Additional Guidance from the University for students reporting difficult Personal Extenuating Circumstances and seeking adjustments for their assessments

Where you believe that your study or ability to complete assessments is being adversely affected by difficult, unforeseen and unavoidable personal extenuating circumstances (PECs) and wish to have your circumstances considered for an appropriate adjustment e.g. extensions, exemptions, deferrals of your assessment etc. you should follow the Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PEC) procedure.

We always recommend that you:
1) Discuss the application with your tutor or Student Health & Wellbeing Advisor
2) Inform your school of circumstances as they happen,
3) Avoid applying after the assessment has taken place, if possible.

Please Note: The University PEC policy and procedure and Guidance on Submitting PECs should be read together with any programme specific PEC guidance and/or programme regulations highlighted in your Programme Handbook.

If you have a disability or long term illness that requires ongoing adjustments, you should contact the Student Wellbeing Service (SHWS), as soon as possible, for consideration of a Student Support Plan (SSP) rather than making multiple PEC submissions.

Contact details below:
• Specialist Learning Team: specialistlearning@newcastle.ac.uk
• Disability: disabilityadvisor@newcastle.ac.uk
• Mental Health: MentalHealthAdvisor@newcastle.ac.uk

To request an adjustment to your assessment under the PEC Policy and Procedure you should complete the online PEC form available via the Student Portal (S3P). Guidance and further information to help you complete the form can be found here.

The PEC form enables the School to consider what has happened to you, make an appropriate adjustment, in the first instance, and record any adjustment given.

Possible adjustments will vary depending on the time of year, but could include:

a. A short extension (up to 7 days) to the hand-in date for a piece of work under the self-certification rules (see below);
b. An extension to the hand-in date for a piece of work (not a self-certificate);
c. an exemption for a minor item of coursework;
d. a deferral of the assessment to the next normal occasion – generally a deferral to August;
e. permission to set aside attempts at assessments – to provide a first attempt;
f. permission to repeat tuition in residence; setting aside previous attempts (e.g. re-doing a Stage or Semester as if for the first time);
h. permission to proceed to the next Stage carrying fails;

Where an adjustment is not possible or inappropriate the PEC Committee can recommend support for discretion be used at a progress or award Board of Examiners, noting that this cannot result in marks being changed.

The PEC form must be fully completed and where possible submit evidence to verify your experience and its impact, except in specific self-certificated situation (see below). Your form should include clear details of study/assessment affected, including dates of impact. If the form is not fully complete the PEC Application may be rejected or returned for further information.
I. Your PEC form must provide clear details of the unforeseen and unavoidable personal circumstances that are or have significantly affected your performance in the assessment.

II. We need you to be as precise as possible about how your work was affected – e.g. lack of time to complete the project for the module, number of missed hours in the laboratory, unable to revise, etc.

III. Where appropriate the PEC form should indicate how long the difficulty/health issue lasted for.

IV. All modules/assessments that have been adversely affected must be indicated, showing which assessments were affected – e.g. 2nd essay, exam for module X.

V. You can submit additional statements/documents with your PEC form including tutor reports or SSP information, however, all information provided should be relevant and all important points detailed.

**Please Note:** You must avoid submitting documentary evidence of a personal nature belonging to another person/s (such as, a mother or fathers’ medical information), unless they have given written permission for you to do this and this consent is included with the documentation.

**Additional Information for the 2021/22 Academic Year**

The following are important points to be aware of when considering making a PEC application during the 2021/22 Academic Year:

1. On up to two occasions per Semester, with a maximum of four occasions in any academic year, you can submit a PEC form to request a short extension to an assignment/s deadline, without evidence of your minor illness/circumstances. **These are deemed self-certificates** and will be accepted on trust without medical evidence but cannot result in any adjustment other than an extension of up to 7 days for any assignment submission. **N.B.** if you have a number of assignment deadlines which are impacted by the same circumstance, during the same time period, you are able to submit these together in one PEC request which will be classed as one of your self-certificates.

2. Where your examinations have been arranged as a remote timed assessment (e.g. 24/48 hour take away paper), a submission of up to 30 minutes late is allowed, without penalty or requiring a PEC application, due to the challenge of remote assessment/IT difficulties.

3. In the event of a bereavement of a close family member, your focus will understandably be on your loss and those affected by it. Always let your Personal Tutor know what has happened, as they can provide a supporting statement and help you think about what you would like to share in your PEC submission. It can help us know what adjustments we can provide if we understand, when your loss occurred e.g. just before an exam, how close you were to the person who has died, etc.

4. You are advised not to seek to create evidence after the event, retrospective PECs will not normally be accepted.

5. Your school will acknowledge and record receipt of your PEC application. At this stage they may formally refer to or direct you to seek support from other University services. It is very important you engage with these support services, as they can help to reduce the impact the personal difficulties have had upon you.

6. You should be aware that the submission of multiple PECs could indicate that you are experiencing difficulties which may be better considered under the University’s **Support to Study** procedure. Where appropriate, schools may contact you to discuss additional support initiatives.

7. Please note detailed feedback on a PEC application is not given. However, your School will inform you promptly of any adjustment that has been approved, kept for the Board of
Examiner meeting or if your application was unsuccessful. Until such a confirmation is received, where you can it is best to continue to attend classes and submit work as required.

8. The Board of Examiners and its PEC Committee operate within University Regulations. Key documents are:

- The Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PEC) Policy & Procedures
- University Regulations, particularly examination conventions
- University’s Policy on Assessment and Feedback