

LAINE

THEATRE ARTS

Policies

Extenuating Circumstances Policy

EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

POLICY

The following policy applies to BA (Hons) Musical Theatre (3-year course), Level 6 Diploma in Professional Musical Theatre, BA (Hons) Musical Theatre (one-year top-up), Cert HE (Musical Theatre), and the 1-year Foundation Course in Musical Theatre.

PURPOSE

This policy sets out the College's approach to supporting students whose short-term, unforeseen circumstances impact their ability to complete assessments or meet academic deadlines. It aligns with the Student Support and Intervention Framework and is typically applied within Pathway A – Short-Term Support.

This policy reflects Office for Students (OfS) requirements relating to student outcomes, fairness, and continuation, and aligns with the OIA Good Practice Framework.

It should be read alongside the Fitness to Study Policy, Intermission Policy, and relevant academic regulations.

SCOPE

This policy applies where a student's ability to attend an assessment, submit coursework, or perform to their usual standard is affected by exceptional, short-term circumstances outside their control.

This policy applies only to assessment-related matters and does not address longer-term or ongoing difficulties. Where circumstances are ongoing or complex, the Student Support and Intervention Framework, Fitness to Study Policy, or Intermission Policy may apply. All personal data and sensitive information will be processed in accordance with UK GDPR and Data Protection legislation. Information will only be shared with those directly involved in decision-making or support.

PRINCIPLES

The College will apply this policy in line with the following principles: Adjustments granted under this policy will ensure that the student is not disadvantaged; however, they will not confer an unfair academic advantage over other students.

- Early intervention: Students will be supported at the earliest opportunity through the Student Support and Intervention Framework.
- Student-centred approach: Students will be actively involved in discussions and decisions wherever possible.
- Proportionality: Actions taken will reflect the level of concern and risk.
- Support before sanction: Every effort will be made to enable continuation through reasonable adjustments and support.
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: Decisions will take account of individual circumstances and protected characteristics as appropriate.
- Transparency: Students will be clearly informed of concerns, processes, and possible outcomes.
- Safety: The College retains a duty of care to the student and wider community.

Decisions will be applied consistently across all students and programmes. The College will take reasonable steps to ensure that similar circumstances are treated in comparable ways, while recognising the need to consider individual context.

DEFINITION OF EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

Extenuating circumstances are serious, exceptional, and unforeseen events outside the student's control that have a material and demonstrable impact on their ability to undertake or complete an assessment.

EXAMPLES OF EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

Extenuating circumstances are serious, exceptional, and unforeseen events outside the student's control that have a material and demonstrable impact on their ability to undertake or complete an assessment.

Acute illness or injury

Bereavement

Serious personal disruption

Court attendance

Victim of crime

Transport disruption

Religious observance

Exceptional personal circumstances

Circumstances Not Normally Accepted

The following would not normally be considered valid extenuating circumstances:

- Poor time management or workload pressure
- Minor illness not supported by evidence
- Technical issues that could reasonably have been avoided
- Misreading of assessment deadlines
- Holidays or social events not previously approved

The College retains discretion to consider exceptional cases where appropriate.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Evidence must be independent, verifiable, and relevant to the timing and impact of the assessment. The following provides examples of acceptable evidence for different types of extenuating circumstances:

MEDICAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- Medical certificate signed at the time of illness or incident
- Copies of prescriptions
- Certificates of attendance at a GP surgery or hospital

- Doctor's report or professional opinion
- Scanned doctor's notes (on headed paper or stamped)
- Screenshots/photos of medical appointments or hospital wristbands
- For illness of another person: medical evidence plus a student statement explaining the relationship and why care was required

BEREAVEMENT

- Death certificate

PERSONAL / DOMESTIC CIRCUMSTANCES

- Corroboration from a professional person (e.g. teacher, counsellor, support worker)

COURT ATTENDANCE / LEGAL MATTERS

- Official court or tribunal documentation

SPORTING REPRESENTATION

- Letter from the relevant sporting authority

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

- Confirmation from an appropriate religious authority, which may include confirmation of the student's religious affiliation, confirmation of their observance of specific practices, and/or confirmation that the timing of the assessment coincides with a period of religious observance.

VICTIM OF CRIME

- Police report or confirmation from an investigating authority

PRE-BOOKED HOLIDAY (WHERE APPLICABLE UNDER POLICY RULES)

- Documentary evidence confirming booking date and duration

TRANSPORT DISRUPTION

- Evidence of disruption (e.g. official travel reports, tickets, service notifications)

CITIZENSHIP / OFFICIAL DUTIES

- Evidence from the relevant organisation or authority

OTHER EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- A detailed student statement explaining:
 - the nature of the issue
 - why it was unforeseen
 - why alternative arrangements could not be made
- Supporting evidence from an appropriate independent source where possible

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Submit applications promptly, provide evidence, and make informed decisions about assessment submission.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications are considered as part of the Student Support and Intervention Framework triage process. As part of the Extenuating Circumstances Policy, students wishing to submit an application must do so by booking an appointment with the Student Support Lead via the VLE. During this appointment, guidance will be provided on the appropriate process and required evidence.

Timing of Applications

Applications should normally be submitted in advance of an assessment where possible. Retrospective applications will be accepted where circumstances were unforeseen and prevented prior notification, but must be submitted within the stated deadlines and supported by appropriate evidence.

In cases where a student is unable to attend or complete an assessment due to unforeseen circumstances occurring on the day of the assessment (including but not limited to illness, bereavement, or being a victim of crime), the student must complete the online extenuating circumstances form available on the VLE and

submit it via email to elliejohnson@laine-theatre-arts.co.uk within 48 hours of the assessment date.

The application will then be reviewed by the Student Support Team, and the outcome and any required actions will be communicated to the student via email within 5 working days.

Repeat Applications

Where a student submits multiple applications, the College may review the case holistically and determine whether longer-term support mechanisms (e.g. intermission or Fitness to Study) are more appropriate.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Evidence must be independent, verifiable, and relevant to the timing and impact of the assessment. The College reserves the right to request original documentation and to verify evidence where necessary. Self-certification or student statements alone will not normally be sufficient without independent corroboration, except in clearly justified exceptional cases.

DECISION-MAKING

Decisions are based on evidence, timing, and impact, and will be communicated in writing.

Decisions will be made by appropriately trained staff and will be based on:

- The credibility and relevance of evidence
- The timing of the circumstances relative to the assessment
- The extent of the impact on the student's performance
- Whether the student could reasonably have mitigated the impact

Decisions will be made on the balance of probabilities. The College will ensure that decision-making is subject to appropriate academic oversight, and that individuals involved have not had a direct role in teaching or assessing the student where this would present a conflict of interest.

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

All outcomes will specify:

- The assessment(s) affected
- The revised deadline or assessment point
- Any conditions attached to the decision

An **extension** may be granted where a short-term issue has impacted the student's ability to meet the original deadline, but where the student is still able to complete the assessment within an agreed revised timeframe.

A **deferral** may be granted where the student is unable to complete the assessment within the current assessment period due to more significant or ongoing circumstances, and the assessment is therefore postponed to a later date or reassessment period.

Alternative arrangements may be approved where a student is able to complete the assessment but requires reasonable adjustments to the format, timing, or conditions of assessment due to their circumstances.

An application may be **rejected** where there is insufficient evidence, where the circumstances are not considered to have had a material impact on the assessment, or where the request falls outside the scope of the Extenuating Circumstances Policy.

Where appropriate, outcomes may be supported by a short-term support plan. Where repeated applications or ongoing issues are identified, the case will be escalated through SSIF triage to Pathway B or D.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER POLICIES

Aligned with the Student Support and Intervention Framework, Fitness to Study Policy, and Intermission Policy.

APPEALS

Students may submit an appeal in accordance with the Academic Appeals Policy. Appeals may only be made on the following grounds:

- **Procedural irregularity** – where there is evidence that the correct procedures were not followed and this may have had a material impact on the decision.
- **New evidence** – where relevant evidence has become available that was not reasonably accessible at the time of the original decision and could have affected the outcome.
- **Material error in the decision-making process** – where there is evidence of a significant factual, administrative, or decision-making error that affected the outcome.

For clarity, dissatisfaction with the outcome alone, or disagreement with academic judgement, does not constitute grounds for appeal.

Appeals must be submitted and considered in accordance with the Academic Appeals Policy, which sets out the full procedure, timeframes, and stages of review. Appeals will be considered by individuals who were not involved in the original decision, ensuring independence and procedural fairness.

COMPLETION OF PROCEDURES (COP) AND OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT ADJUDICATOR (OIA) (BA STUDENTS ONLY)

Where a BA student has completed all internal procedures and remains dissatisfied with the final decision, a Completion of Procedures (COP) letter will be issued where appropriate. This letter confirms that the College's internal processes have been concluded and sets out the issues considered and the final decision reached.

Where eligible, receipt of a COP letter enables the student to submit a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA), an

independent body which reviews complaints from students in higher education in England and Wales.

Any referral to the OIA must be made within 12 months of the date of the COP letter. Further information about the OIA, including the complaint scheme and how to submit a complaint, is available at www.oiahe.org.uk.

The OIA will normally only review cases after all internal procedures have been completed. It does not re-hear cases or make academic judgements, but will consider whether the provider followed its procedures fairly and reasonably and whether any remedy is appropriate. Where students are not eligible for OIA review, the College will ensure that internal procedures remain fair, transparent, and consistent with good practice.

Accessibility and inclusivity

[Important for Equality Act and OfS]

The College will make reasonable adjustments to ensure that students can access this process, including adjustments for disability, language needs or other protected characteristics.

w section:

Link to academic standards (B1/B2)

The application of this policy will ensure that academic standards are maintained and that any adjustments do not compromise the integrity of assessment.

Monitoring and Review

The College will maintain a record of extenuating circumstances applications and outcomes. An annual analysis will be undertaken to identify trends, risks, and areas for improvement. A summary report will be provided to the Academic Board to support oversight of student outcomes and assessment fairness.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version:	2
Approved by:	Approved by Academic Board on 23rd April 2026 by email
Review Interval:	3 Years
Last Review Date:	April 2026
Next Review Date:	March 2029