



CAMBRIDGE ACADEMY OF
DENTAL IMPLANTOLOGY

Notification of Extenuating Circumstances (NEC) Policy & Process

Cambridge Academy of Dental Implantology

The Academy endeavours to support student engagement and academic performance. It is assumed that students intend, and are able, to work to their optimum level throughout the duration of their studies, but that their performance may, on occasion, be affected adversely by circumstances beyond their control. The Notification of Extenuating Circumstances (NEC) policy and process provides a mechanism by which students can notify the Academy of extenuating circumstances and seek guidance and support about the implications of such circumstances for their study and assessment and how these might be addressed.

1. Requirements

1.1 This policy uses the following definitions:

a. **“Individual Requirements”** means students with identified and specified assessment support needs (including students with specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, ongoing physical or sensory impairments, medical or mental health conditions);

b. **“NEC”** means Notification of Extenuating Circumstances;

c. **“working days”** are defined as Monday to Friday and excludes weekends, UK Bank Holidays and all Academy closure days.

1.2 This policy and process applies to all students of the Academy

1. All reasonable efforts have been made in the design of this process to ensure it embodies the principles of fairness. The principles of fairness include:

a. giving reasons for actions taken and decisions made by the Academy;

b. avoiding potential bias by ensuring independent consideration at each stage of the process;

c. operating reasonable timescales for submissions to and responses from the Academy.

1.3 In implementing this policy and process the Academy will ensure that students with protected characteristics, as defined under the Equality Act 2010, are treated fairly and without discrimination.

1.4 Information provided by students under this policy and process will be treated confidentially. It will only be shared with those persons necessary to progress the application and / or ensure that appropriate support is provided in response to information provided on the application.

1.5 The Board of Examiners needs to be able to take into account all circumstances affecting a student. It will therefore be able to review the profile of NECs submitted by a student during the current or previous academic year(s).

1.6 A third party, including a spouse, cannot submit an NEC form on a student’s behalf unless written consent is received from the student. Where consent is provided to, and accepted by, the Academy

all communications relating to this policy and process will be made through the nominated individual only.

1.7 This policy and process refers to aspects of the structure and staffing of the Academy. It is recognised that there may be some variation in structures and nomenclature across the Academy. It is therefore implicit that those of appropriate seniority and experience will operate this policy and process at the appropriate equivalent level throughout the structure of the Academy and where different structures are in place. Similarly, where mention is made in this policy or process of action by the holders of specific posts, it is implicit that this activity may be delegated to an appropriate nominee, having sufficient experience and skills and being sufficiently senior to act on behalf of the designated post holder.

1.8 Information and guidance about this policy and process will be provided to students via the Student Handbook,

1.9 The Academy expects that students will be able to meet the timescales specified in this policy in communicating with the Academy, including by electronic means, unless affected by circumstances which themselves explain the delay.

1.10 The Academy will reasonably endeavour to comply with the timescales prescribed in the policy and process via its planning and operational processes. However, there may be circumstances in which the Academy cannot reasonably meet such time limits.

2. Responsibilities

Students should be enabled to make an informed decision. It is ultimately the student's responsibility to decide whether to attempt an assessment. If a student decides to attempt an assessment, then they are agreeing that they are fit to undertake the assessment and accepting that their performance will be judged on its merits.

2.1 Students are responsible for ensuring that they:

- a. read and understand this policy and process
- b. disclose, as soon as practically possible, any extenuating circumstances they would like taken into consideration where their academic performance has been, or may be, compromised;
- c. submit their request through the online Appeals Portal along with all appropriate documentary evidence which meets the standard of evidence required by the Academy (see appendix 1);
- d. clearly indicate which modules and related assessments have been or will be affected;
- e. are available, in the event that the NEC is upheld, to discuss with the Academy Director what actions may be required to allow them to perform to the best of their ability.

2.2 The Academy is responsible for ensuring that:

- a. all students are made aware of the NEC policy and process.
- b. all students are made aware of the primary contacts for seeking advice on this policy and process.
- c. a record is retained on individual student files of advice given and results of NEC applications

3. Definition of Extenuating Circumstances

The Academy employs a shared definition of extenuating circumstances to ensure fair and consistent application whilst recognising that the specificities of each case must be taken into consideration in order to support students effectively.

3.1 The Academy defines extenuating circumstances in this policy and process as circumstances which:

- a. may affect a student's ability to attempt one or more assessments
- b. are serious or significant;
- c. cannot be avoided;
- d. can be corroborated by independent evidence;
- e. occurred before the assessment event(s) or deadline(s) in question.

3.2 Where a student indicates at any stage of this policy and process that they have a disability (including but not limited to experience of an ongoing impairment, medical or mental health condition) the Academy will communicate with the student through the appropriate channels at the Academy (and may also include contact with third parties where this is deemed necessary due to the student's circumstances) and reasonable adjustments will be made (where appropriate to do so) to accommodate the student's needs at the Academy.

3.3 This policy and process allows for the circumstances of students with identified and specified assessment support needs (including students with specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, ongoing physical or sensory impairments, medical or mental health conditions) to be taken into account. Students with such needs – defined in this policy and process as Individual Requirements – should alert the Chief Examiner to their circumstances at an early stage. Students with pre-approved Individual Requirements are not required to use the NEC policy and process described in this document unless they wish to notify the Academy of the impact of specific and unforeseen circumstances that are related to their pre-declared support and access needs, or to notify the Academy of unrelated extenuating circumstances. The Academy recognises that the identification of circumstances which might be defined as Individual Requirements may occur at any stage of a student's studies.

3.4 It is also recognised that some students will have extenuating circumstances that have a prolonged and / or fluctuating effect on their performance (e.g. enduring health conditions). In some cases, it may be more appropriate that these students' needs are addressed through "reasonable adjustments" in the context of the Equality Act 2010, requiring agreed access requirements that apply over a longer timescale.

3.5 Extenuating circumstances are likely to differ in severity and will affect individuals variously. Factors to consider in the operation of this policy and process include:

- a. the nature of the extenuating circumstances and the likely duration of their impact;
- b. the extent of learning that the student has missed during the module(s);
- c. the student's knowledge about the effect of their situation on any preparation for forthcoming assessment tasks;
- d. the impact of any delay in assessment in one or more module(s) on work in other modules;
- e. any implications for the timing of progression or graduation;
- f. the final date by which coursework will need to be submitted in order for it to be considered by the Board of Examiners.

4. Timings

If the student has not attempted the assessment, then they should disclose extenuating circumstances through the NEC policy and process. If the student has attempted the assessment, then they should disclose extenuating circumstances through the Academic Appeals policy and process.

4.1 A student may notify the Academy of extenuating circumstances at any time of the academic year (including outside term time). Where the circumstances are likely to affect assessment, or have already done so, the timing of the notification is important.

4.2 Where the notification is made before an assessment event or submission date, and the NEC is upheld, the Academy will work with the student to determine the support that they might require to be able to perform at their optimal level.

4.3 Whilst an application for an extension is under consideration, a student should not assume that it will be granted. Where an NEC is submitted immediately before a coursework deadline the student should seek advice from the Chief Examiner.

4.4 Where the notification is made after an assessment event or submission deadline, and the student has not attempted or submitted the assessment, extensions will be considered only if the student notifies the Academy of their circumstances within five working days of the assessment event or submission deadline, and will not be permitted unless the circumstances themselves explain the delay in notification to the Academy's satisfaction.

4.5 Where the notification is made later than five working days after an assessment event or submission date, and the student has not attempted or submitted the assessment, and the circumstances themselves explain to the Academy's satisfaction the delay in notification, the Academy may allow the student to be assessed at the next most appropriate opportunity. Such a decision by the Academy must be ratified by the Board of Examiners.

4.6 If a student discloses extenuating circumstances after the relevant Board of Examiners meeting, and / or cites unanticipated impaired performance in an assessment which has been attempted, such as illness during an exam, the student's circumstances will be considered through the Academy's Academic Appeals policy and process). The student should be directed to the first stage of the Appeals process, that is, they should submit a Request for Reconsideration ("R4R"). Students can seek guidance on the R4R process from the Chief Examiner.

4.7 The implications of the NEC policy and process are that if a student believes their performance is going to be affected by circumstances beyond their control they need to make a judgement (supported wherever possible by Academy staff and appropriate evidence) about whether or not to attempt the assessment. Where they feel that their performance may be impeded, then a student might be advised not to submit or attend the assessment. — If a student decides to attempt an assessment in this context, they then accept

- (i) that they will be considered by the Academy to be fit to undertake the assessment and
- (ii) that their performance will be judged on its merits alongside those of their peers. A student cannot thereafter submit an NEC. Subsequent notification must be made through the R4R stage of the Appeals process.

5. Outcomes

It is not the policy of the Academy to adjust marks or grades where a submission by a student is upheld at any stage of this policy and process, but to provide circumstances in which a student can demonstrate their academic ability unhindered.

5.1 There are three possible outcomes of an NEC submission: upheld, partially upheld or not upheld.

5.2 Where an application for extenuating circumstances is upheld, the Academy will take one of the following actions:

a. provide a short extension to an assessment deadline where this is appropriate and practicable. Extension periods will be of five or ten working days only and a maximum of two extensions may be granted for an individual assessment. Should a student seek a third or further extension for the same individual assessment, the Board of Examiners should consider whether the student should be provided with the opportunity to be assessed at the next available opportunity or to vary their rate of study.

b. provide the opportunity for the student to be assessed at the next available assessment point, where an extension is not appropriate due to the type of assessment (e.g. examination) or the student believes their performance will be impeded if they submit or attend according to the assessment schedule. Where the next available opportunity is to be considered a first attempt the mark will be uncapped. The Academy will decide what constitutes the next available assessment point and the decision to offer a student a next opportunity attempt will need to be ratified by the Board of Examiners;

c. provide the student with the opportunity to vary their rate of study or take a leave of absence

5.2 A partially upheld outcome indicates that the student selected multiple assessments and the NEC was upheld for some but not all of these assessments.

6 The Board of Examiners

The Board of Examiners ratifies all outcomes of NEC submissions. The Board of Examiners will consider matters referred by the Chief Examiner and decisions to offer students assessment attempts at the next available opportunity as part of the overall academic decision-making process relating to the performance and progress of the students concerned.

6.1 The Board of Examiners will be presented with three lists of students from the NECP in the following format:

- a. A list of students whose NEC submissions are deemed not upheld on the basis of the evidence presented;
- b. A list of students whose NEC submissions are deemed upheld on the basis of the evidence presented;
- c. Individual cases (where extensions have been granted) which may give rise to further discussion.

6.2 The Board of Examiners will consider the NEC report as part of the overall academic decision-making process relating to the performance and progress of the students concerned.

6.3 Following the Board of Examiners' meeting, students will be able to access their results online via the Academy's online Learning Management System (LMS).

7. Standards of evidence required

All submissions made under this policy and process must be supported by independent, reliable and contemporaneous documentary evidence which substantiates claims of compromised academic performance or other inability to comply with assessment requirements, except in the circumstances specifically pertaining to self-certification.

7.1 The burden of proof lies with the student at all times.

7.2 The Academy reserves the right to take such steps as deemed necessary to verify evidence submitted without prior notification. Where the Academy is unable to authenticate the material to its satisfaction, the application may be unsuccessful.

1.3 Evidence submitted with an NEC application should be:

a. written by appropriately qualified professionals who are independent of the student. These include, for example suitably qualified medical practitioners and other professionals;

b. on headed paper, and signed and dated by the author. Evidence presented by email may be acceptable if the email has been sent by the author from the official domain name of the author's organisation. Extracts of numerous emails merged into a single document are not acceptable as evidence;

c. confirmation that the circumstances were witnessed on the relevant date and not reported retrospectively. In other words, a medical note which states that the student told the medical practitioner that the student was ill several months before the note was issued is not acceptable evidence;

d. in English. It is the student's responsibility to provide supporting documentation and any translation should be undertaken by an accredited translator (e.g. a member of the Association of Translation Companies [<http://www.atc.org.uk/en/>]);

e. original. Scanned copies of original documents will be accepted for upload to the online Appeals Portal. However, original hard copies may be requested at any time.

f. unaltered by the student. Documentation that has been amended for any reason will be deemed inadmissible by the Academy. If there is evidence that a student has fraudulently submitted documentation to the Academy the matter will be considered under the Student Code of Behaviour or the Academic Irregularities policy.

8. Types of extenuating circumstances considered

The following table provides guidance on circumstances which will be considered through this process and corresponding examples of appropriate evidence. The entries below are indicative and the list is not exhaustive. The Academy accepts that other circumstances may arise which are not detailed in this policy. In such cases, students should submit their NEC form, providing specific facts and with appropriate supporting evidence.

| Circumstance | Examples | Guidance |
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| <p>Short term injury or illness (less than 7 calendar days)</p> | <p>The Academy's self-certification form completed in full. This form is completed online and is available from the course website.</p> <p>Letters from doctors stating that the student informed them that they were unwell at a point in the past and which do not make a medical diagnosis will not be accepted.</p> | <p>Self-certification is permitted in the following circumstances: where a student contracts a self-limiting illness up to seven calendar days before an examination, individual presentation, or other assessment under timed or other assessment conditions, and has not attempted the assessment or presented themselves at the assessment venue.</p> <p>Self-certification will not be accepted for coursework submissions.</p> <p>Self-certification must be made using the Academy's form. Before self-certifying, students are advised to consider how they will manage an additional assessment and associated workload during the next assessment opportunity.</p> <p>Self-certification will be accepted in situations where there is a sudden deterioration in a long-standing medical condition or disability for which the student already has Individual Requirements in place.</p> |
| <p>Illness or injury (over 7 calendar days)</p> | <p>An original medical certificate which must be a confirmed diagnosis by a registered medical practitioner and be specific about the nature of the</p> | <p>This may include sudden deterioration in a long-standing medical condition or disability for which the student</p> |

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| | illness and the likely impact it has had upon the student. | has Individual Requirements in place. Minor illnesses such as colds, sore throats, headaches, digestive problems, etc. do not normally constitute extenuating circumstances. |
| Hospitalisation | An original medical certificate / letter from the relevant hospital confirming the nature and severity of the circumstances and the dates of hospitalisation. It would be helpful if this letter could also confirm the likely period of impact on the student's ability to undertake formal assessment and / or study | |
| Acute personal / emotional circumstances (over 7 calendar days) | An original medical certificate / letter from an appropriate medical professional or counsellor. | |
| Serious illness or death of a close family member or close friend | An original medical certificate / letter from an appropriate medical professional or a copy of a death certificate of a letter from the family doctor or a Coroner's Report. This may be accompanied, if necessary, by formal documentation confirming relationship with the deceased. A letter or note on headed paper confirming the date of the funeral, or a copy of a funeral service. | |
| Funeral not covered by the circumstances above | A letter or note on headed paper confirming the date of the funeral, or a copy of a funeral service. | |
| Crime victim | Where the impact of the crime has resulted in the student suffering serious injury, illness or hospitalisation lasting more than seven days, or has required other support (e.g. counselling or other mental health or wellbeing support), then the extenuating circumstances may fall within | |

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| | one of the other categories in this table. | |
| Legal or regulatory proceedings | Documentary evidence from the court or a solicitor | |
| Jury service | Documentary evidence from the court | |
| A material administrative error or a mistake / irregularity in the conduct of an assessment event | Appropriate documentary evidence such as a copy of an email which reports issues to Academy staff | Where there has been a material administrative error (e.g. the student has attempted the wrong exam paper), or irregularity (e.g. disruption from other students, or construction or landscaping), then the student should notify the invigilator during or immediately after the assessment event or Academy staff immediately after the event so that the issue can be documented. |

9 Type of circumstances usually not considered extenuating

The following table gives examples of circumstances which are **not** considered extenuating:

| Circumstance | Guidance |
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| Failure to read the examination timetable or assessment deadlines or assessment requirements properly | Students are responsible for ensuring they read and understand examination timetables, assessment deadlines and assessment requirements, seeking clarification as appropriate. |
| Pressure of assessments, assessment deadlines, and / or exam stress | Many students experience a degree of pressure and / or anxiety before and during assessments. These circumstances are not considered extenuating unless a medical diagnosis of illness has been made and evidence can be provided. Where a medical diagnosis has been made, the student can submit a Notification of Extenuating Circumstances application with appropriate evidence. |
| Deactivation as a result of non-payment of Academy fees or debts to the Academy | An NEC submission will not be considered where a student has lost access to their student account and other Academy facilities following the deactivation of their student record due to outstanding debts to the Academy. |
| Minor illnesses (e.g. coughs, colds, sore throats, etc.) | |
| Self-induced conditions (e.g. hangovers) | |
| Religious festivals | The Academy respects the rights and religious views of its students and will make every attempt to schedule exams avoiding holy days, but this is not always possible. Religious festivals do not therefore constitute extenuating circumstances. |
| Personal disruptions which could have been anticipated (e.g. holidays) | Students are expected to plan around assessment dates and deadlines. The Academy publishes the examination period and term dates in advance on the course website. |
| Accommodation disturbances (e.g. moving house, housemate disagreements) | Accommodation disturbances do not generally constitute extenuating circumstances. |
| Transport issues | Students are expected to plan their travel, including contingency time for moderate delays, to ensure timely arrival at the assessment venue (20 minutes before the published exam start time). However, significant, unavoidable delays or cancellations may constitute extenuating circumstances. |
| IT and / or computer failure / and / or failure to save work properly | Students are responsible for saving and backing up all electronic work. Loss or corruption of files |

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| | or failure to save work properly do not constitute extenuating circumstances |
| Assessment and deadline schedules | Deadlines and examinations scheduled close together are unlikely to constitute extenuating circumstances. Examination period dates are published in advance on the Learning Management System (LMS) |
| Reluctance to disclose circumstances for any reason (e.g. describing oneself as a “private person”) | <p>The Academy can only consider circumstances if they are disclosed in accordance with this policy. The Academy recognises there may be instances in which students are unwilling to disclose their circumstances online due to their highly sensitive nature. In such cases, it is important that the student discloses these circumstances to the Chief Examiner and that a confidential written record of any discussion is retained on the student’s file for reference (rather than the online system) should it be required in a Request for Reconsideration or Academic Appeal investigation.</p> <p>Where students fail to notify the Academy of circumstances which may impede their academic performance, they must be aware that this nondisclosure may affect any future application for Request for Reconsideration or Academic Appeal if the Academy deems that the late disclosure and the evidence provided could have previously been made available .</p> |
| Criminal conviction | Investigation of a criminal offence or subsequent sentence does not constitute extenuating circumstances. Court proceedings dates are often known well in advance, and it is expected that students involved in such proceedings plan their studies around relevant dates, unless the student is required to attend court on the day of an examination or assessment submission deadline. |

NEC Claims - Process flowchart

