

## **Completion of Training**

### **STP and HSST**

**Exceptional Extenuating Circumstances Policy 2019**



## Contents

	<b>Page</b>
1.0 Scope	3
2.0 Principles	3
3.0 Process	6
Appendix 1 Exceptional Extenuating Circumstances Guidance For trainees	8
Appendix 2 Exceptional Extenuating Circumstances Application Form	13

## 1.0 Scope

This policy applies to trainees on the Scientist Training Programme (STP) and Higher Specialist Scientific Training (HSST). It applies to direct entry and in service trainees across all funding routes e.g., HEE, private provider or employer.

This policy is available to trainees in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

This policy explains how to apply for additional time to complete your training if exceptional extenuating circumstances arise during your training.

This policy does not apply to your academic programme so you must follow the relevant University processes to apply for an extension with them.

This policy does not cover the final exit examinations for either programmes. Processes for these activities are detailed separately for each programme on the relevant areas of the school's website here:

<http://www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk/current-programmes-stp/nhs-scientist-training-programme/how-will-i-be-assessed/osfa>

<http://www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk/current-hsst/nhs-higher-specialist-scientific-training/the-hsst-handbook/exit-procedures-and-assessment>

Any decisions made will be agreed with the relevant education providers (employer and university where appropriate) and the organisations commissioning or contributing financially to the programme.

## 2.0 Principles

2.1 This policy is built around the following key principles:

- (i) All trainees on the STP and HSST are required to complete a variety of activities both within their work place and with a university within an agreed timescale in accordance with their relevant curriculum and assessment strategy for their training. Trainees must evidence that they have achieved the required standards for these activities in order to receive a certificate of completion from the National School of Healthcare Science (NSHCS).

- (ii) In the event of a significant incident or set of circumstances, not of the trainee's own making, which results in them not being able to complete all of the required activities, there is a process for the NSHCS to recommend additional time in which to complete the training.
- (iii) All recommendations for an extension of time are subject to agreement with both the host employer and the commissioning organisation funding the training. Occasionally this may also require agreement with the university depending on the circumstances. An extension of time may not automatically attract additional funding and will be dependent on individual circumstances.
- (iv) No trainee should gain an unfair advantage over other trainees through the exceptional extenuating circumstance process.
- (v) This policy ensures that the standards of the NSHCS awards are safeguarded, for the benefit of current and prospective trainees and employers and service users/patients.

2.2 Where circumstances beyond your control impact negatively on your ability to complete your training, you may apply for an extension of time due to exceptional extenuating circumstances (EEC). If approved, the School will normally recommend additional time to complete the required activities of the programme without penalty.

2.3 EEC may apply in one or more of the following circumstances:

- (i) Where severe circumstances prevent you from completing all of the required training activities including recording them on the e-portfolio.
- (ii) Where exceptional extenuating circumstances can be shown to have affected your performance in activities already undertaken within the training.

2.4 This policy does not apply if you have a disability or existing long term medical condition. This should be reported to the NSHCS at application stage, on enrolment, or as soon as possible thereafter, so that it can be recorded and appropriate arrangements to support you put in place. This policy does not apply to changes to programme completion as a result of maternity, paternity or parental leave as this is not considered an exceptional extenuating circumstance. In these cases changes to completion date should be managed under your local employer policy and any requirements for extension of training approved and agreed by the local commissioner. The NSHCS should be informed of any extension's resulting from maternity, paternity or parental leave requirements so that you can be considered for completion at the appropriate time.

2.5 Claims for EEC will not normally be approved if they arise from matters within your control, including but not limited to:

- (i) Failure to organise your time appropriately;
- (ii) Your own negligence or carelessness;
- (iii) Circumstances for which you have had ample opportunity to plan;
- (iv) Circumstances which you did not disclose at the appropriate time (unless unable to do so due to circumstance e.g. impaired mental capacity).
- (v) Any failure of computer-related equipment.

Circumstances that are most likely to be considered are outlined in appendix 1.

2.6 All claims for EEC must be submitted on the form in appendix 2. You must fully complete the form and provide evidence. Claims normally can be submitted at any point in the final year but not any later than one month before the agreed completion date. In exceptional cases a claim may be accepted later, provided there is a good reason why it could not be submitted earlier. New applications received after the published completion deadline will not be considered. In all cases it is your responsibility to submit the form by the specified deadline.

You should refer to the NSHCS STP Requirements for Completion policy for details of completion timescales or to the HSST completion requirements available on the School's website

<http://www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk/current-programmes-stp/nhs-scientist-training-programme/stp-completion>

<http://www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk/current-hsst/nhs-higher-specialist-scientific-training/the-hsst-handbook/exit-criteria-for-certification>

2.7 All applications for EEC must be accompanied by a statement or evidence from the current host employer confirming support for any additional training or assessments required. An extension of time may have financial implications so the relevant commissioner for the training will be notified of the application before the School makes a decision whether to grant an extension. You and your training department may wish to contact your local commissioner before you apply to find out what, if any, financial options may be available to you.

- 2.8 All evidence must be provided by a professional who has specialist knowledge of the circumstance, this could be a GP report and/or supporting letter from your employer as an example
- 2.9 If your application is unsuccessful, the activities already submitted and completed will be treated as your final submission, and you will then be subject to the consequences that ordinarily apply to incomplete submission.
- 2.10 If your application is successful, the School will advise you of the new deadline by which you will have to complete. The panel may recommend extension normally up to a maximum of 3 months, with longer periods only in cases of prolonged sickness or other unavoidable absence. You may then complete the remaining activities at any time during the extension period.
- 2.11 You have the right to appeal against a decision within 10 working days of being notified of the decision. The appeal will be considered by the Head of School and the HEE Post Graduate Dean with responsibility for Healthcare Science, or their nominated representative(s), whose decision will be final.

### **3.0 Process**

- 3.1 In order to submit an application for EEC, you must complete form EEC1 (appendix 2). The claim can be submitted at any point in the final year but not later than one month before the agreed completion date. The application must be supported by appropriate evidence and should indicate the length of extension requested. Refer to appendix 1 for details.
- 3.2 It may be necessary to submit an application whilst waiting for the supporting evidence to become available. If the evidence is not yet available, EEC1 must still be submitted by the appropriate time and the evidence then submitted as soon as it becomes available. The application will not be submitted for review/decision until all appropriate evidence has been provided.
- 3.3 Applications are forwarded to the NSHCS training management panel for consideration. The panel are required to make a decision on each application within 5 working days of its meeting. It is the responsibility of the training management panel to ensure that any application approved is appropriate and that there is sufficient, relevant evidence.
- 3.4 It is the responsibility of the Chair of the panel to notify you of the decision.

- 3.5 You will not normally be permitted to submit a claim for the same reason more than once. If you request a further extension you must outline what additional factors have affected your ability to complete the training since the first application was submitted and approved.

## Appendix 1

### Exceptional extenuating circumstances guidance for trainees

#### What are Exceptional Extenuating Circumstances (EECs)?

We know there can be circumstances out of your control - a bereavement or hospitalisation, for example - and when this happens, the EEC process may allow you to be granted additional time in which to complete your training without penalty. You will need to submit evidence from a professional person with your application.

#### What does the EEC option cover?

Here are some circumstances that the EEC option covers:

- Hospitalisation
- Mental or physical illness (usually in excess of 3 months)
- Bereavement
- Unexpected carer responsibilities
- Sudden return home (abroad) following a family emergency
- Training delivery/capacity or quality issues within the host department

For examples and details of what evidence can be provided for these, see the section on examples, below.

#### What does the EEC option not cover?

Here are some circumstances that the EEC option doesn't cover:

- Your failure to organise your time appropriately
- Circumstances for which you have had ample opportunity to plan
- Technical failures of computers/equipment
- Negligence or carelessness by you
- Circumstances you did not disclose at the appropriate time (unless you were unable to do so e.g. due to hospitalisation)
- Maternity/ paternity or parental leave

#### What do I need to do?

##### Step 1

You will need to download the EEC1 form and complete ALL the required information.

The form can then be submitted by email to [nshcs@hee.nhs.uk](mailto:nshcs@hee.nhs.uk). Your supporting evidence can be submitted with your EEC1 form if you are able to scan it. If not, you should send it via post to National School of Healthcare Science, Health Education West Midlands, St Chad's Court, 213 Hagley Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B16 9RG.

Remember to highlight in your application how your circumstances have impacted on your ability to work and complete your training activities.

## **Step 2**

Your application will be considered by the NSHCS training management panel.

## **Step 3**

Once the panel have met and reviewed your application, you will receive a decision by email within five working days. There are three possible outcomes:

**Approved:** If your application is granted you will normally be given an appropriate amount of additional time (which the panel will decide) within which to complete your training without penalty.

**Declined:** If your application has not been successful, you may be able to resubmit if there is additional or further evidence to support your request. If your claim is not upheld you will continue to be subject to the required deadlines for your programme without additional training time.

**Further evidence required:** If it is requested, you must submit further professional evidence within 10 working days of receiving your outcome and instructions on how to do this will be provided in the email.

## **Timescales**

Typically it is expected that the training management panel will consider applications for trainees in their final year of training where the following timescales will apply:

Extenuating Circumstances Applications (EEC1) and evidence submitted to the School at least 5 working days prior to panel review (this does not include the day of the panel)

Panel review held – typically meetings are on a monthly basis

It will be important that trainees submit their applications in a timely manner to ensure sufficient support can be put in place for those granted extensions and to ensure those requests that are declined still have sufficient time to complete the programme within the original deadlines.

**Table 1 Training Management Panel Meeting and Application Submission Dates 2019**

<b>Date of EEC Panel</b>	<b>Latest Submission Date</b>	<b>Likely outcome date</b>
13/02/2019	06/02/2019	By 20/02/2019
13/03/2019	06/03/2019	By 20/03/2019
10/04/2019	03/04/2019	By 17/04/2019
13/05/2019	06/05/2019	By 20/05/2019
12/06/2019	05/06/2019	By 19/06/2019
15/07/2019	08/07/2019	By 22/07/2019
14/08/2019	07/08/2019	By 21/08/2019
09/09/2019	02/09/2019	By 16/09/2019
09/10/2019	02/10/2019	By 16/10/2019
06/11/2019	30/10/2019	By 13/11/2019
04/12/2019	27/11/2019	By 11/12/2019

The panel's decision will be communicated within 5 working days to you, your training department and the commissioner.

**Examples of circumstances & the types of evidence that may be required**

- Hospitalisation (supported by medical evidence/doctor's note or occupational health report or supporting statement from a Supervisor, Training Officer, Counsellor or person of Religious authority).
- Mental or physical illness (supported by medical evidence/doctor's note or occupational health report or supporting statement from a Supervisor, Training Officer, Counsellor or person of Religious authority).
- Bereavement (supported by a death certificate or supporting statement from a Supervisor, Training Officer, Counsellor or person of Religious authority).
- Unexpected carer responsibilities (supported by medical evidence/benefit entitlements or supporting statement from a Supervisor, Training Officer, Counsellor or person of Religious authority).

- Sudden return home (abroad) following family emergency (supported by medical evidence - if applicable - or supporting statement from a Supervisor, Training Officer, Counsellor or person of Religious authority if relevant).
- Training delivery (supported by evidence of levels of supervision, planning and support available to the trainee or any other documentation relating to the training that would demonstrate potential barriers to completion). For this circumstance the views of the Training Officer and/or Head of Department would be relevant.

## **EEC examples**

### Hospitalisation example:

Trainee A was involved in a car accident which meant he was in hospital. He was absent from the workplace for some time and unable to study and because of this he could not complete all of his required training activities. He applied for an EEC and attached a letter from his doctor as well as medical certificates as proof of his circumstances.

### Mental or physical illness examples:

Trainee B has recently suffered from severe depression and anxiety. This has meant he has not been able to concentrate on his work and hasn't been able to complete all of his required training activities. He has applied for an EEC and attached a doctor's note confirming his situation.

Trainee C has been seriously ill for the past twelve weeks which has meant she has not been about to complete all of her required training activities. When she returned to work and study she filled out an EEC application and attached a doctor's note stating how long she was ill for.

### Bereavement example:

Trainee D has suffered the death of her father. She has been deeply affected by this loss and it has affected her ability to work and study and complete all of her required training activities. Trainee D applied for an EEC and attached her father's death certificate as evidence.

### Unexpected carer responsibilities example:

Trainee E has been affected by the recent news that her mother has cancer. She has become the sole carer for her mother and has found this both emotionally and physically draining, leaving her with a lack of concentration and her ability to prioritise her work has been compromised. She feels she's not been able to give as much effort to completion of all of her

required training activities as she would have liked. She submitted her EEC with medical evidence of her mother's condition, as well as a supporting statement from her supervisor and now awaits a panel decision.

Sudden return home (abroad) following family emergency example:

Trainee F has received the news that her father in her home country has fallen very ill and she needs to return home suddenly to care for him and the rest of her family. She applied for an EEC and attached a medical letter confirming her father's condition. She also attached her flight tickets as evidence of the times that she was out of the country.

Training delivery/capacity or quality issues within the host department:

Trainee G has been unable to meet regularly with their training officer for the past 3 months due to urgent and compelling clinical commitments, with no suitable individual able to provide alternative support. The projected training plan is insufficient to enable him to fulfil all of the required assessment activities of the programme for one of his modules. He filled out an EEC application with evidence of the areas as yet not covered together with details of the training and supervision plans available from the department.

## Appendix 2

### National School of Healthcare Science

#### Exceptional Extenuating Circumstances Application Form

You should complete and submit this form if you feel that personal, medical, or problems outside your control have negatively affected, or will affect, your ability to complete the required training activities within the timescales agreed for the programme.

This form together with any evidence trainees wish to be considered must be submitted a minimum of 5 working days prior to the training management panel being held.

If you require assistance in completing this form or further advice about this process, please contact any of the following sources of advice:

- Your Training Officer/lead or Head of Department
- The National School of Healthcare Science [nshcs@hee.nhs.uk](mailto:nshcs@hee.nhs.uk) or 0121 695 2311

Personal details	
<b>Name:</b>	<b>Email address:</b>
<b>Training programme:</b>	<b>Specialism:</b>
<b>Department &amp; employer:</b>	<b>Training officer/supervisor name:</b>
<b>Year of entry:</b>	<b>Training officer/supervisor email:</b>
<b>Anticipated year of completion:</b>	

Period and length of time your training has been affected by your circumstances and the length of extension you are applying for	
<b>From:</b>	<b>To:</b>
<b>Total length of time:</b>	
<b>Total length of extension requested:</b>	

**Reasons for your application and the evidence provided to support it (tick those that apply) including evidence that the application is supported by the employer**

<b>Hospitalisation</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Evidence (please enclose any relevant documents):</b>
<b>Mental or physical illness</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Evidence (please enclose any relevant documents):</b>
<b>Bereavement</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Evidence (please enclose any relevant documents):</b>
<b>Unexpected carer responsibilities</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Evidence (please enclose any relevant documents):</b>
<b>Sudden return home</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Evidence (please enclose any relevant documents):</b>
<b>Training Delivery</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Evidence (please enclose any relevant documents):</b>
<b>Other (specify)</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Evidence (please enclose any relevant documents):</b>
<b>Support from employer</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Evidence (please enclose any relevant documents):</b>

**Describe your extenuating circumstances, how they have affected your ability to complete the required training activities and what outcome you are requesting from the training management panel**

## Declaration

The information which I have provided regarding my extenuating circumstances is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I give my consent for this information to be disclosed to the relevant training management panel and members of the National School of Healthcare Science who are responsible for considering my case. I also understand that this claim for extenuating circumstances will be kept on my trainee record and may be referred to at any subsequent meetings relating to my training.

**Note that fraudulent claims for extenuating circumstances are taken extremely seriously by the National School of Healthcare Science and could result in your removal from the training programme.**

**Signed:**

**Dated:**