

GEMSAS APPLICATION PROCESS: EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES POLICY AND PROCEDURE

This policy and procedure is effective from 1st January 2021.

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy and procedure applies to GEMSAS applicants. It sets out the process that governs requests by applicants to extend deadlines. While this policy is related to the GEMSAS Appeals Policy and Procedure ([Appeals Policy](#)), it only deals with requests to extend deadlines. If an applicant wishes to appeal a decision made by GEMSAS administrative staff, GEMSAS Project Officers or the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC), they should refer to the GEMSAS Appeals Policy.

In order to provide all GEMSAS applicants with equal opportunity to have their applications considered, an applicant will ordinarily not be entitled to receive an extension to a deadline. The exception to this is where an applicant can show that extenuating circumstances prevented them from complying with a deadline.

This policy sets out the requirements that an applicant must meet in order to establish that they were subject to extenuating circumstances.

Note: This policy does not apply to any requests to extend a deadline imposed by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) or individual universities. Where an applicant seeks to extend a deadline imposed by ACER or a university, they should contact the specific organisation in question and refer to that organisation's relevant policies.

Applicants should note that ACER is the organisation responsible for administering the GAMSAT exam and universities are ultimately responsible for offering or not offering positions to applicants for them to study medicine, dentistry or optometry in their program.

2. PROCEDURE

2.1. Requesting consideration of extenuating circumstances

(a) Where circumstances outside an applicant's control prevent them from duly submitting their GEMSAS application, making a payment to GEMSAS, providing documentation in a timely manner or by a key date, or if they experience personal difficulties that necessitate change to their initial application, the applicant may make a request for consideration of extenuating circumstances.

2.2. Grounds for extenuating circumstances

(a) An applicant may submit a request for consideration of extenuating circumstances only on the following grounds:

(i) Acute medical condition, including mental illness;

(ii) Compassionate reasons

(iii) Technical failures outside of the applicant's control

(b) Specific criteria for the above grounds are set out in Appendix I.

- (c) Circumstances that can reasonably be considered within an applicant's control such as misreading GEMSAS timelines, minor ailments, and not maintaining up to date contact details will not be accepted as grounds for consideration of extenuating circumstances.

2.3. **Submitting a request for consideration of extenuating circumstances**

- (a) All requests for consideration of extenuating circumstances must be submitted in writing to: info@gemsas.edu.au
- (b) Requests to submit a late application or make a late payment must be submitted within 10 working days of the close of the application or payment date.
- (c) Requests to submit late documentation must be submitted within 10 working days of the due date of the documentation.
- (d) Requests to make changes to the initial application must be submitted within 21 days of the date of the extenuating circumstances arising.

Note: Due to the complexity and variety of circumstances, an applicant is required to provide as much time as possible to allow for the GEMSAS administrative staff to review the request for consideration.

2.4. **Submitting Documentation**

- (a) Requests for consideration of extenuating circumstances must be supported by documentation that is current and relevant to the application.
- (b) Examples of supporting documentation include but are not limited to:
 - (i) medical certificate from a treating practitioner registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra);
 - (ii) death certificate (in the instance of a close family member);
 - (iii) police report of a relevant incident;
 - (iv) report from service provider of power or internet outages; and
 - (v) other documents on a case by case basis.

Note: Appendix I sets out the criteria considered when evaluating an extenuating circumstances application. Ahpra register searches can be performed via:

<https://www.ahpra.gov.au/Registration/Registers-of-Practitioners.aspx>

- (c) The supporting documentation must confirm that the applicant was unable to submit their application at the required time or that their circumstances have recently changed resulting in the applicant needing to make changes to their initial application.
- (d) Supporting documentation for applications on medical grounds will not normally be accepted if they are:

- (i) Back dated;
- (ii) Based only on information provided by the applicant; or
- (iii) Obtained by means other than the applicant participating in one or more clinical consultations.

2.5. **Review of extenuating circumstances applications**

- (a) A GEMSAS Committee will assess an applicant's request for consideration of extenuating circumstances based on the terms of the applicant's request and the applicant's supporting documentation.
- (b) Where the GEMSAS Committee determines, in accordance with the criteria set out in Appendix I, that an applicant was subject to extenuating circumstances they may extend the relevant deadline in a manner proportionate with the nature of the extenuating circumstances.
- (c) Where the GEMSAS Committee determines that an applicant was not subject to extenuating circumstances, they must refuse to extend the relevant deadline.
- (d) The GEMSAS Committee must notify the applicant in writing of the outcome of their request for consideration of extenuating circumstances within 5 working days of the applicant having submitted their request.

Note: Decisions will be made within 5 days, with the exception of situations where additional information has been requested by the GEMSAS Committee.

- (e) The GEMSAS Committee may, at their sole discretion, request further information from an applicant in order to determine the applicant's request.
- (f) Where the GEMSAS Committee requests further information from an applicant:
 - (i) The applicant must promptly comply with the request or promptly notify the administrative staff if they do not have the further information requested; and
 - (ii) The GEMSAS Committee must extend the notification date referred to in clause 2.5(d) above to a date that is five days after the date the applicant provides the further information or notifies the GEMSAS Committee that they do not have the further information.
- (g) The decision of the GEMSAS Committee is final.

Appendix I

The criteria considered in approving an Extenuating Circumstances Application are:

Criteria	Details/Examples	Supporting documentation required
Medical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An acute medical condition • An acute mental health illness or condition • Serious or debilitating illness or injury requiring hospitalisation • Giving or recently given birth • Direct responsibility for the care of an immediate family members suffering an acute medical condition or life-threatening illness 	A medical certificate from a treating practitioner registered with AHPRA (on letterhead, including provider number and qualifications) covering the appropriate dates
Compassionate reasons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Death/funeral of immediate family or close friend • Severe disruption to domestic arrangements or family relationship breakdown • Unexpected carer responsibilities • A misadventure (e.g. car accident) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certified copy of relevant death certificate • Letter/documentation from an appropriate person confirming the event (must state relevant dates) <p>Note: An appropriate person cannot be a relative of the applicant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence for the misadventure such as police reports, statutory declaration
Technical processes or other failures outside of the applicant's control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widespread and sustained power or internet outage (within at least 10 km radius); • Failure of higher education provider to produce a transcript or other required documents within the timeframes notified by that provider. <p>Note: loss of data due to failures of an applicant's personal electronics, software or email accounts does not satisfy this criteria. Such failures should have been mitigated by the applicant by maintaining adequate backups and security (e.g. backups held in separate locations or the cloud and strong passwords used to secure email accounts holding relevant data).</p>	Documents with a high degree of legitimacy e.g. information from an Australian telecommunications or electricity provider, higher education provider, emails from a professor, college dean or university administrative staff, or other written communications (which must be provided in their entirety and not as a screen shot/excerpt), and witness statements from people with direct knowledge.