

A Guide to Extenuating Circumstances for Access to HE

Detailed information regarding extenuating circumstances when considering the award of an Access to HE Diploma can be found online in the QAA Grading Scheme Handbook E.

QAA Grading Scheme Handbook Section E

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/access-to-he/access-to-he-resources/access-to-he-grading-scheme>

What you need to know:

1. What are extenuating circumstances?

Extenuating circumstances are defined as any events, usually personal or health-related (but not limited to these), that are outside a student's control but can have a negative impact on performance. This might be performing less well than expected or the ability to sit an exam assessment or hand in an assessment on deadline.

Support arrangements are available to students if they are finding it difficult to learn or be assessed during their course. These include:

- extension to the course
- an aegrotat award
- partial achievement
- award through extenuation

These arrangements provide flexibility to ensure appropriate and proportional arrangements are in place to meet students' individual needs. Using all available evidence to decide which awarding arrangement should be applied will be crucial and should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

2. Extension to the course

Processes will already be in place to support students during the course where extensions to submission deadlines are required. For extensions past the end of the course deadline, applications must be submitted to the moderator for approval during Final Moderation. Applications will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and agreed upon, where appropriate, at the Final Awards Board.

Each case should have an NR (Notice of Referral) form completed, listing which units are outstanding and the proposed deadline for completing all work. The reason for the extenuating circumstances should be given, along with any appropriate evidence available (or copies).

Claims for any work the student has completed up to the point of the application being submitted should be included in overall claims at the Final Awards Board. Students should be advised to keep their certificates and transcripts showing partial achievement safe, as these will form part of their final certification once outstanding units have been completed and awarded.

3. Aegrotat Award

In those exceptional extenuating certified medical circumstances which have resulted in the student being unable to complete the course requirements, a student may be granted an Aegrotat Award.

The final awards board would consider and approve only when the student has achieved at least 30 of the credits required for the Access to HE Diploma. In such cases, the Access to HE Diploma can be awarded without full credits, and the unit and grade profile will be incomplete. The Diploma awarded must state that it is an aegrotat award.

4. Partial Achievement

In those circumstances where a student cannot complete and be awarded the full Diploma and cannot submit work for any further outstanding assessments, they will be awarded partial achievement. The Final Awards Board will confirm grades for completed units, and a unit transcript will be issued. A student may wish to return to study at some point later in the future to complete any outstanding units and has up to 5 years to do this.

5. Award through extenuation

In some exceptional circumstances, not all assessments can take place, and in such cases, the award through extenuation may support the award of unit(s) that make up the Diploma.

The award through extenuation is evidence-based and will be agreed upon at the Final Awards Board. Each such student must have an Extenuation Form completed by a member of the Provider's Access to HE team, listing which units are affected and sufficient evidence relating to the learning outcomes and grading (where applicable) of each unit to be awarded.

There are no limitations to the number of pieces of evidence or the number of different types of evidence that may be submitted. The evidence submitted must be sufficient for the unit(s) and grade(s) to be awarded, where applicable. The evidence submitted must be clear so that a student can understand why the evidence has been selected and how it has been used to arrive at the decision to award a unit/grade (if applicable) should they seek to appeal their unit grade.

If there is not sufficient evidence to grade a unit but there is enough evidence to meet the learning outcomes of that unit, the student will be awarded a Pass. If it is not possible to generate sufficient evidence to meet the learning outcomes of a unit, that unit cannot be awarded through extenuation.

Download the appropriate forms from the website [Forms and Templates](#).

Contact Details

If you are unsure or have a specific query, please email the support team at access@gatewayqualifications.org.uk.