined as circumstances in a student’s life that are unexpected, significantly disruptive and beyond the student’s control and which may affect their performance at assessment.

7.1.2 Core Principles

1. Wherever possible, UCL is responsible for ensuring that students are not unfairly disadvantaged by such circumstances.
2. Students are responsible for making known any circumstances which may affect their performance in good time for them to be considered by the appropriate body.

7.1.3 Aims

1. The EC regulations aim to:
   i) Uphold the academic standards of UCL
   ii) Mirror the principles applied for employees, fostering a professional approach which prepares students for the work place and highlights the need for students to accept responsibility for their own conduct
   iii) Ensure that all students are treated fairly and equitably
   iv) Accord with the principles of natural justice
   v) Pay due notice to the danger of inadvertent, indirect discrimination or bias
   vi) Ensure that, as far as possible, procedures do not bear more heavily against specific groups, particularly with regard to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, caring responsibilities, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation
   viii) Be simple to operate, be widely publicised, and ensure that outcomes are promptly delivered.

7.1.4 Scope

1. The Extenuating Circumstances regulations apply to all UCL taught students, including those on MRes programmes, and cover all types of assessment, including examinations and coursework.

7.1.5 Long-term/ Chronic Conditions and Disabilities

1. The EC regulations provide short-term solutions for students experiencing sudden, unexpected difficulties. They are not designed to support students with longer-term or chronic conditions or disabilities. UCL seeks to ensure that such students are properly supported throughout their studies and enabled to achieve their full potential at assessment. Section 4: Special Assessment Arrangements governs how UCL supports such students.
2. It is however recognised that a student with a chronic or long-term condition may nonetheless experience an acute episode or sudden worsening of their condition and that it may not always be possible for UCL to put sufficient arrangements in place to help such students. Such eventualities are covered by the Extenuating Circumstances provisions.
7.2 Faculty Extenuating Circumstances Panel (FECP)

7.2.1 Terms of Reference

1. Each Faculty will have an Extenuating Circumstances Panel (FECP) which is responsible for the processing of EC claims received from students in the Faculty.

2. The terms of reference of the FECP are:
   i) To make objective, impartial decisions about the validity of EC claims submitted by students in the Faculty.
   ii) To determine the most appropriate course of action for the circumstances in hand and make recommendations to the relevant Programme Boards of Examiners or to the Special Assessment Arrangements Panel.
   iii) To ensure that all claims are supported by appropriate evidence.
   iv) To ensure that mitigation is only applied to the affected module(s).
   v) To ensure that mitigation is only applied once for each assessment.
   vi) To ensure that EC claims are processed in a timely manner.
   vii) To ensure that EC claims remain confidential to the EC Panel, the SAA Panel and to the Chair and Secretary of the relevant Programme Board of Examiners.
   viii) To ensure that all data relating to ECs are stored securely.
   ix) To report annually to the Academic Regulations and Quality Assurance Sub-committee on the profile of cases received and validated to assist in institutional analyses.
   x) To report annually to the Academic Regulations and Quality Assurance Sub-committee on the efficacy of the EC regulations, making recommendations for improvement where appropriate.

7.2.2 Membership

1. The FECP must be independent from the Programme Board of Examiners.

2. The FECP should be chaired by the Faculty Tutor. A deputy chair may be nominated to stand in for the chair where necessary.

3. The FECP Secretary should be a named member of staff from the Faculty administration team. The Secretary is responsible for receiving and processing claims and ensuring that the decisions of the FECP are transmitted to the relevant Programme Boards of Examiners and to students in a timely manner.

4. In addition to the Chair, the FECP should comprise at least two members of senior academic staff, e.g. Faculty Graduate Tutors, Programme Directors, Departmental Tutors etc.

5. Academic membership must be based on the principles of independence and objectivity. Academic members should withdraw from the meeting for any discussions regarding students for whom there might be a conflict of interests e.g. a Programme Director should not be involved in making decisions for a student registered on his/ her own programme.

6. The quorum for any EC Panel meeting is three: the Chair and two members of academic staff. There must be sufficient academic membership to allow members to withdraw from discussions whilst maintaining quoracy.

7. Where possible, the members of academic staff should change on an annual basis to ensure maximum sharing and awareness of the EC process across UCL.

7.2.3 Delegation of Authority to Departmental Panels

1. The FECP may delegate authority to consider EC claims to a Departmental EC Panel (DECP), for example where the volume of claims might hinder the speed of decision-making.

2. Departmental EC Panels are accountable to the Faculty EC Panel which is ultimately responsible for all decisions made on its behalf. The FECP will determine the authority of any DECP under its responsibility.
3. Departmental EC Panels should be chaired by the Head of Department or Chair of the Departmental Board of Examiners, with a named secretary from the departmental administration team.

4. Academic membership must follow the principles of independence and objectivity, where staff are not involved in making any decisions relating to students for whom there might be a conflict of interests e.g. a Programme Director should not be involved in making decisions for students registered on his/ her own programme.

7.2.4 EC Panel Meetings

1. The FECP/ DECP must meet regularly in order to consider claims in good time, particularly around the main examination periods.

2. To facilitate decision-making, panels may meet ‘virtually’, where decisions are approved electronically and formally recorded by the EC Panel Secretary.

7.3 Acceptable Grounds for Extenuating Circumstances

1. UCL recognises that each student’s circumstances are different and that claims must be considered on a case-by-case basis. However, in order to promote fairness for all students across UCL, the following guidelines are provided to assist UCL staff and students in assessing whether an EC Claim might be considered:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acceptable Grounds for Extenuating Circumstances</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Circumstances which will normally be considered where there is appropriate evidence</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples that UCL would commonly regard as circumstances that could have seriously affected performance:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Death of a child, sibling, parent (including step-parent or legal guardian), spouse or common law partner</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Serious personal injury or medical condition preventing attendance at or completion of assessment or submission of work</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Serious worsening or acute episode of an ongoing medical condition (including pregnancy and maternity) or disability</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Victim of serious crime (e.g. assault, mugging)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Theft of work required for assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Direct experience of terrorist incident or natural disaster</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Major fire in residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Jury Service or attendance at court or tribunal as a witness, defendant or plaintiff</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| **Circumstances that may be considered where there is clear evidence of the impact on the student** |
| The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples that UCL may regard as extenuating circumstances, where there is clear evidence to suggest that |
| • Death of, or serious injury to, a friend or relative not identified above |
| • Moderate personal injury or medical condition preventing attendance at or completion of assessment or submission of work |
| • Serious injury or illness to child, sibling, parent (including step-parent or legal guardian), spouse or common law partner |
| • Unexpected caring responsibilities caused by sudden serious illness or worsening of ongoing medical condition in a child, sibling, parent (including step-parent or legal guardian), spouse or common law partner |
| the student was significantly affected: | • Family breakdown (such as divorce)  
| | • Serious disruption caused by terrorist incident or natural disaster  
| | • Major travel disruption (such as cannot be remedied by finding an alternative mode of transport or by better time-keeping on the part of the student)  
| Circumstances that would not normally be considered | • Minor illnesses or injuries (such as colds, headaches, hayfever)  
| | • Ongoing medical conditions, disabilities, learning difficulties, mental health conditions, pregnancy, maternity or caring responsibilities for which the student is already receiving reasonable adjustments or Special Assessment Arrangements  
| | • Assessment/examination stress  
| | • Caring responsibilities for relatives with minor illnesses or injuries  
| | • Poor time management  
| | • Failure of IT equipment/printers  
| | • Failure to back up electronic documents  
| | • Minor crime  
| | • Minor private or public transport failure  
| | • Financial problems or employment difficulties  
| | • Accommodation problems or house moves  
| | • General domestic/family problems  
| | • Supporting a friend or relative at a court or tribunal  
| | • Visa problems  
| | • Holidays or booked travel arrangements  
| | • Circumstances which are foreseeable or preventable  
| | • Circumstances which have not clearly impacted on academic performance  
| | • Circumstances which do not clearly relate to the timing of the assessment  
| | • Circumstances without reasonable supporting evidence (medical or otherwise)  
| | • Circumstances supported by evidence from unregistered medical practitioners, including alternative therapists  
| | • Circumstances supported by evidence from a relative or other person with a conflict of interest  
| | • Circumstances supported by ‘retrospective’ evidence e.g. a medical note which states that the student declared they had been ill previously  
| | • Conditions which are not fully diagnosed e.g. a medical note which states that “the patient informs me that...”  
| | • Claims that a student was unaware of the dates or times of submission or examination  
| | • Late disclosure of circumstances on the basis that a student felt unable to confide in a staff member or follow the UCL EC procedures.  

The following is a non-exhaustive list of circumstances unlikely to be regarded as extenuating circumstances:
7.4 Submitting a Claim

7.4.1 Student Responsibilities

1. Students must submit an Extenuating Circumstances Claim Form (see Annex 4.2.1), together with appropriate supporting evidence, as soon as possible and no later than one week after the circumstance has taken place.
2. The Student Handbook for each UCL programme must specify where student EC claims are to be submitted. This might be the faculty, department or programme office. The student is responsible for submitting their claim to the specified office.
3. Claims must identify the type of mitigation being requested. The student’s request will determine how the claim is considered and processed by UCL but in no way determines the outcome of the EC Claim. Students may submit an application for:
   i) A coursework deadline extension of up to one week
   ii) Special Assessment Arrangements (for short-term conditions)
   iii) Other
4. Claims must clearly state the modules/ components for which the student is seeking mitigation; claims will not be considered for any modules not identified on the EC Claim Form.

7.4.2 Evidence

1. Claims must be supported by written evidence from an appropriate, verifiable and independent authority such as a registered medical practitioner (i.e. listed in the GMC’s List of Registered Medical Practitioners), solicitor, undertaker, coroner, registrar of births, marriages and deaths, police officer, fire officer, court or tribunal officer.
2. Evidence must cover the full period for which the student is claiming mitigation.
3. Evidence must be provided in English or accompanied by a translation formally notarised by a solicitor.

7.4.3 Late Submission of a Claim

1. Where a student is unable to submit their claim within the specified deadline because the EC is still ongoing, and the Board of Examiners has not yet made a decision, the Faculty/Departmental EC Panel or Special Assessment Arrangements Panel may use its discretion to consider the late claim following the standard procedures outlined in Sections 7.5-7.7 of these procedures.
2. Where a student is unable to submit their claim within the specified deadline because the EC is still ongoing, and the Board of Examiners has already made a decision, the student may be able to request a review of the Board’s decision:
   i) Students should submit a request for review within two weeks of the date of the results notification.
   ii) The Student Handbook for each UCL programme must specify where student EC Claims are to be submitted. Requests for review should be submitted to the same location.
   iii) The receiving office will forward the request to the Chair of the Faculty EC Panel who will review the case.
   iv) Where the Chair of the Faculty EC Panel agrees that there are valid grounds for the late submission of the EC Claim (i.e. it was impossible for the student to submit it on time and/or before the Board of Examiners) the FECP Chair will make a recommendation to suspend the regulations to the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs).
   v) Where the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs) accepts the request for review, s/he will overturn the original Board of Examiners’ decision and put a new one in its place. The Faculty EC Panel and Programme Board of Examiners will be notified as soon
as possible. Assessment and Student Records will amend the student’s record and issue the student with a new results notification.

vi) Where the Faculty EC Panel Chair or the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs) rejects the request for review, s/he will notify the FECP and Programme Board of Examiners as soon as possible. The Secretary to the FECP is responsible for notifying the student that their request has been rejected.

7.5 Requests for Coursework Deadline Extensions of up to One Week

1. A coursework extension of up to one week may be approved by a Programme Director (or equivalent), Departmental Tutor or Chair of a Programme Board of Examiners. (Requests for extensions of more than one week must be forwarded to the Faculty EC Panel, following the procedures in Section 7.7 of these procedures. Other members of teaching staff, including Module Tutors, are not permitted to grant an extension.

7.5.1 Procedure

1. The EC Claim Form asks students to state clearly whether they are seeking a coursework deadline extension of up to one week in mitigation of their circumstances. Where this is indicated, the receiving office should forward the claim to the relevant Programme Director (or equivalent), Departmental Tutor or Chair of the Programme Board of Examiners no later than one week after receipt of the claim.

2. On receipt of an EC Claim form, the Programme Director (or equivalent), Departmental Tutor or Chair of the Programme Board of Examiners should assess the request against the Acceptable Grounds for Extenuating Circumstances in Section 7.3 of these procedures. Where they deem the claim to be valid, they may use their discretion to grant a deadline extension of up to one week only, in consultation with the teaching department.

3. Where an extension is agreed, the Department must communicate the new deadline to the student in writing as soon as possible and notify the relevant Faculty EC Panel of the decision.

4. Where an extension is not permitted, the Department must communicate the decision to the student in writing as soon as possible. Such students retain the right to submit a second EC Claim for consideration by the Faculty/Departmental EC Panel.

7.6 Requests for Special Assessment Arrangements for Short-term Conditions

1. Students with long-term, chronic conditions and disabilities are expected to follow the procedures outlined in Section 4: Special Assessment Arrangements and are not expected to submit claims for Extenuating Circumstances in order to be considered for Special Assessment Arrangements. The following processes are provided as an additional mechanism to support students with short-term, sudden and unforeseen extenuating circumstances who may nevertheless be able to sit an examination if Special Assessment Arrangements can be put in place.

7.6.1 Procedure

1. The EC Claim Form asks students to state clearly whether they are seeking Special Assessment Arrangements in mitigation of their Extenuating Circumstances. Where this is indicated, the receiving office should forward the claim to Assessment and Student Records for consideration
by the Special Assessment Arrangements (SAA) Panel, as soon as possible and no later than one week after receipt of the claim.

2. On receipt of a claim, the SAA Panel may use its discretion to consider whether reasonable adjustments can be put in place, such as:
   i) Extra time in an examination
   ii) An alternative venue, including the option of a separate room
   iii) Rest breaks
   iv) Specialist equipment, such as a PC or an adjustable chair
   v) Recommendation of an alternative form of assessment

3. The SAA Panel will be given access to the EC Claim Form so that it can ensure that adjustments are appropriate. EC claim forms must be treated confidentially by the SAA Panel.

4. Where Special Assessment Arrangements are put in place no further mitigation will be considered. The student must not be given additional consideration by the Faculty/Departmental EC Panel.

5. Where the SAA Panel is unable to assist, or is unable or unwilling to accept the EC Claim, the SAA Panel must communicate the decision to the student in writing as soon as possible. Such students retain the right to submit a second EC Claim for consideration by the Faculty/Departmental EC Panel.

### 7.6.2 Late Requests for Special Assessment Arrangements

1. In exceptional circumstances, for example where a decision has to be made on the morning of an examination, the SAA Panel may exercise its discretion to receive an EC Claim directly from the student and to put Special Assessment Arrangements in place, where it believes the EC claim to be valid.

2. If the SAA Panel is unable to support the student, or is unable or unwilling to accept the EC Claim, the student retains the right to submit a second EC Claim for consideration by the Faculty/Departmental EC Panel.

### 7.7 All Other Claims

1. All other claim forms (not related to extensions of up to 1 week or Special Assessment Arrangements) must be forwarded to the Secretary of the Faculty/Departmental Extenuating Circumstances Panel, by the receiving office, as soon as possible and no later than one week after receipt of the claim form.

### 7.7.1 Faculty EC Panel

1. Each Faculty will have an Extenuating Circumstances Panel whose terms of reference and membership are defined in Section 7.2 of these procedures. Faculties may delegate authority for considering EC Claims to a Departmental Panel whose terms of reference and membership are also defined in Section 7.2 of these procedures.

2. The Faculty/Departmental EC Panel will review each claim and the evidence presented against Section 7.3 Acceptable Grounds for Extenuating Circumstances and make one of the following decisions:
   i) Accept
   ii) Reject
   iii) Pending – further evidence required

3. Where a claim is rejected, the student will be notified in writing within one week of the decision being made.

4. Where further evidence is required, the student will be notified within one week of the decision being made and will be expected to provide the missing evidence within a further two weeks. Where no further evidence is received, the Faculty/Departmental EC Panel will reject the claim and notify the student in writing.
7.7.2 Accepted Claims

1. Where a claim is accepted, the Faculty/Departmental EC Panel will make one of the following decisions:
   i) To refer the claim to the Special Assessment Arrangements Panel (see Section 7.6 of these procedures)
   ii) To offer the student the opportunity to sit/submit the assessment as if for the first time and without penalty (deferral)
   iii) To offer the student a specified extended deadline
   iv) To condone the late submission of coursework (late submission penalties suspended and full mark awarded)
   v) To exclude the affected component from the module mark calculation, up to a maximum of 50% of a module
   vi) To exclude the affected module from the classification calculation, up to a maximum total of 30 credits (1 course unit) across the whole programme
   vii) To recommend that the Board of Examiners gives special consideration to any weighted average marks falling within the 1% Borderline Zone (see Section 2.10 Undergraduate Borderline Criteria and Section 3.9 Taught Postgraduate Borderline Criteria)
   viii) To recommend that the student is considered under Section 2.11 Undergraduate Special or Aegrotat Provisions, where applicable

2. The FECP/DECP Secretary should notify the student of the decision in writing within one week of the Panel meeting, giving details of the decision made and any new deadlines.

3. The FECP/DECP should notify the relevant Programme Board of Examiners of its decision within one week of the Panel meeting.

7.7.3 Recommendation to the Programme Board of Examiners

1. The Programme Board of Examiners is responsible for applying the Faculty/Departmental EC Panel’s decision, confirming the module result and determining whether the student may progress or graduate.
2. The Programme Board of Examiners must only receive notification of validated Extenuating Circumstances from the Faculty/Departmental EC Panel; un-validated claims must not be considered and Board members must not raise new cases at the meeting of the Board.
3. The Faculty/Departmental EC Panel decision will include only the student’s candidate number and the decision for each affected module. Only the Chair and Secretary of the Board of Examiners will have access to the EC Claim Form in order to verify information.
4. The Board must not be advised of, or be allowed to discuss, the nature or severity of the Extenuating Circumstance.
5. Marks for individual modules must not be adjusted in any circumstances.
6. All decisions must be recorded accurately by the Board of Examiners and communicated to the student in writing.