

POLICY TEMPLATE



Academic Consideration for Students in Extenuating Circumstances

Category: *Student Related*
Approval: *Senate*
Responsibility: *Vice-Provost and Dean of Student Affairs.*
Date: *Date initially approved: April 18, 2017*
Date of last revision:

Definitions:

“academic consideration” means an action or actions taken by an educator or Faculty/School Office, in response to a student with an extenuating circumstance. Considerations include but are not limited to: an excused absence, a brief reprieve from coursework, an extended or deferred deadline, a modified schedule for assignments, labs, placements, projects, or comprehensive exams, a deferred exam or project, a medical leave of absence, an alternate assignment, a re-weighting of assigned marks, course withdrawal without penalty, or other consideration deemed appropriate by the Faculty or School office. Students receiving academic considerations must meet all essential academic requirements and standards of the program.

“academic work” means course work, research, labs, placements/fieldwork, professional internships, or any other program requirements

“delegate” means an individual acting on behalf of a student who is experiencing an extenuating circumstance. A delegate may assist the student with completing and submitting documentation, and communication with Faculty/ School offices and instructors. Written consent must be received from the student for the delegate to act on their behalf.

“documentation” means the independent verification of an extenuating circumstance provided by a student (or delegate) for the purposes of requesting academic consideration. Required documentation will differ depending on the extenuating circumstance and must be completed by an appropriate professional. Faculties / Schools have discretion to request documentation as they see fit to verify an extenuating circumstance. In cases where a confidential verification is provided, the student should not be asked for additional documentation specific to the extenuating circumstance.

“educators” mean all individuals who participate in the creation, development or provision of materials, activities and assessments for learning for Queen’s students. Educators include academic faculty and non-academic staff involved in the delivery of academic curriculum as well as course directors and co-ordinators, instructors of record, adjunct staff, teaching fellows and teaching assistants, professional learning instructors, graduate supervisors and developers who work with staff, faculty, and other Queen’s personnel.

“essential academic requirements and standards” means the knowledge and/or skill which must be acquired and/or demonstrated for a student to successfully meet the learning objectives or degree level requirements of a required academic activity (e.g. comprehensive exam), course, program, or professional certification.

“extenuating circumstances” means a personal circumstance beyond the student’s control that has a direct and substantial impact on the student’s ability to meet essential academic requirements or standards. Extenuating circumstances include but are not limited to a sudden or acute physical or mental illness, serious injury to self or significant others, bereavement, a traumatic event, or other serious personal/family crisis.

Extenuating circumstances may also include officially representing the university at a sanctioned varsity athletics event (provincial, national, international competitions) or through an invitation to showcase achievement or share an exceptional talent or ability on a provincial, national or international stage as a distinguished guest.

Please note extenuating circumstances do not include personal or family events (e.g. holidays, weddings), academic or exam stress, or transportation or technological difficulties.

“good faith” is a general presumption that all involved are acting with honest and sincere intentions.

Purpose/Reason for Policy:

To outline the university’s approach to providing consistent and fair academic considerations to students for a range of extenuating personal circumstances as defined above.

Scope of this Policy:

This policy applies to full-time and part-time undergraduate, graduate and professional students who are enrolled in academic activities at Queen’s University, including students studying at Queen’s on exchange or through other international agreements.

Academic considerations for students who have experienced sexual violence fall under this policy, however in the case of differences in procedure, this policy defers to the Policy on Sexual Violence Involving Queen’s University Students.

NOTE: For those members of Queen's community who are both employees and students (e.g. employees taking courses on a part-time basis, TAs, TFs, RAs) this policy applies only to their academic activities as students (e.g. classes, research, examinations and fieldwork).

This policy does not include students seeking academic accommodations related to a chronic or ongoing physical or mental health condition or an established disability. Please refer to the existing policy on Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities in that case. Students with an underlying health condition or disability should seek academic accommodation from Queen's Student Accessibility Services in Student Wellness Services.

Policy Statement:

Queen's University recognizes that students may have extenuating circumstances that temporarily affect their ability to fulfill their academic obligations and requirements.

The institutional response to requests for academic consideration due to extenuating circumstances is based on the principle of good faith, wherein the university and instructors are requested to assume that student circumstances and documented requests are legitimate unless there is compelling evidence to suggest otherwise. Similarly students are requested to assume that the university and instructors will provide academic considerations that are deemed to be in the best interest of the student, taking into account academic progress and essential academic requirements and standards.

Privacy and confidentiality are to be respected, protected and maintained throughout the academic consideration process. Faculty / School Offices may request documentation, at their discretion, to verify the extenuating circumstance while keeping the privacy of information disclosed by students a priority. Students should not be required to disclose specific details to educators regarding the circumstances resulting in their request for academic consideration. In cases where a student provides a confidential verification, no other documentation should be requested from the student.

The university is committed to responding to students in a fair and consistent manner; however, academic consideration may be individualized due to the nature of each student's specific circumstances, and differing program requirements. Faculty/School Offices can exercise discretion in responding to requests for academic consideration in extenuating circumstances, as appropriate, while working with educators to ensure that essential academic requirements are met.

The use of this policy and procedures to provide false or misleading information or to delay or avoid fulfilling academic requirements constitutes academic dishonesty, and students will be subject to the university's [Academic Integrity](#) Procedures.

Responsibilities:

Procedures for a range of extenuating circumstances, pertaining to the individuals and units below, are detailed in the procedures document that accompanies this policy.

In all cases, where responsibilities or procedures refer to 'student', the term "delegate" may be substituted for cases where an individual is acting with consent on behalf of the student.

The forms described in this policy can be accessed on the Student Wellness Services website, and Faculty / School websites.

Students (or a delegate) are responsible for the following:

- *Notify the university, specifically your instructors, supervisors or Faculty/School Office, depending on Faculty/School procedures, if you will be absent or are unable to complete any portion of course work, research or other program requirements or complete it on time, due to extenuating circumstances;*
- *Complete and submit a Self-Declaration of Brief Absence form or a Request for Academic Considerations for Extenuating Circumstances form*
- *Submit additional documentation as requested by your Faculty/School to the Faculty/School Office; in applicable circumstances this may include a Verification of Personal Health Condition form; Verification of Confidential Extenuating Circumstances form, a Request for Excused Absence for a Significant Event form, or other documentation as appropriate. If a Verification of Confidential Extenuating Circumstances form is submitted, students do not need to provide additional documentation,*
- *Locate your Faculty/School procedures and follow as directed. Communicate and work with your instructors and /or Faculty School Offices to determine academic considerations and to provide updates related to ongoing needs.*
- *Complete and/or submit academic work as per the consideration granted.*

Educators are responsible for the following

- *Familiarize themselves with this policy and related procedures, and Faculty/School protocols/processes;*
- *Recognize the university's 'good faith' approach when responding to requests for academic consideration;*
- *Accept documentation from students (or delegates) and/or Faculty/School offices. This includes Self-Declaration for Brief Absence forms (in place of a sick note), Request for Academic Considerations for Extenuating Circumstances form, and other documentation as provided by the student or your Faculty/School Office. Do not ask for any additional documentation from students who provide a Self-Declaration of Brief Absence or Verification of Confidential Extenuating Circumstances form.*
- *Communicate and work with student and Faculty/ School Office to determine reasonable academic considerations; and update on students' academic progress.*
- *Consult with Faculty/School Offices for clarification or facilitation of academic consideration arrangements, as required;*
- *Assure students in extenuating circumstances that reasonable academic consideration will be implemented, as appropriate, while ensuring essential academic requirements are met.*

Faculty/School offices:

- *Communicate this policy, related procedures, and Faculty/School-specific protocols annually to departments, programs, faculty members, course instructors, and students;*
- *Respond to inquiries from students about academic considerations;*
- *Accept Self Declaration of Brief Absence forms and Request for Academic Considerations for Extenuating Circumstances form and additional documentation as appropriate. This may include a Verification of Personal Health Condition form; Verification of Confidential Extenuating Circumstances form, a Request for Excused Absence for a Significant Event form; or other documentation as appropriate. Determine additional documentation required from student (or delegate) on a case-by-case basis. If a Verification of Confidential Extenuating Circumstances form (to be hyperlinked) is submitted, students do not need to provide additional documentation to the Faculty/School office.*
- *Provide only required documentation and information to educators and /or others working to support the student on a need-to-know basis.*
- *Work with faculty members, graduate supervisors, and instructors of record to respond to requests for academic consideration, and determine and implement considerations in extenuating circumstances as appropriate;*
- *Assure students in extenuating circumstances that reasonable academic consideration will be implemented, as appropriate, while ensuring essential academic requirements are met.*

Members of the Advisory Committee on Academic Accommodations:

- *Develop and review annually, guidelines for academic consideration that may be applied by faculty members and Faculty/School Offices across the university in the more frequently-occurring circumstances, recognizing that in many cases, individualized considerations will be required due to the specific circumstances and the student's unique situation;*
- *Act as a network of contacts for Student Wellness Services, the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Coordinator, and other staff/units on campus, as needed, relating to students' requests for academic consideration in extenuating circumstances, including facilitating responses to any Faculty/School questions or concerns;*
- *Bring forward emerging trends or issues relating to academic consideration for students in extenuating circumstances to support university-wide approaches.*

Student Wellness Services:

- *Develop and maintain the forms associated with the policy.*
- *Provide professional support and services to students in extenuating circumstances, and help facilitate requests for academic consideration in the best interests of the health and well-being of students.*
- *Complete Verification of Personal Health Condition and Verification of Confidential Extenuating Circumstances forms and recommendations for short term exam accommodations as appropriate.*

Human Rights Office

- *Provide professional support and service to students with extenuating circumstances related to human rights, and help facilitate requests for academic consideration in the best interests of the health and well-being of students.*
- *Determine when other human rights legislation and policies may supersede this policy and support students accordingly*
- *Complete Verification of Confidential Extenuating Circumstances forms as appropriate.*

Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Co-ordinator

- *Provide professional support and service to students with extenuating circumstances related to sexual violence, and help facilitate requests for academic consideration in the best interests of the health and well-being of students.*
- *Determine when the Policy on Sexual Violence Involving Queen’s University Students supersedes this policy and support students accordingly*
- *Complete Verification of Confidential Extenuating Circumstances forms as appropriate.*

Office of the Vice-Provost and Dean of Student Affairs:

- *Work with Faculty/School offices, and other units, as appropriate, to help facilitate requests for, and implementation of, academic consideration for students in extenuating circumstances, as needed;*

Contact Officer	<i>Jennifer Dods, Executive Director, Student Wellness Services</i>
Date for Next Review	<i>2018/April 18</i>
Related Policies, Procedures and Guidelines	<i>Part 1: Academic Consideration for Students in Extenuating Circumstances Procedure</i> <i>Part 2: Academic Consideration for Students Participating in Sanctioned Events or as Distinguished Guests</i>
Policies Superseded by This Policy	<i>n/a</i>