Guidelines for Using the “Declaration of Extenuating Circumstances” Form

Background:

The BISC strives to ensure that academic standards are upheld and that all students are treated fairly and equitably. The BISC does, however, understand that there are occasions in which circumstances beyond a student’s control adversely affect a student’s academic performance. When this happens during the term, a student’s time management may suffer and they may fall behind on their written assignments or miss an in-class assessment. The “Declaration of Extenuating Circumstances” form (document AC02) exists to provide students with an avenue to appeal to the Deputy Academic director for short-term academic considerations.

In signing this form, students acknowledge their awareness of the guidelines for Academic Integrity, as outlined on the Arts and Sciences website:

http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/students-at-queens/academic-integrity

What is considered to be an extenuating circumstance?

For the purpose of this form, an extenuating circumstance is defined as a short-term physical or psychological event that is beyond a student’s control and adversely affects his or her academic performance. The “Declaration of Extenuating Circumstances” form is used to appeal for academic considerations up to 72 hours. It is thus suitable for use in cases of short-term illness or other event of which the impact is not expected to be long-lasting.

For ongoing medical conditions, students must seek advice from Student Services who will provide support and guidance.

Extenuating circumstances beyond a student’s control include the following:

- The student suddenly becomes quite ill near the deadline date.
- The student is in university for the first time and has not received any type of verbal or written feedback concerning their performance in the course prior to the drop deadline.
- The student has suddenly developed a serious personal problem which is consuming much of their time and energy.
What is not considered to be an extenuating circumstance?

Circumstances not beyond a student’s control include the following:

**NO** = The student is an upper-year student and has not received any type of verbal or written feedback concerning their performance in the course prior to the drop deadline.

**NO** = The student has over-committed themselves by taking on additional work shifts, running for election, serving on student government or other committees, etc.

**NO** = The student was ill earlier in the term, but not in the week or so preceding the deadline.

**PROCEDURE:**

- Students will complete the form and return it to the Deputy Academic Director.
- It is preferable to return the form in person to discuss the request. The request is more likely to be granted if the Deputy Academic Director has a full understanding of the situation. Nevertheless, it is possible to send the form electronically.
- When completing the form, students will specify the nature of their circumstance and may be asked to provide supporting documentation.
- Students will specify what type of accommodation they are requesting.
- The Deputy Academic Director will discuss the request with the student and will decide to grant or deny the request. If the student is not satisfied with the decision, they may appeal the decision by contacting the Academic Director.
- The form will be kept on file for the duration of the student’s enrolment at the BISC. This serves to enhance the BISC’s ability to identify students requiring longer-term support.
- Students remain responsible for catching up on any material they have missed.

**Note to instructors:**

If a student approaches an instructor to ask for an extension on an assignment, they must be referred to this document and advised to contact the Deputy Academic Director.

Instructors will not grant any academic considerations outside of this framework.