

PARTNERS Academic Summer School Personal Extenuating Circumstances Procedure



This procedure applies to all Personal Extenuating Circumstances applications submitted before, during and after the PARTNERS Academic Summer School 2024.

Introduction

The purpose of the Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PEC) Committee is to consider claims by students of personal extenuating circumstances that have affected their performance in the assessments/examinations that are required for successful completion of the PARTNERS Academic Summer School (PASS), and to make the appropriate adjustments. The PEC Committee will make decisions to enable an alternative assessment and/or extensions to the typical assessment to be allocated to a student if, due to legitimate reasons too much teaching has been missed, or to allow Board of Assessors discretion alongside the normal assessment. It is anticipated that a full PEC Committee will only meet prior to every Board of Assessors if necessary.

The Committee

The membership of the PEC Committee will consist of four senior members of academic staff. To respect the confidential nature of much PEC business, membership will always be restricted to a small number of staff.

The Committee will be notified by the Secretary of the Board via e-mail if an application is submitted in order to enable adjustments at the time; that is, allow an alternative assessment to be completed or an extension to be granted. The Committee will review and approve this immediately.

The members of the Committee will meet immediately prior to the Board of Assessors if it is necessary to discuss any PEC forms that request Board of Assessors discretion alongside the normal assessment. The Committee will provide a discretion rating to forward to the Board of Assessors. This discretion rating should take in to account any adjustments already made, to avoid double-counting. For cases where a discretion rating is provided to the Board of Assessors, the Board of Assessors will then consider whether there is a case for applying discretion.

Scope of Procedure

This procedure is to be used only in relation to personal extenuating circumstances submitted in writing by students. Challenges to the academic judgement of the examiners on an assessment outcome are not permitted under the PEC Procedure or any other procedure. A PEC application should be used before the Board of Assessors reaches its decision on a student's results.

Students attending the PASS will be informed of the Personal Extenuating Circumstances procedure in the Student Handbook and introductory presentation. Students considering submitting a PEC application should complete the online form at the earliest opportunity.

The University does not permit the same matter to be the subject of a PEC application and other procedures at the same time so if a personal extenuating circumstance has already been taken into account as an eligibility criterion for the PARTNERS Programme supported entry route, it cannot be used again. The UK Recruitment Team should be consulted if there are concerns, by staff or students, about duplication of procedure.

Confidentiality

The PEC application shall be treated in confidence and be disclosed outside of the PEC committee and academic strand lead only if it is necessary to progress the application or is otherwise required by law. In such a case, the applicant will be notified in advance of the disclosure.

Grounds

- PEC applications can only be made on the following grounds:
 - a) Personal extenuating circumstances affecting attendance at the PASS.
 - b) Personal extenuating circumstances affecting completion of the required compulsory elements of the PASS.
- PEC claims made by the student should be supported by documentary evidence where possible, for example a doctor's note or evidence of hospital appointment.
- Owing to the partially online nature of PASS 2024 delivery, a PEC can be considered for unexpected IT issues or software failure issues which impact on their access to, or completion of, online learning and assessments.
- Requests for adjustments that relate to the following, are not generally accepted as the basis of a PEC application:
 - a) Instances where an adjustment has already been made.
 - b) Problems with students' own personal computers, printers or other technology where the student has not made contact with the PASS team or their academic strand lead to try and mitigate this issue first. The PASS team will endeavour where possible to support students with access to technology.
 - c) Issues with online timed assessments (such as 24/48 hour takeaway papers) which result in you submitting your assessment up to 30 minutes late. In these instances, an extension of up to 30 minutes will be granted without the need to submit a PEC
 - d) Retrospective report of illness or other extenuating circumstances, without good reason.
 - e) Ongoing medical conditions/disabilities including learning disabilities, or mental health conditions for which the adjustment requested is already named as reasonable.
 - f) Unspecified anxiety or examination stress.
 - g) Minor infection such as coughs, colds, headaches or hay fever, unless supported by specific medical evidence.
 - h) Distress relating to family pet.
 - i) Holidays, house moves, sporting or other social commitments.
 - j) Known employment or financial responsibilities.
 - k) Where the circumstances could have been avoided, for example by more effective time management.

How to apply

- Students are advised to complete the online PEC request form as soon as possible.
- A late PEC application shall only be accepted at the discretion of the PEC Committee if circumstances exist which make it reasonable for the student not to have applied within the normal timescales. Evidence of grounds of a late PEC application must be supplied by the student.

Procedure

- The student will receive an automatic response once they have submitted their PEC form to confirm receipt of this.
- The PASS team will discuss the specifics of the case with the academic strand lead to determine if a formal PEC is required.

- a) If the application is submitted in order to enable adjustments at the time; that is, allow an alternative assessment to be completed or an extension to be granted, an email shall be sent by the Secretary of the Board of Assessors to the Chair of the Board of Assessors and the other PEC Committee members to review and approve immediately.
- b) If the application is submitted in order to request Board of Assessors discretion alongside the normal assessment, the PEC Committee will meet and review the case immediately prior to the Board of Assessors and determine an appropriate outcome. If appropriate, the PEC Committee may seek additional information from the applicant or relevant staff.
- The UK Recruitment Team will notify the student of the outcome of the PEC application. However, applications received as part of a pre-Board of Assessors call will not generally receive individual feedback.

Outcome

- The PEC Committee is authorised to approve a number of adjustments in accordance with University procedures. That is:
 - a) Extensions within and beyond those permitted as part of the Late Submission of Assessed Work policy;
 - b) Exemptions from minor elements of compulsory work (maximum of 20% of the module in question);
 - c) Completion of an alternative task; and
 - d) To provide Board of Assessors with an assessment of the scope and severity of mitigating circumstances affecting a student, which have not been addressed by a-d above (i.e. a recommendation for discretion).
- The PEC Committee may also decline to support any adjustment or to recommend for Board of Assessors discretion.

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