

Extenuating Circumstances and Reasonable Adjustments Policy

1. Introduction

Francis James is committed to creating an inclusive and supportive environment for all learners. We acknowledge that learners may experience circumstances or have conditions which adversely affect their academic performance. This policy outlines the processes for:

1. Extenuating Circumstances (also called Mitigating Circumstances): Unexpected and unpreventable events or conditions that significantly impact a learner's attendance or their ability to meet assessment deadlines or perform to their usual standard.
2. Reasonable Adjustments: Adjustments provided to learners with disabilities, specific learning differences (SpLDs) or other long-term conditions to remove or reduce disadvantage, also ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and Office for Students (OfS) requirements.
3. Learners with Special Educational Needs: Additional procedures and provisions to support learners with documented needs throughout their studies. These needs may require additional or different support in order to enable a learner to participate effectively in the degree programmes.

2. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to:

- define transparent procedures for identifying, applying for and granting extenuating circumstances and reasonable adjustments.
- ensure fair and consistent treatment of learners requiring additional support due to personal, medical or other significant factors.

This policy applies to all undergraduate learners with Francis James. It covers both short-term (acute) and long-term (chronic) conditions or circumstances.

3. Extenuating Circumstances

3.1 Grounds and application

Francis James has a staged response to extenuating circumstances applications as set out below.

Stage 1: Light Impact

These are short-term, low-level disruptions that affect a learner's ability to meet a deadline but do not prevent engagement with the assessment. In this case, no formal evidence is required, although the learner must provide explanation ahead of the assessment deadline.

The typical outcome from applying for this reason is up to a 5-day extension.

Stage 2: Moderate Impact

This is where there are circumstances that significantly disrupt a learner's ability to complete an assessment within the original timeframe. Formal evidence is required to support the claim.

The typical outcome from applying for this reason is a 10-day extension.

Stage 3: Severe or Sustained Impact

This is where serious circumstances prevent the learner from completing and submitting the assignment within the current period. Formal evidence is also required to support the claim.

The typical outcome from applying for this reason could be: a deferred assessment attempt; an alternative assessment format (if appropriate); recommendation for a temporary deferral or interruption of studies if the impact is ongoing.

3.2 Application Procedure

1. Notification: learners must inform their programme support officer as soon as possible if they believe extenuating circumstances may affect their studies. This should be 10 working days before the assignment deadline, unless there is a compelling and evidenced reason for a shorter notice period.
2. Submission: An Extenuating Circumstances Information and Application Form (available on Moodle) must be completed and submitted before the assessment deadline or within a specified time post-deadline for emergencies.
3. Supporting Evidence: Medical certificates or other official documentation should be provided when possible. Where evidence cannot be obtained, a written explanation must be included.
4. A panel (consisting at least of a senior representative of the Quality Team and the Programme Support Officer) will consider any application received, including the evidence provided, and will provide a decision to the learner within 5 working days of the application.

4. Reasonable Adjustments

4.1 Eligibility

- Learners with a documented disability, SpLD (e.g., dyslexia, ADHD), long-term health condition or mental health condition that impacts their studies are entitled to reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010.

4.2 Support Services and Assessment

1. Disclosure and Assessment: learners are encouraged to disclose any disability or learning difference at admission or as soon as they become aware. They may be referred for an Educational Psychologist Assessment or medical referral if needed.
2. Individual Learning Plan (ILP): Once a condition is verified, the programme support team or disability advisor will create an ILP specifying recommended adjustments (e.g., extra time in for assessment, assistive technology, adapted materials).
3. Implementation: Programme leaders and support officers and course tutors receive copies of the ILP to ensure consistent provision of adjustments. Staff must respect learner confidentiality and only share details with relevant personnel.

4.3 Examples of Reasonable Adjustments

- Additional time or rest breaks in examinations and assessments
- Use of assistive technology (e.g., screen-readers, speech-to-text software)

- Provision of lecture materials in accessible formats (e.g., large print, electronic text)
- Alternative assessment formats where appropriate (e.g., viva voce, practical demonstration)
- Adjusted deadlines for coursework submissions

5. Learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

5.1 Identification and Support

1. Early Identification: SEN may be identified through admissions information, school/college references or learner self-disclosure.
2. Assessment: learners may undergo additional diagnostics or a professional assessment.
3. SEN Provision: Francis James will coordinate support strategies tailored to individual needs, which may include in-class assistance, adapted materials or specialist tutoring.

5.2 Collaboration with External Agencies

- Where necessary, Francis James may collaborate with external specialists, health professionals or local authorities to ensure learners with SEN receive comprehensive and coordinated support.

6. Confidentiality and Data Protection

- All information provided by learners regarding extenuating circumstances, disabilities or SEN is treated as confidential, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).
- Records are stored securely and only shared with staff members who have a legitimate need to know in order to implement adjustments or support.

7. Appeals and Complaints

- Learners who are dissatisfied with decisions relating to extenuating circumstances or reasonable adjustments may follow the Academic Appeals and Complaints Policy.
- Appeals must be lodged within the timeframe stated in that policy, and Francis James will conduct a fair and transparent review of each case.

8. Monitoring and Review

- Quality Assurance: Francis James maintains records of extenuating circumstances requests and reasonable adjustments to identify any trends and improve service provision.
- Policy Review: This policy is reviewed annually or as required by changes in legislation or OfS guidance.

9. Approval and Effective Date

Written By	Revision Date	Revision Number	Approved By	Review Date
Karen Tucker	31/12/2024	1	 S Graham	31/12/2025

Helen Barratt	31/06/2025	2	 S Graham	31/06/2026
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