

The University of Bradford Counselling & Mental Health Service

Providing evidence to support extenuating circumstances: information and guidelines

What are Extenuating Circumstances, as defined in the University's policy?

These will normally be exceptional circumstances beyond the student's control which cause them to perform **significantly** less well, in coursework or examinations, than might have been expected on the basis of performance in other work.

This means that there needs to be:

- **'Good cause'** which has prevented a student from attending required assessments or from completing a particular assessment.
- **Ill-health** or other form of **adverse circumstances** which may have led to significant impairment of a student's performance in an assessment;

For example:

- suffering a serious illness or injury
- an unexpected change in, or impact of, a disability
- the death or critical illness of a close family member
- a significant family crisis leading to acute stress
- absence arising from jury service, maternity, paternity or adoption leave

In general, extenuating circumstances will be of a medical or personal nature affecting the student for a **significant** period of time and/or during the examination period.

Please see the [University of Bradford Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedure](#) for a fuller definition and more guidance.

Counselling and Mental Health Service Policy

Where appropriate, Counsellors or Mental Health Advisors will provide a standard letter in support of extenuating circumstances where those circumstances interfered with the student's ability to focus on academic work and ***where the student has clearly endeavoured to manage with our help.***

The following points contain information and guidelines about when we will provide this:

- The Counsellor or Mental Health Advisor needs to be confident that s/he is in a position to make a judgement that the issues that the client has disclosed to them have seriously affected his or her ability to meet course requirements.
- In order to make this kind of a judgement, the Counsellor or Mental Health Advisor needs to have a clear awareness and understanding of the client's difficulties.
- Generally, this means that the student has attended at least one 50-minute counselling appointment (not just a 25-minute intake appointment), or that they have attended at least one 50-minute intake appointment with a Mental Health Advisor.
- ***Providing evidence of this kind for a client needs to come as a result of the counselling or mental health advice and not be the purpose of it.***
- Letters will only ever be provided at the student's request and with the student's permission.
- The Counsellor or Mental Health Advisor will provide a standard letter which does not go into any specific details. Any extenuating circumstances letter sent by the Counselling and Mental Health Service will state the number of sessions and dates attended.
- Even if a Counsellor or Mental Health Advisor has seen a student for several appointments, s/he may not feel that providing this kind of evidence is appropriate.
- For postgraduate research students we provide letters confirming extenuating circumstances to support requests for suspension/extension of study.

Confirmation of attendance

In certain circumstances we may provide letters confirming attendance at the Counselling and Mental Health Service. However, the provision of a letter confirming attendance is not, in itself, proof of an extenuating circumstance.

Confirmation of fitness to study

We do not provide evidence confirming fitness to study. This can only be provided by a medical professional.

For further information and advice about Extenuating Circumstances:

- Contact the Counselling and Mental Health Service
 - counselling@bradford.ac.uk
 - mhadvice@bradford.ac.uk
 - 01274 235 750

- Contact the Disability Service:
 - [Main Disability website](#)
 - [Disability FAQ page - for students](#)
 - [Disability FAQ page - for staff](#)
 - 01274 233739
 - disabilities@bradford.ac.uk

- Contact the Students Union
 - [Information about Extenuating Circumstances](#)
 - [Extenuating Circumstances Guidance](#)
 - [UBU Main Website](#)
 - ubu-advice@bradford.ac.uk