



Internal guidance on mitigating circumstances, extension, suspension of studies and withdrawal from EUAA Academy study programmes

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1. Purpose and scope

This Internal Guidance establishes the principles and procedures applicable when EUAA Academy ('Academy') students enrolled on a master's programme experience adverse circumstances that may have an impact on their studies. These circumstances may affect students' attendance at online or face-to-face lectures, their ability to commit the required amount of time to their studies, or their performance in assessment tasks.

This Internal Guidance aims to ensure the consistent application of rules governing requests for consideration of mitigating circumstances, extensions, suspension of studies, or withdrawal from the study programme.

As part of their acceptance into the programme, students are required to sign a student agreement acknowledging their commitment to engage in part-time studies, which typically require approximately 20 hours of study per week, largely through self-paced learning. In parallel, the nominating Member State confirms its support for the student's participation in the programme and undertakes to provide sufficient time to enable them to meet the programme requirements. Therefore, where requests for consideration of mitigating circumstances, extensions, suspension of studies, or withdrawal from the study programme are submitted on the grounds of an increase in workload, it must be demonstrated that the increase is unforeseeable and substantial.

The Academy reserves the right to decide on whether the adverse circumstances experienced by a student fall within the scope of this Internal Guidance.

Requests are granted or refused on a case-by-case basis. Decisions are taken by the relevant actors depending on the nature of the request. These may include the Registrar in consultation with the lecturer, the Student Affairs Standing Committee which makes recommendations to the Head of the Academy, or the Academic Board.

In so far as possible, requests should be submitted in advance of the lecture, assignment deadline, or assessment date. The Academy may request supporting documentation to substantiate the request.

The final decision as to whether to accept the request or not lies with the Academy.

2. Mitigating and extenuating circumstances

Mitigating and extenuating circumstances are unforeseeable and/or significant circumstances that may have an adverse effect on the student's academic performance.

Examples of such circumstances include, but are not limited to:

- crisis situations and *force majeure*;
- personal sickness or serious illness of a partner or close relative;
- childbirth or maternity;
- major life events, such as the loss of a partner or close relative;
- a sudden and unforeseeable increase in workload at the workplace;



- unforeseeable operational decisions, such as deployment to an alternative duty station or role.

Students may request that mitigating and extenuating circumstances be taken into account where those circumstances may affect their attendance at online or face-to-face lectures, their ability to meet assignment deadlines, or their performance in assessment tasks.

2.1. Procedure

In the event of adverse circumstances, the student must notify the training national contact point (TNCP) that they will be absent from lectures, unable to meet assignment deadlines, or participate in assessments. The TNCP should verify that the grounds supporting the request are valid before forwarding the request to the Registrar on registrar@euaa.europa.eu.

Requests are granted or refused by the Registrar, in consultation with the lecturer, on a case-by-case basis.

When the request is **accepted**, the following may apply.

- **Attendance:** The mitigating circumstances are taken into account during the calculation of attendance levels where the student does not meet the 100 % attendance threshold for face-to-face lectures and 80 % attendance overall.
- **Assignments:** The assignment submission deadline is extended. The length of the extension is decided in consultation with the lecturer and the Registrar.
- **Assessments:** The student is given a new assessment date. Where feasible, this falls before the start date of the following module.

The student is allowed to continue the programme; however, they will only be eligible for the exit award once they have met the attendance criteria and achieved the necessary learning outcomes.

In the event that the mitigating and extenuating circumstances are long-term (for example, due to health issues or maternity), the student may be required to join a subsequent cohort.

If the request is **not accepted**, the Academy informs the student of the decision and considers the student absent. The TNCP is kept informed throughout the process.

3. Requests for extensions

Students may request an extension of a deadline where they are unable to meet an assignment or assessment deadline. They may also request an extension of studies where they are unable to complete the capstone project¹ within the scheduled timeframe.

¹ See Internal guidance on the master's programme capstone project (IG-029).

3.1. Procedure

Where a student requests an extension of an assignment deadline or informs of an absence from lectures, they should include the lecturer in any correspondence relating to the request.

Where students are unable to submit the capstone project within the scheduled timeframe, they should apply for an extension of studies. To do so, they must submit a formal request in writing, co-signed by the TNCP, to the Registrar on registrar@euaa.europa.eu.

Extension of assignment deadlines

Requests for extension of assignment deadlines are granted or refused by the Registrar, in consultation with the lecturer, on a case-by-case basis.

Where the request is **accepted**, the length of the extension is determined by the lecturer and the Registrar. Where feasible, the extended deadline falls before the start date of the following module.

Extension of assessment deadlines

Requests for extension of assessment deadlines are granted or refused by the Registrar, in consultation with the lecturer, on a case-by-case basis.

Where the request is **accepted**, the extended deadline is determined by the lecturer and the Registrar. Under certain circumstances, the student may be required to join the subsequent cohort in order to complete the assessment under similar conditions to those of the original assessment.

Where a student has been granted an extension but fails to comply with the new deadline, the Academy reserves the right to penalise the student. This is determined on a case-by-case basis and may include a grade ceiling (i.e., no possibility of receiving a merit or distinction), or a failing grade.

Extension of studies

Requests for extension of studies are considered on a case-by-case basis by the Student Affairs Standing Committee, which then makes a recommendation to the Head of the Academy.

Where an extension is granted, the student is given a new deadline for the submission of the capstone project. Where the student has requested a short extension, it may be feasible for them to graduate with the same cohort. In such cases, the Registrar discusses with the supervisor whether the latter has sufficient time and agrees to grade the capstone project in time for the student to participate in the scheduled capstone defence.

Where the extension is longer or it is not feasible for the student to defend the capstone project with the same cohort, they join a subsequent cohort. The student may choose to follow the capstone project module again in order to liaise with their supervisor(s), who may be different from the one(s) assigned to them in the original cohort.

An extension of studies may also be granted to enable a student to retake a module which they have failed.

In exceptional circumstances, and on the recommendation of the Academic Board, students may be granted a further extension of up to two years to complete their studies.

Non-compliance with extensions

Where a student has been granted an extension but fails to comply with the new deadline, the Academy reserves the right to penalise the student. This is determined on a case-by-case basis and may include a grade ceiling (i.e., no possibility of receiving a merit or distinction), or a failing grade.

4. Suspension of studies

Students may request a one-year suspension of their studies. To do so, they must provide justified reasons and commit to rejoining a subsequent cohort. A suspension constitutes a complete break from studies, during which students are not expected to commit time to their studies, carry out research related to their studies, or contact their lecturers or supervisor(s).

4.1. Procedure

To apply for a suspension of studies, students must submit a formal request in writing, co-signed by the TNCP, to the [Office of the Registrar](#).

Requests for suspension of studies are considered on a case-by-case basis by the Student Affairs Standing Committee, which then makes a recommendation to the Head of the Academy.

Where the suspension is **granted**, the student retains access to the Academy portal and the content of modules they have completed. The student may also contact the Registrar to discuss any matters relative to the suspension. The suspension is granted for a maximum of one year to enable the student to join a subsequent cohort and resume their studies from the point of suspension.

5. Withdrawal from studies

A student may decide to withdraw from their studies at any time during the programme. Withdrawal should only be requested when none of the above solutions are possible.

5.1. Procedure

Students who are considering withdrawing from their studies should contact the Registrar by email on registrar@euaa.europa.eu. A meeting is then convened between the relevant actors (student, TNCP, Registrar and/or lecturer) to explore possible solutions. The Academy provides students with increased support and advice on how to address the underlying reasons for withdrawal.



Where no solution is identified and the student notifies the Academy of their decision to withdraw from their studies, they are encouraged to complete the module they are currently studying. The student records should indicate that the student has withdrawn from their studies. Where the student has achieved the required number of ECTS credits, they are awarded the relevant qualification to which they are entitled, i.e. a certificate or a diploma. Otherwise, students receive a certificate for the programme modules accredited as exit awards provided they have met the attendance criteria and achieved the learning outcomes.

Where a student has provided adequate justification for withdrawing from their studies, they may be able to re-enrol no later than two years after their withdrawal. Re-enrolment is considered on a case-by-case basis by the Student Affairs Standing Committee, which then makes a recommendation to the Head of the Academy. Where a student withdraws with no justification, they are not permitted to re-enrol on the programme.

6. Termination of studies

The Academy reserves the right to terminate a student's enrolment on a programme. Decisions on termination of studies are taken by the Academic Board.

A student's enrolment may be terminated where the student has remained inactive without explanation or justification for a period of two months and has failed to attend lectures or submit assignments.

Termination may also result from a serious violation of the [Code of Conduct for participants in training activities](#)² ('Code of Conduct'). In accordance with subsection 9.4 of the Code of Conduct, in serious cases and pending a final decision on the complaint, a student may be temporarily excluded from participating in the study programme, where there are justified reasons to believe that the safety or wellbeing of persons participating in training activities is jeopardised. Following the outcome of the investigation, the Academy may decide to terminate the student's enrolment on the programme. In addition, in accordance with subsection 9.6, the Academy reserves the right to refer instances of violations of the Code of Conduct to the individual's employing or contracting organisation, as necessary. Irrespective of the decision taken by the employing or contracting organisation as a consequence thereof, the Academy is to decide on the concerned individual's further participation in its training activities, including possible termination.

In the event of intentional academic misconduct, the Academy reserves the right to decide that a student may no longer participate in the Academy's training activities and terminate their studies³.

² Decision of the Executive Director No 76 of 30 May 2022 on the Code of Conduct for participants in the EUAA's training activities.

³ Standard operating procedure (SOP TD-005) on processing of academic misconduct reports.

7. Record keeping and data protection

Unless otherwise prescribed in applicable internal acts, records pertaining to the procedures described above are to be maintained by the Registrar. These records are confidential and may be used to identify repeated instances of non-compliance.

The Academy adheres to the applicable EU regulation governing data protection, namely Regulation (EU) 2018/1725⁴.

Students may contact the Agency's Data Protection Officer on dpo@euaa.europa.eu to lodge complaints or raise questions regarding the handling of their personal data.

Questions about these procedures may be addressed to the Registrar on registrar@euaa.europa.eu.

8. Dissemination and review

Relevant information from this Internal Guidance is to be published on the website of the Academy and the Academy portal and made available to all staff and students.

The Quality Assurance and Accreditation Sector is responsible for ensuring that all Academy employees, students, and learners are familiar with the content of this guidance, for developing and monitoring its implementation, and for reviewing and revising it, where appropriate.

9. Summary of changes

Version no.	Changes
01	New IG

⁴ Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC, (OJ L 295, 21.11.2018, p. 39).