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	Permission granted for students with permanent extensions as reasonable adjustments to apply for short extensions and "permanent extension" changed to "reasonable adjustment to a submission deadline" (section 8).		25/06/2026	Academic Board

If this document is required in an alternative format, please contact Futureworks on 0161 214 4600 or via email: info@futureworks.ac.uk

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Extenuating Circumstances Policy & Procedure

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Policy

1 Introduction and Scope

1.1 Futureworks recognises that during the course of your studies you may suffer from illness or misfortune that adversely affects your ability to complete an assessment requirement or engage with your programme in general. This policy, which applies to all Futureworks students, sets out Futureworks' arrangements for considering requests for additional consideration in such circumstances.

1.2 Extenuating circumstances provision is generally applied to short-term circumstances. If your circumstances have had, or are likely to have, a longer-term impact you may wish to consider other options, such as engaging with Student Services to create a Learning Support Plan, interrupting your studies or withdrawing from your programme (see the Withdrawal and Interruption to Studies Policy). If your circumstances are impacting your ability to engage with your programme and/or there are concerns about your wellbeing, Futureworks may apply its Fitness to Study Policy. Student Services will be able to advise you regarding the best route to take in your specific circumstances.

2 Definitions

2.1 This Policy covers reasonable adjustments, short extensions and extenuating circumstances. A reasonable adjustment, in the context of this Policy, is a temporary or one-time change to teaching, learning or assessment practices that enables a student with a disability, specific learning difficulty or injury to demonstrate their knowledge and skills on an equitable basis with their peers. A short extension is an extension to your assessment submission deadline of up to 5 working days, which can be granted based on unforeseen circumstances impacting your ability to complete your assessment on time or attend a live assessment. Extenuating circumstances are unforeseen circumstances which have had a significant impact on your performance or

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ability to study. A number of outcomes could be considered, including a long extension to your submission deadline or an opportunity to resubmit the assessment afresh.

3 Fairness and Confidentiality

3.1 Futureworks is committed to the principles of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in the consideration of all Extenuating Circumstances claims, ensuring that no student is disadvantaged on the basis of protected characteristics or personal circumstances. All applications will be handled with sensitivity, fairness and respect, and information disclosed will be treated as strictly confidential, shared only with relevant staff for the purpose of assessing the claim and in accordance with data protection legislation.

4 Fraudulent Applications

4.1 You are expected to provide accurate and truthful information to support your application; any submission of false, misleading or fraudulent evidence will be taken seriously and may result in the rejection of the claim and referral for disciplinary action under the Futureworks' Regulations for the Conduct of Students.

5 Advice and Support

5.1 You can contact Student Services by email at student.services@futureworks.ac.uk, by telephone on 0161 214 4610, or in person at the Student Advice Centre (3rd Floor) to ask for advice and support regarding your circumstances. Your Personal Tutor will also be able to signpost you to the most appropriate department or guidance and will be able to support you through the process of applying for extenuating circumstances or appealing a decision relating to this policy. If you would prefer to submit your extenuating circumstances application in a different format due to accessibility reasons, please contact Student Services.

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6 Reasonable Adjustments

6.1 A reasonable adjustment in the context of this policy is a temporary or one-time change to teaching, learning or assessment practices that enables a student with a disability, specific learning difficulty or injury to demonstrate their knowledge and skills on an equitable basis with their peers, without compromising the academic standards of the programme. Adjustments are tailored to individual needs, proportionate, and determined in line with equality legislation. You can apply for a reasonable adjustment for a specific assessment or module by contacting your Programme Leader, who will meet with you to discuss your needs and complete a form to capture the agreed adjustment. If you require a more permanent and/or wide-ranging approach you may wish to consider contacting Student Services to create a Learning Support Plan, which would enable permanent measures to be put in place for some or all types of assessment and for your learning experience in general. You can contact Student Services by email at student.services@futureworks.ac.uk, by telephone on 0161 214 4610, or in person at the Student Advice Centre (3rd Floor). See Appendix A for the Reasonable Adjustments Procedure.

6.2 Examples of reasonable adjustments to Futureworks assessments include, but are not limited to: for presentations, permitting pre-recorded submissions in place of live delivery, the use of assistive technology, provision of additional preparation time, or alternative formats such as smaller audiences; for essay-based assessments, provision of accessible formats, use of speech-to-text software, or modified feedback approaches; and for live or practical assessments (such as performances), adjustments to timing or duration, rest breaks, alternative assessment formats where appropriate, or adapted environments (e.g. lighting, noise levels). All adjustments will be designed to ensure inclusivity while maintaining the integrity and core requirements of the assessment.

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7 Short Extensions

7.1 A short extension is an extension to your assessment submission deadline of up to 5 working days.

7.2 Short extensions apply to short-term illness or unexpected events (flu, migraine, etc.). They do not cover ongoing conditions (where you must apply for reasonable adjustments or apply for formal extenuating circumstances).

7.3 Short extensions only apply to individual assessments and can be applied to any first attempt on for an assessment on a Futureworks programme. Short extensions cannot be applied to reassessments.

7.4 If you believe that your circumstances will prevent you from submitting your assessment on time or attending a live assessment (presentation, practical or exam) you are permitted to apply for a short extension.

7.5 You may not apply for more than one extension per assessment. Short extensions cannot be used for capstone modules e.g. Level 6 Major Project.

7.6 Applications will only be accepted from 48 hours before the submission deadline to 48 hours after the submission deadline, unless there are exceptional circumstances preventing an application from being submitted in this time frame.

7.7 Self-certification, which constitutes an application without the need for evidence, is permitted for up to 1 assessment submission semester. You may not use two self-certifications consecutively to cover a longer period.

7.8 You are not permitted to self-certify for live assessments (presentations, practicals or exams), or group assessments. If you wish to be granted an extension on a live assessment, group assessment or you have already self-certified for an assessment that semester you must provide satisfactory evidence for your extension to be granted.

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7.9 If evidence is required it should be uploaded with the application. If evidence is not immediately available you should email it to assessments@futureworks.ac.uk within 7 calendar days. Types of permissible evidence are listed below in the Evidence section; however, Futureworks understands that in some cases it may not be possible to obtain evidence.

7.10 To apply for a short extension you should complete the Extension Request Form, which can be found on your VLE programme page, along with guidance on the process.

7.11 If you require the form in an alternative format, or you need additional time to complete it and provide evidence due to a disability, please contact Student Services by email at student.services@futureworks.ac.uk, by telephone on 0161 214 4610, or in person at the Student Advice Centre (3rd Floor).

7.12 Applications cannot be made by a third-party unless you provide us with written consent.

7.13 The Extenuating Circumstances Panel, consisting of the Head of Student Services and the Academic Registrar, will consider your application and respond by email, either granting or rejecting your application and informing your Programme Leader if your request is granted. The Extenuating Circumstances Panel normally meets 3 times per week on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and the Secretary communicates Panel outcomes on the same day. If your request for a short extension is rejected the Panel will suggest options that may be appropriate to your situation, such as a Learning Support Plan or extenuating circumstances application, and signpost you to the support available.

7.14 For further guidance on the Short Extensions Procedure please see Appendix B or view your programme page on MyFutureworks. You can also contact your Programme Leader, Personal Tutor or Student Services by email at student.services@futureworks.ac.uk, by telephone on 0161 214 4610, or in person at the Student Advice Centre (3rd Floor).

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8 Permanent Reasonable Adjustments to Submission Deadlines

8.1 Students with specific disability support or learning difficulties can request permanent reasonable adjustments to submission deadlines ahead of the academic year through Student Services (see section 4.2). Such adjustments may extend deadlines for up to 5 working days and may relate to specific types of assessment or to all assessments. Any adjustments to submission deadlines will be decided on a case-by-case basis. If you already have a reasonable adjustment to a submission deadline of 5 working days in place you will still be permitted to apply for a short extension in addition to that.

9 Late Submissions without Agreed Extensions

9.1 Where coursework is submitted late and there are no approved short extension or extenuating circumstances it will be penalised in line with the following tariff:

9.1.1 Submission within 6 working days: a 10% reduction deducted from the overall marked score for each working* day late, down to the 40% pass mark and no further.

9.1.2 Submission that is late by 7 or more working days: submission refused, mark of 0.

9.1.3 Students who fail to submit work for assessments or attend live assessments shall be deemed to have failed the assessment components concerned and will be marked as 0.

9.2 A working day means a day when the Futureworks facilities are open. For example, if a submission deadline falls the day before a holiday or other time when facilities are closed, the late submission deadline will be 7 working days after the facilities re-open.

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10 Formal Application for Extenuating Circumstances

10.1 If your circumstances cannot be mitigated by a short extension (see section 7) you may make a formal application for Extenuating Circumstances.

10.2 An Extenuating Circumstances application should only be made if your circumstances have had a significant impact on your performance or ability to study.

10.3 You are responsible for submitting your own requests for consideration of extenuating circumstances. As such, you should familiarise yourself with the types of evidence accepted and with the procedure for submitting an application.

10.4 You can make an extenuating circumstances application by completing the Extenuating Circumstances Form on your MyFutureworks (VLE) programme page. You should upload any relevant evidence prior to the published deadlines or within 7 calendar days, whichever is sooner. You can find the deadlines in your Student Handbook or on your MyFutureworks (VLE) programme page. If you cannot submit evidence by published deadlines you must submit details of the extenuating circumstances with an indication that evidence will be submitted within 7 calendar days.

10.5 If you require the form in an alternative format, or you need additional time to complete it and provide evidence due to a disability, please contact Student Services by email at student.services@futureworks.ac.uk, by telephone on 0161 214 4610, or in person at the Student Advice Centre (3rd Floor).

10.6 Applications cannot be made by a third-party unless you provide us with written consent.

10.7 Not all difficult or distressing events will constitute extenuating circumstances; there must be a demonstrable adverse effect on your academic performance, which may take several forms:

10.7.1 You are/were unable to submit the required assessment task by a deadline or attend a live assessment.

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10.7.2 An event or circumstance may have caused you to underperform in an assessment, either in the preparation for the assessment, or on the day (i.e., whilst completing a piece of coursework or undertaking revision and/or attending a live assessment).

10.8 Applications for extenuating circumstances can be submitted up to a maximum of 4 weeks in advance of an assessment deadline – they must still demonstrate how they meet the 'Unexpected' and 'Unpreventable' criteria.

10.9 If you are unsure if your circumstances meet the criteria for an extenuating circumstances application you can contact Student Services for advice and support by email at student.services@futureworks.ac.uk, by telephone on 0161 214 4610, or in person at the Student Advice Centre (3rd Floor).

11 Late Formal Applications for Extenuating Circumstances

11.1 If a request is made as a result of circumstances that have arisen on the day of the deadline or live assessment. you must submit your extenuating circumstances application by the published extenuating circumstances application deadline, which can be found in your Student Handbook or on your MyFutureworks (VLE) programme page. This includes where assessments have been started but cannot be completed as a result of unforeseen circumstances.

11.2 Applications for extenuating circumstances submitted after the published deadline or live assessment date will not be considered without a credible and compelling explanation as to why the circumstances were not known in advance or why you were unable to submit an application prior to the published date. This could include, but is not limited to, periods of hospitalisation.

11.3 Not knowing about the process or only being concerned about the impact on your performance after seeing your results, would not normally count as good reasons for submitting a late application. But Futureworks will consider each case on its individual facts. If the request is made very late Futureworks may be limited in terms of the actions that can be taken.

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Futureworks reserves the right to reject applications for extenuating circumstances if they are submitted after published deadlines without good cause.

12 Number of Applications

12.1 You cannot submit the same individual circumstance as a request for Extenuating Circumstances more than once unless you can show that the circumstance has been exacerbated in some way, or the effects have lasted longer than expected. When completing the Extenuating Circumstances form you should ensure that you list all modules affected as they will not automatically be included in your request.

13 Criteria

13.1 For a claim to be accepted, you must be able to demonstrate that extenuating circumstances are ALL of the following:

13.1.1 Significant - The event or circumstances must have had a serious impact on your studies.

13.1.2 Unexpected - You must usually have had no prior knowledge that a particular event or circumstance would occur.

13.1.3 Unpreventable - There must have been no reasonable steps that you could have taken to prevent the event or circumstance from occurring.

13.1.4 Relevant - You must be able to link the event or circumstance, and its impact, on the period for which the application is being made.

13.1.5 Evidence - An application for extenuating circumstances must meet the usual requirements for independent documentary evidence (see section 13).

13.2 Extenuating circumstances normally considered with evidence include:

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13.2.1 Serious personal illness or personal injury, or a significant change or deterioration in a long-term condition.

13.2.2 Victim of crime (usually with police crime number)

13.2.3 Jury service

13.2.4 Involvement in a criminal case/witness

13.2.5 Failure, or inaccessibility, of Futureworks provided equipment

13.2.6 Failure in the provision of reasonable adjustments

13.3 Examples of circumstance that do not require further evidence at application point:

13.3.1 The death of someone close to you e.g., parent, grandparent, guardian, partner, sibling, child. – this document is not always available immediately so will be confirmed after application

13.3.2 Confirmed Carer Status

13.3.3 Confirmed G09 indicator

13.4 Extenuating circumstances that MAY be considered with evidence include:

13.4.1 Personal problems/trauma/family crisis/domestic issues/unexpected issues with childcare provision.

13.4.2 Illness of a close family member.

13.4.3 Planned medical operation (if advance notice is provided).

13.4.4 Planned hospital tests (if advance notice is provided).

13.4.5 Unforeseen consequences of disability which have not been mitigated by agreed reasonable adjustments or permanent extensions.

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13.4.6 Unforeseen accommodation issues, outside of the student's control (this would not include house moves caused due to the end of a lease).

13.5 Circumstances NOT normally considered include:

13.5.1 Events which you could be reasonably expected to manage, for example:

13.5.2 Issues due to time mismanagement

13.5.3 Lost (electronic) coursework that is not backed up due to computer or hardware failure

13.5.4 Domestic events like house moves, holidays or family celebrations

13.5.5 General pressures of multiple deadlines

13.5.6 Traffic difficulties

13.5.7 Illness that you did not seek medical advice for at the time (or do not have evidence they sought advice for).

13.5.8 Pregnancy - (Excluding illness, associated medical appointments and proximity to due date).

13.5.9 General examination nerves (where no diagnosis of a mental health condition has been received).

13.5.10 Mistaking a deadline, misreading the examination timetable/required assessment task deadline, or submitting the wrong required assessment task in error.

13.5.11 Paid employment (for non-apprentices) resulting in time management issues

13.5.12 Common cold or other minor short-term illness

13.6 Ongoing extenuating circumstances and long-term health conditions

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13.6.1 You will not normally be awarded extenuating circumstances for known or ongoing circumstances unless there are events beyond your control that prevent them from accessing support or there is a change in these circumstances. You will need to provide evidence to support this.

14 Supporting Evidence

14.1 Applications for extenuating circumstances will not normally be considered unless they are supported by independent documentary evidence. The evidence you submit should help you to demonstrate the impact your circumstances have had on your academic performance.

14.2 Evidence must be

14.2.1 Independent evidence from a third party who knows you in a professional capacity (GP, police, hospital, funeral director, counsellor).

Or

14.2.2 Supporting information/documentation that you receive when being supported by Student Services can be used to support an application; for example, an appointment confirmation email with the Student Welfare Officer.

14.3 All evidence should

14.3.1 consist of clear photographs or scans of documents

14.3.2 be in written form

14.3.3 be identifiable as belonging to you e.g. must clearly state your name

14.3.4 confirm who is providing the Evidence (person or organisation). e.g: Letter-headed correspondence (ideally be signed by an appropriate third party)

14.3.5 include date of evidence

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14.3.6 include date and duration of issue/incident (if applicable).

14.3.7 where possible state the impact of the issue

14.3.8 be written in English - it is your responsibility to provide an independent translation where appropriate

14.4 Fit Notes should include the second page that includes your name confirmation and address. NHS APP – both pages should be included showing your details. The evidence can be redacted if the appropriate information is still visible.

14.5 In certain circumstances School staff can support the application with an email to you and this should be attached as evidence. For example:

14.5.1 Failure/Availability of Specialist Equipment - academic staff can support applications where it is accepted that the situation is beyond your control; for example, the failure or the availability of specialist equipment required to meet the learning outcome.

14.5.2 Bereavement or serious health issue of a family member – your Personal Tutor may already have been made aware of these circumstances and may provide an email to you, which can be attached as evidence rather than requesting documentary evidence.

14.6 Evidence that will NOT be accepted:

14.6.1 Photographs of non-documentary Evidence – for example:

14.6.2 Incidents (such as car accidents).

14.6.3 People or body parts/injuries and illness

14.6.4 Photographs of COVID lateral flow test

14.6.5 Assignment briefs

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14.7 Personal information about third parties; for example, the illness of a family member should not be submitted to Futureworks unless necessary. If your extenuating circumstances relate to someone close to you the information needed is the impact of these circumstances rather than the details of those circumstances. By disclosing data relating to a third party to evidence your extenuating circumstances application, you are confirming that you have the consent of the third party to do so.

14.8 To authenticate evidence and information supplied Futureworks may make further checks or require further evidence or information from you. The manipulation and alteration of documentation used to evidence extenuating circumstances may result in disciplinary action in line with the Regulations for the Conduct of Students.

15 Awaiting an Extenuating Circumstances Application Decision

15.1 If you are awaiting the outcome of your extenuating circumstances application should continue with your coursework and make the required assessment task submission by the original deadline (or as soon as possible after this). If the extenuating circumstances application is declined this task submission will count.

16 Decision

16.1 Applications will be considered by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel, consisting of the Head of Student Services and Academic Registrar or delegated authority, and decisions will be communicated to you by the Secretary within 14 calendar days of your Extenuating Circumstances application. If, in exceptional circumstances, this time frame needs to be extended the Extenuating Circumstances Panel will let you know in writing and confirm when you should expect to receive an outcome.

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16.2 Each application will be considered to ensure it meets all of the criteria detailed in the section 13 of this policy. The decision as to whether the extenuating circumstances application has been granted or rejected can be taken without academic judgement being applied.

16.3 If the application is rejected you will be informed of this decision immediately after the Panel meeting by email and signposted to alternative options and support. If the application has been granted the Extenuating Circumstances Panel may need to consult with your Programme Leader if academic judgement is needed to decide the best course of action.

16.4 Any course of action agreed will aim to provide you with a fair opportunity to show what you are capable of. The Panel and your Programme Leader will take into consideration your specific circumstances, ensuring that you are not disadvantaged.

16.5 Should the consultation with your Programme Leader and consideration of your circumstances mean that the time frame exceeds 14 days you will be notified. The Extenuating Circumstances Panel will then confirm the proposed course of action by email to you and your Programme Leader, but the final decision will be made at the relevant assessment board and following the assessment board being conducted the decision will be confirmed to you in writing.

16.6 The Head of Student Services will prepare a report from the Extenuating Circumstances Panel, which will include recommendations regarding extenuating circumstances cases. These recommendations may require an element of academic judgment; for example, to consider whether marks are out of line with your normal performance, or whether alternative assessments would be suitable.

17 Circumstances with an impact on all students or groups of students

17.1 Sometimes there will be unanticipated circumstances which have an impact on all students, or on a specific group of students. Where this is the case, Futureworks will take action to apply mitigation and will let students know what this will be. There is no need for you to make an application under this Policy for this action to be taken. If necessary, adjustments will be made

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to teaching and learning arrangements and consideration will be given to mitigate the impact on assessment; for example, by assessing only the content taught, changing the method of assessment, or delaying assessment submission until later in the year. It might also include taking the circumstances into account when making decisions about a student's progression or degree classification, provided that can be done in a way that protects academic standards. Futureworks will ensure that actions and timelines are clearly communicated in such cases. For more information see our Student Protection Policy.

17.2 If you consider that the impact of such circumstances affects you severely and is not mitigated by the action taken by Futureworks, you should make an extenuating circumstances application in the usual way.

18 Assessment Board

18.1 Extenuating Circumstances recommendations will be presented to the assessment board, which will make decisions in line with the Regulations for Validated Awards of the Open University. The assessment board will decide whether to:

18.1.1 provide a student with the opportunity to take the affected assessment(s) as if for the first time, allowing them to be given the full marks achieved for the examination or assessment, rather than imposing a cap (if the student has already attempted the assessment, the highest mark will stand);

18.1.2 waive late submission penalties;

18.1.3 determine that there is sufficient evidence of the achievement of the intended learning outcomes from other pieces of assessment in the module(s) for an overall mark to be derived;

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18.1.4 note the accepted extenuation for the module(s) and recommend that it is taken into account at the point of award and classification.

18.2 The assessment board, depending on the circumstances, may exercise discretion in deciding on the particular form any reassessment should take. For further information regarding possible options, please see the Regulations for Validated Awards of the Open University.

18.3 Both you and your Programme Leader will be informed of the assessment board decision by email following the meeting. The Programme Leader will then contact you to provide advice and support regarding the decision.

19 Appealing a Decision

19.1 If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of an Extension Request or Extenuating Circumstance Application you may make an appeal in line with the Academic Appeals Policy & Procedure. The grounds for this type of academic appeal may include a claim that insufficient weight has been given to extenuating circumstances or that the procedure has not been properly followed. For extension requests you may appeal immediately on receipt of the outcome; however, for extenuating circumstances applications you may only appeal once the assessment board has made its decision. If your formal academic appeal is rejected Futureworks will issue you with a Completion of Procedures Letter and advice on next steps.

20 Group Assessments

20.1 Futureworks will consider extension requests and extenuating circumstances applications for group assessments on their individual merits. Outcomes will vary depending on the nature of the assessment and whether the circumstances have affected the whole group or an individual student within the group. If the circumstances have affected the whole group an extension to the submission deadline or a deferral of a live assessment for all members of the group may be granted. If circumstances have only affected an individual student within the group, the decision

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may be made for the student to complete an individual assignment in place of the groupwork; however, this will depend on the assessment. If an individual assessment is set it may be necessary to adjust the group assessment for the other members of the group. The circumstances of the individual student will be kept confidential from other students in the group.

21 Fee & Visa Implications

21.1 If your extenuating circumstances application is granted and the outcome is that you may re-sit the assessment as a first attempt there will be no additional fee. If, however, the outcome is that you will need to repeat credits with attendance the appropriate fee for those credits will be charged in line with the Tuition Fee Policy. If you are an international student studying on a Student Route visa and you need to extend the duration of your course you will need to apply to extend your stay. Students studying on a Student Visa should be aware of the maximum duration permitted for them to complete their course, which is based on Home Office guidance.

22 Data & Reporting

22.1 Futureworks keeps a record of all short extension requests and extenuating circumstances applications, together with their outcomes, on a secure SharePoint. This information is held is only accessible by Panel members. Panel members may refer to and take into account your previous applications when making their decision. If you make multiple applications this may indicate that you need to be provided with increased advice and support. In such cases you will be invited to a support meeting with the Student Welfare Officer to discuss your needs. Programme Leaders will only be informed of successful extension requests and extenuating circumstances applications.

22.2 Temporary and one-off reasonable adjustments agreed with the Programme Leader are logged at School level so that staff can view previous decisions. This data is also used in training Programme Leaders to ensure a consistent approach.

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22.3 A summary annual report using anonymised data for all procedures sitting under this Policy is submitted to the Academic Board for monitoring purposes.

23 Related Policies & Procedures

23.1 Regulations for Validated Awards of the Open University

23.2 Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure

23.3 Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure

23.4 Student Complaints Policy and Procedure

23.5 Assessment Policy and Procedure

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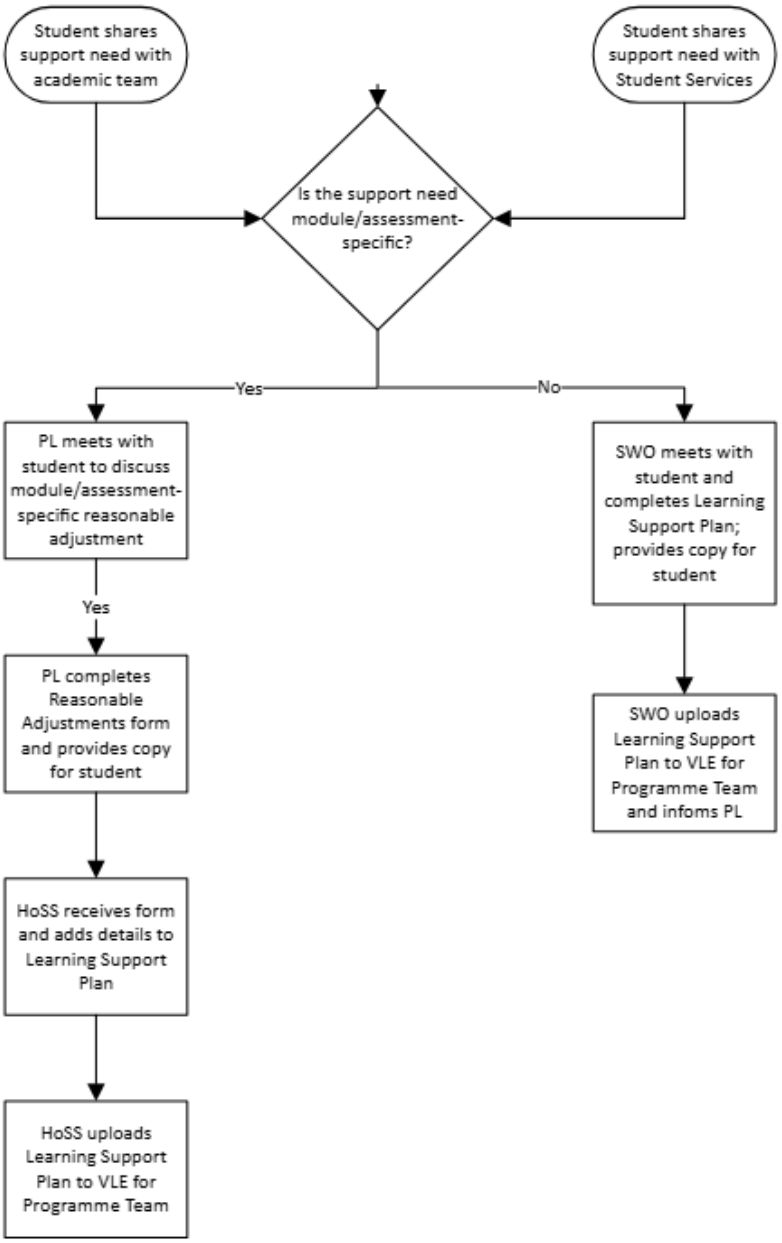
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Appendix A – Reasonable Adjustments Procedure

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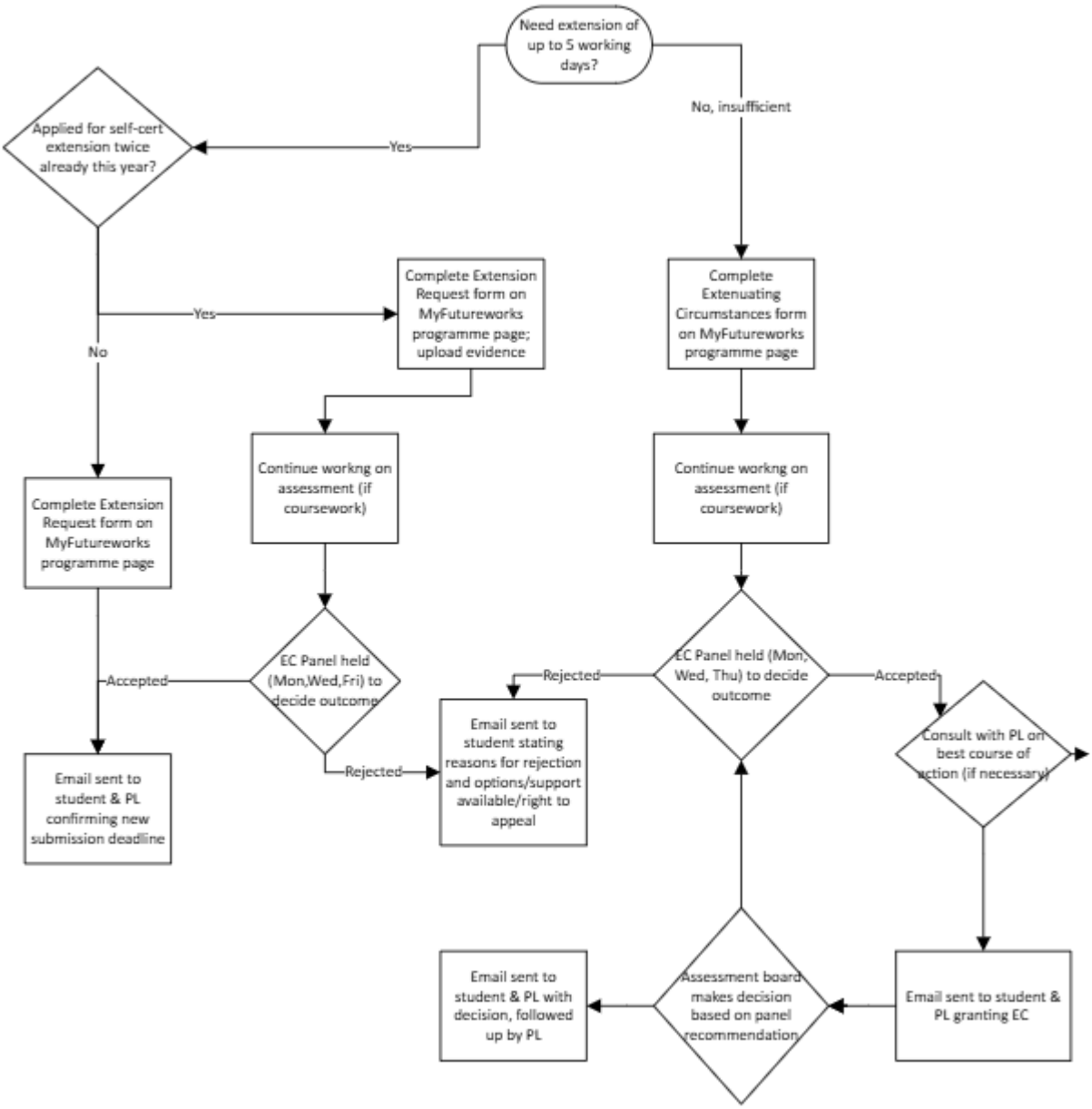


Appendix B – Short Extension and Extenuating Circumstance Application Procedure

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