

# York Online Fit to Sit / Submit policy



## Purpose and scope:

The York Online programmes were developed as flexible programmes, aimed at working professionals, enabling students to balance their studies around work and other commitments. The University recognises that the nature of those other commitments may at times have a significant impact on student’s ability to study. This document sets out the University’s policy for supporting students experiencing disruptions to their summative assessments. This policy applies to all students studying on the York Online programmes, namely:

- MSc Computer Science, MSc Computer Science with Artificial Intelligence, MSc Computer Science with Cyber Security, MSc Computer Science with Data Analytics;
- MSc Finance, Leadership and Management, MSc Innovation, Leadership and Management, MSc International Business, Leadership and Management;
- Master of Business Administration, MBA Public Sector Management;
- Master of Public Administration, MPA International Development, MPA Public Policy and Management, MPA Social and Public Policy;
- and any other programmes that may be added to the portfolio from time to time.

## Document control:

<b>Approved</b>	13/05/2022 Standing Committee on Assessment 31/05/2022 Special Cases Committee 09/06/2022 University Teaching Committee	<b>Starts:</b> <b>05/09/2022</b>	<b>Next review:</b> <b>01/05/2023</b>
<b>Policies superseded by this policy:</b>	The York Online Exceptional Circumstances affecting Assessment policy 2021/22		
<b>Amendments</b>	<b>Date:</b> 22/03/2023	<b>Details of change:</b> Updated broken link to Data Protection policy	
<b>Related policies, procedures, guidelines and regulations</b>			
<p>The University’s Exceptional Circumstances affecting Assessment policy no longer applies to these programmes.</p> <p>The <a href="#">Guide to Assessment, Standards, Marking and Feedback</a> sets out the assessment rules for all programmes, including York Online.</p> <p>The York Online Study Break / Leave of Absence policy</p> <p>The York Online Repeat Study policy</p> <p>The York Online Policy on managing disruptions in the ISM</p>		<p><a href="#">UK Quality Code</a> Advice and Guidance on Assessment</p> <p><a href="#">OIAHE’s Good Practice Framework</a>: Requests for Additional Consideration</p>	
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# York Online Fit to Sit / Fit to Submit policy

## 1. Introduction

1.1 As part of its commitment to enabling a lifelong journey of growth and development, the University of York offers a series of 100% online programmes, known as York Online, aimed primarily at mid-career professionals seeking to enhance their careers or transition into new ones. Students on these programmes represent a distinct population within the University, with the majority being mature learners with full-time work and family commitments that may need to take precedence over their studies from time to time. The University recognises the diversity of experience and barriers to attainment that our York Online students may encounter. In response, the University aims to provide a supportive environment that enables students to respond flexibly to changes in their circumstances and manage their learning and progression on the programme.

1.2 Studying at Masters level alongside employment represents a significant commitment and can often be challenging. Students have a responsibility to manage their time and workload effectively, monitor their engagement with the programme and plan accordingly. The University expects that all students who have selected and paid for a module in the current teaching period will be actively studying that module and able to engage effectively.

1.3 The University operates a Fit to Sit / Submit policy for summative assessments on the York Online programmes. This means that if a student sits an exam or submits an assignment, they are declaring themselves fit to do so and the mark achieved should stand. "Fit" means that the student is well and unaware of any circumstances that would prevent them from undertaking or being able to prepare for an assessment. Students who are not capable of taking the assessment should not attempt to do so and should declare to the University that they are not fit to sit the assessment.

1.4 Where students anticipate that their ability to complete an assessment will be disrupted, they should notify the University via the appropriate form. Where a student notifies the University in advance of the start of an exam or assignment deadline, alternative arrangements will be put in place without the need to provide evidence. If a student is taken ill during an exam, or believes after an assessment deadline that they experienced circumstances that affected their performance, they may submit an exceptional circumstances claim. To ensure fairness and the maintenance of standards in assessment, where a student informs the University of a disruption after the exam start or assignment deadline, evidence of the circumstances and their impact will be required.

1.5 For the avoidance of doubt, students are only considered unfit to take an assessment when they inform the University in the timescales and manner set out in this policy. Students who do not take the assessment, and do not inform the University that they were not fit to do so, will fail the assessment and the standard rules will apply, as set out in the [Guide to Assessment, Standards, Marking and Feedback](#).

## 2. Definitions

2.1 **Assessment** - a discrete assessment activity, identified as a distinct assessment task in the module catalogue; examples include exams, reports, group work, dissertations. For the purposes of this policy, 'assessment' will refer to summative assessments only. Any references to formative assessments will use the term 'formative assessment'.

2.2 **Assignment** - the practice of assessing students through means other than exams, e.g. essays, reports, presentations or practical work. Students are required to submit work on or before a published deadline. Assignments are subject to a five-day late submission window. Assignments may also be referred to as 'open assessments' outside this policy.

2.3 **Deferral** - delaying an assessment that has not been taken to the next available opportunity. A deferral is only possible in cases where a student notifies the University that they are not fit to sit / submit in advance of the exam start date or assignment deadline.

2.4 **Deadline** - in relation to assignments, this is the deadline for the submission of the assessment task. In relation to an exam, this is the date and time by which the student is expected to have completed their examination attempt.

2.5 **Exam** - a summative assessment task taken by way of online examination; students are permitted one attempt to sit a previously unseen assessment or question set within a tightly controlled time period. York Online exams are usually limited timeframe examinations, where students are provided with a two-day window to complete the examination, but once they start the examination they must complete within the limited timeframe, for example 2 hours.

2.6 **Extension** - an extension to the deadline for an assignment; this will always be two weeks after the original deadline.

2.7 **Fit to Sit** - a student's judgement that they are well and capable of sitting an exam.

**2.8 Fit to Submit** -- a student's judgement that they are well and capable of completing an assignment.

**2.9 Formative assessment** - formative assessment has a developmental purpose and is designed to help learners learn more effectively by giving them feedback on their performance and on how it can be improved and / or maintained. It does not "count" towards the module mark and is not covered by this policy.

**2.10 Independent Study Module (ISM)** - a module where students are expected to identify a research topic and carry out their own research. ISMs have different assessment rules around compensation and reassessment, compared with taught modules (see below), and a specific contribution to the calculation of merits and distinctions. See the [Guide to Assessment, Standards, Marking and Feedback](#) for further details.

**2.11 Late penalty removal** - in cases where a student has submitted an assignment or completed an exam after the deadline and has subsequently made a successful claim that they were affected by a disruption, the mark penalty for late submission defined in the *York Online Programme Handbook* may be waived.

**2.12 Learning Outcomes** - statements of the knowledge, skills and attributes that a learner is expected to have acquired after completion of a process of learning.

**2.13 Reassessment** - also referred to as a resit, reassessment is an opportunity for students to redeem failure for the award of credit to meet progression or award requirements. Reassessments may be exams or assignments, and are always summative assessments worth 100% of the module weighting. Reassessments are covered by this policy.

**2.14 Sit-as-if-for-the-first-time (SAIFFT)** - in cases where a student has sat an exam or submitted an assignment and has subsequently revoked their 'fit to sit / submit' declaration via an exceptional circumstances claim, they may be permitted a second opportunity to attempt the affected assessment. If the student accepts this opportunity, the new mark will always replace the student's original result.

**2.15 Summative assessment** - summative assessment is used to indicate the extent of a learner's success in meeting the assessment criteria used to gauge the intended learning outcomes of a module or programme. Marks for summative assessments make up the mark for the module.

**2.16 Taught module** - a module where the content has been defined and structured by the module author, even where study might be self-directed. This is distinct from modules where students are expected to identify a research topic and carry out their own research (see Independent Study Modules). Taught modules have specific assessment rules around compensation and reassessment, and a specific contribution to the calculation of merits and distinctions. See the [Guide to Assessment, Standards, Marking and Feedback](#) for further details.

**2.17 Teaching period** - equivalent to a term for the York Online programmes; each teaching period lasts eight weeks and students study a single module in that time. The teaching periods are numbered OL1 (the September start) to OL6 (the June start).

**2.18 Working days** - standard working days for the University are Monday to Friday, 9.00 - 17.00 UK time, excluding Bank Holidays and University closure days.

### **3. Notifying the University of a disruption before the assessment deadline**

#### **3.1 Types of disruption**

3.1.1 Where a student anticipates that they will be unable to complete the assessment by the deadline they may choose to delay that assessment. This may be for any reason, but typical examples would include an illness that seriously impacts upon concentration; significant change in workload in their paid employment; or inability to arrange childcare during a scheduled exam period.

#### **3.2 Evidence requirements**

3.2.1 Where a student notifies the University in advance of the assessment deadline that they are not fit to complete that assessment, no evidence of the disruption or its impact will be required.

#### **3.3 Outcomes**

3.3.1 Where the assessment is an exam the only outcome is a deferral of the exam to the next opportunity.

3.3.2 Where the assessment is an assignment, students may choose between a two-week extension or a deferral. For students choosing an extension, they may submit their assignment

before the extension period closes but no other length of extension will be permitted. Students submitting after the new assignment deadline will be subject to the standard late penalties.

3.3.3 Where a student chooses a two-week extension but is unable to meet the new deadline, they may submit a new request but the only permitted outcome is a sit-as-if-for-the-first-time. If the original assessment deadline has passed at the time the student submits the second request, they will be required to provide evidence of the continued disruption and its impact within the stated timeframe (see section 10 on evidence requirements). This is to ensure that students are adequately supported and that they do not gain an unfair advantage.

3.3.4 The delayed assessment will always be the same weighting as the original assessment, and will test the same Learning Outcomes. Wherever possible it should be in the same format as the original assessment.<sup>1</sup> However, the deferred assessment will be an unseen assignment task or exam paper, so there is no value in a student delaying a summative assessment unless they have encountered a significant disruption to their studies whilst preparing for the assessment or they are not fit to sit / submit.

## 3.4 Approval

3.4.1 Where students notify the University that they are not fit in advance of the assessment deadline, approval will be automatic. Students will receive an email confirmation that their request has been received and actioned.

3.4.2 Where a student chooses an extension and subsequently requests further time (section 3.3.3), the request and evidence will be considered by the York Online Support Team, who may consult with the Chair of the Department's Exceptional Circumstances affecting Assessment Committee, or their deputy, on a case-by-case basis as part of the decision-making process.

## 4. Notifying the University of a disruption that occurs during an exam

### 4.1 Types of disruption

4.1.1 Where a student starts an online exam and experiences a disruption that impacts on their ability to complete it, they can withdraw their fit to sit declaration by submitting an exceptional circumstances claim. This may be for any reason, with the exception of those listed in section

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<sup>1</sup> In cases where this is not possible, the alternative assessment must be in a format that the student has previously encountered. It is expected that alternative formats should only be provided in very rare circumstances, following consultation with the Chair of the Department's Board of Examiners.

6.2, but the impact of the disruption and the evidence will be assessed and the request will only be approved in cases where the disruption could not have been foreseen and is likely to have had a significant impact on the student's exam performance.

## **4.2 Evidence requirements**

4.2.1 Where a student experiences a disruption during an exam and requests another opportunity to sit it, evidence of the disruption will be required along with a clear statement about its impact on performance. See section 10 for which types of evidence are accepted. A student will be considered to have started the exam if they have begun their single attempt in Canvas, even if the student has not answered any questions.

4.2.2 The York Online Support Team may work with the Programme Design and Learning Technology team and Canvas support to verify the impact that the disruption had on the student's exam attempt. However, the student is still expected to provide their own evidence of the disruption unless their statement provides clear reason why this is not possible, as outlined in section 10.7 of this policy.

## **4.3 Outcomes**

4.3.1 Where a student's performance was significantly affected or they had to abandon the exam, the outcome will be a sit-as-if-for-the-first-time.

4.3.2 Where the impact of the disruption was that the exam was submitted late but the student's performance was not otherwise adversely affected, the late penalty will be waived.

## **4.4 Approval**

4.4.1 Where a student experiences a disruption during an exam and requests another opportunity to sit it, the claim and evidence will be considered by the York Online Support Team, who may consult with the Chair of the Department's Exceptional Circumstances affecting Assessment Committee, or their deputy, on a case-by-case basis as part of the decision-making process. Students will receive an email stating whether their request has been approved. Where a claim is rejected or partially rejected, the student will be notified by email that their claim has not been upheld, provided with the reason for the decision, and informed of their right to appeal to the Special Cases Committee (see section 12).

## 5. Notifying the University of a disruption after the assessment deadline

### 5.1 Types of disruption

5.1.1 Where a student completes an exam or submits an assignment, either by the deadline or late, but feels that they experienced a disruption that affected their performance, they can withdraw their fit to sit declaration by submitting an exceptional circumstances claim.

5.1.2 Where a student does not complete an exam or submit an assignment, and does not notify the University until after the assessment deadline, they can submit an exceptional circumstances claim.

5.1.3 Claims submitted under 5.1.1 and 5.1.2 may be for any reason, with the exception of those listed in section 6.2, but the impact of the disruption and the evidence will be assessed and the request will only be approved in cases where the disruption could not have been foreseen and is likely to have had a significant impact on the student's performance.

### 5.2 Evidence requirements

5.2.1 Where a student claims after the assessment deadline that they experienced a disruption, evidence of the disruption will be required along with a clear statement about its impact on performance. See section 10 for which types of evidence are accepted.

### 5.3 Outcomes

5.3.1 Where a student's performance in an exam was significantly affected or they had to abandon the exam, or were unable to attempt the exam, the outcome will be a sit-as-if-for-the-first-time.

5.3.2 Where the student is sitting an exam and the impact of the disruption was that the exam was submitted within the late submission window, but the student's performance was not otherwise adversely affected, the late penalty will be waived.

5.3.3 Where the student has submitted an assignment by the deadline but their performance was significantly affected, the outcome will be a sit-as-if-for-the-first-time.

5.3.4 Where the student has submitted an assignment after the deadline but within the late submission window, and the impact of the disruption was that the assignment was submitted



late but the student's performance was not otherwise adversely affected, the outcome will be a late penalty waiver.

5.3.5 Where the student has not yet submitted an assignment and submits an Exceptional Circumstances claim within one week of the deadline, students may choose between a two-week extension or a sit-as-if-for-the-first-time. For students choosing an extension, they may submit their assignment before the extension period closes but no other length of extension will be permitted. Students with an extension who submit after the new assignment deadline will be subject to the standard late penalties.

5.3.6 Where the student has not yet submitted an assignment and submits an Exceptional Circumstances claim more than one week after the assessment deadline or cannot immediately supply evidence (see section 10.11), the outcome will be a sit-as-if-for-the-first-time.

## 5.4 Approval

5.4.1 Where a student submits an exceptional circumstances claim after the assessment deadline, the claim and evidence will be considered by the York Online Support Team, who may consult with the Chair of the Department's Exceptional Circumstances affecting Assessment Committee, or their deputy, if required. Students will receive an email stating whether their request has been approved. Where a request is rejected or partially rejected, the student will be notified by email that their claim has not been upheld, provided with the reason for the decision, and informed of their right to appeal to the Special Cases Committee (see section 12).

## 6. Requests to revoke fit to sit / submit - reasons for rejection

6.1 Where a student wishes to withdraw their fit to sit / submit declaration by submitting an exceptional circumstances claim, they will need to demonstrate that the disruption could not have been foreseen and that the impact on their assessment performance was significant.

### 6.2 Issues that will never be accepted

6.2.1 Where a student notifies the University of a disruption after the assessment deadline, the following will never be accepted:

- claims of failure/technical issues of the Canvas Learning Management System or of the University network that cannot be evidenced;
- submission of the wrong file, the wrong file type or a corrupted file;

- failure to upload all required elements of an assessment or to do so within the allotted time;
- technical issues within the student’s control such as loss of work not backed up, with the exception of hardware failure during an exam where evidence is provided;
- misreading of the deadlines or the assessment instructions;
- lack of awareness of this policy;
- assessment errors or procedural issues that affect the whole cohort or whole groups of students.<sup>2</sup>

### 6.3 Reasons for non-acceptance

6.3.1 Where a student notifies the University of a disruption after the assessment deadline, the following will usually lead to a rejection:

i. The student has not submitted the claim within one week of the assessment, and has not provided or evidenced good reason for failing to do so. Where a student submits a claim more than a week after the affected assessment but before the module marks are approved by the Board of Examiners, the claim can still be considered, as long as the student provides satisfactory evidence of a ‘good reason’ as to why they could not have claimed earlier (see section 11). If they cannot do so, the claim may be rejected regardless of the strength of the claim. However, there may be occasions where the student’s circumstances are so serious and exceptional that it would be reasonable to consider their request regardless of the reasons for the late submission.

ii. The student has not provided full information about the disruption and its effect on their studies, or has not provided evidence. The student will be prompted for the necessary information before any decision to reject the claim is made. Where further information or evidence is required, students should be expected to provide it as soon as possible and in any event no later than either:

- three weeks after the assessment deadline or;
- the date of the Board of Examiners meeting at which marks for the assessment will be approved (whichever is earlier).

iii. The timing of the disruption cited would not have adversely affected the

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<sup>2</sup> Claims of this nature are not student-specific and are therefore not appropriate to be considered under this policy. Any such claims would be investigated by the Chair of Board of Examiners and, where appropriate, cohort-wide mitigation put in place in consultation with the Standing Committee on Assessment.

assessment(s).

iv. The student has not sufficiently demonstrated that the circumstances impacted their ability to engage with the assessment in question.

v. The circumstances in question relate to a disability for which reasonable adjustments have been made but which the student has not engaged with to a reasonable extent. For example where mentoring or specialist tuition is provided and agreed but the student decides not to attend.

vi. The claim is submitted after the assessment marks have been ratified by the Board of Examiners. Such claims must be considered as formal University appeals.

## **7. Exceptions to the above**

### **7.1 Modules where group work contributes to the summative assessment**

7.1.1 A small number of modules on the York Online programmes include group work that contributes to the summative assessment. This may be where students take part in formative activities as a group, the results of which contribute to their individual summative assessment, or where two or more students collaborate on a single piece of summative work. The University needs to provide mitigation for the student experiencing the disruption and ensure that other students in the group are not disadvantaged and are able to complete the assessment.

7.1.2 It is the responsibility of the department, when designing group activities that are summatively assessed or affect a summative assessment, to take reasonable measures to ensure that non-participation by one or more members of the student group will not affect the ability of other students to engage with the assessment. These measures should be designed to prevent the student group from being required to delay their assessment or take an alternative assessment, in all but the most severe circumstances.

7.1.3 In no case may circumstances that have affected an individual student ever be disclosed to the group, even where this has directly impacted the group assessment.

7.1.4 Where an individual student experiences a disruption during group work that requires mitigation, they may be granted one of the standard outcomes where this outcome will not impact the ability of other students to complete the assessment. In cases where a standard outcome will impact on other students, an alternative individual assessment will be defined for

the module, which will form the outcome for the student experiencing the disruption with a deadline appropriate to the circumstances and in line with the standard practice of a two-week extension or a deferral/sit-as-if-for-the-first-time.

7.1.5 Where an entire group encounters a disruption, the group may be granted an extension to the submission deadline, provided that due consideration of the student's individual circumstances is taken before the extension is granted. Where a deadline extension would disproportionately negatively affect one or more members of the group (for example, due to conflicting commitments), then an alternative individual assessment should be provided. Students will not be permitted to defer a group assignment due to the inequitable impact on individual student trajectories.

7.1.6 Where a student notifies the University of a disruption after the deadline for a group assessment has passed and their claim is approved, the only permissible outcome is a sit-as-if-for-the-first-time where the student is individually assessed.

7.1.7 Where exceptions are defined for particular modules, this will be set out in the assessment information for that module within the Learning Management System.

## 7.2 Rare cases

7.2.1 It is possible that circumstances may arise where the standard procedures outlined above would not provide adequate mitigation. Such cases will be discussed with the Chair of the Department's Exceptional Circumstances affecting Assessment Committee, or their deputy, and one of the following remedies may be applied:

- i. The opportunity to take 'as if for the first time' a different form of assessment than the original assessment. (Alternative assessments cannot be an assessment in a format that the student has never before encountered). This will usually be for practical reasons, e.g. where a student has deferred an assessment several times and the department has substantially revised the assessment method for that module.
- ii. Additional work to complete the original learning outcomes of the module, e.g. where practical work has been only partially completed.
- iii. Recommendations to the Special Cases Committee for the award of a taught aegrotat degree where the conditions of the policy on aegrotat degrees are met (see appendix).
- iv. If a single module mark is created from a number of marks from assessments testing

the same learning outcomes, the following rule may apply. The Chair of the Department's Exceptional Circumstances affecting Assessment Committee can, in order to produce a module mark, recommend to the Board of Studies waiving no more than 20% of the overall module mark. This is permitted only where the learning outcomes for the module have been measured by the remaining assessments for that module. Where the various elements of a module are intended to test different learning outcomes, such waiving of marks is not permissible. This procedure may be followed for up to a maximum of 30 credits of non-ISM modules, provided that the learning outcomes for the module(s) have been achieved.

v. A revised submission (referral) of work already submitted may be permitted. Where this is allowed, the academic department will apply due consideration to ensuring the student is not unduly advantaged.

vi. Repeat study of the module. In these cases, students will also be subject to the procedures outlined in the York Online Repeat Study policy.

## **8. Deadlines for notifying the University**

8.1 Students should notify the University of a disruption to an assessment no more than two weeks before the assessment deadline and no later than one week after the deadline. For example, if the exam window is 13.00 Wednesday to 13.00 Friday, students have until 13.00 the following Friday to get in touch. Students who do not submit their assessment by the deadline and who do not notify the University via the appropriate form will receive a mark of zero and will be eligible for a reassessment, as set out in the [Guide to Assessment, Standards, Marking and Feedback](#).

8.2 Students may notify the University of a disruption affecting their assessment more than one week after the assessment deadline, providing that they also provide evidence of a good reason for not doing so earlier (see section 11), and that they do so before module marks have been approved by the Board of Examiners.

## **9. Dealing with unexpected submissions**

9.1 Where a student informs the University of their intention to defer the assessment but then submits it by the deadline, it will be assumed that they are capable of taking the assessment and the mark will stand. They will not be permitted to take the assessment again unless they withdraw their fit to sit / submit declaration by submitting an exceptional circumstances claim

and are offered a sit-as-if-for-the-first-time.

9.2 Where a student informs the University of their intention to defer the assessment before the deadline but then submits the assignment after the deadline and within the late submission period, it will be treated as an extension and the late penalties waived.

9.3 Where a student submits their assignment early but then notifies the University of a disruption before the assessment deadline, the first attempt will be erased and the student's notification will be treated as set out in section 3 of this policy.

## **10. Acceptable forms of evidence**

10.1 Students who notify the University of a disruption after they have started an exam or after the assignment deadline must provide evidence to support their claim. Supporting evidence must indicate the nature of the disruption and demonstrate that its timing would have had an impact on the assessment. The student's own statement about their circumstances will be considered as evidence but in most cases independent corroborating evidence will also be required.

10.2 All evidence must be in English or be accompanied by an English translation. It is the student's responsibility to source the translation.

10.3 Students will not be expected to provide independent evidence confirming the death of another person. Where the death is of someone other than a close family member, students will be expected to explain the relationship and the impact on the student's ability to complete the assessment. The following are considered close family members: parents and step-parents, siblings, spouse, children, grandparents, grandchildren, uncles and aunts, nieces and nephews, parents-in-law, and brother- or sister-in-law.

10.4 Students will not be expected to provide independent evidence confirming sexual violence or domestic or intimate partner abuse.

10.5 Students will not be expected to provide evidence of a miscarriage or of an abortion, or of complications arising from a miscarriage or abortion.

10.6 Where the student has been impacted by the serious illness or accident of a close family member (as defined in 10.3), they will not be expected to provide independent evidence confirming that illness. They will be expected to describe the situation and its impact on their

ability to complete the assessment. A serious illness is defined as anything involving inpatient hospital treatment, surgery, or several weeks outpatient treatment; an accident includes anything that requires emergency treatment. Acute incidents in chronic conditions will be considered in the same way. Where a student reports more than two of the same acute incidents in a relative with a chronic illness, they may be referred to the Department's Chair of the Exceptional Circumstances Committee for approval.

10.7 The University recognises that students may encounter other circumstances where it is not possible for a student to get independent evidence. In such cases, a statement made by the student shortly after the event, along with an explanation of why independent evidence cannot be obtained, may be sufficient.

10.7.1 In these cases, the York Online Support Team will consult with the Chair of the Department's Exceptional Circumstances affecting Assessment Committee (or their deputy). In such cases, consideration will be given to whether the explanation as to why evidence cannot be obtained is plausible.

10.7.2 Student statements that are not supported by corroborating evidence will never be accepted for claims of failure/technical issues of the learning management system or of the University network.

10.7.3 Students making more than two claims that cannot be supported by independent evidence may be referred to the Department's Chair of the Exceptional Circumstances Committee for approval.

10.8 For other types of claim, the following types of evidence will carry greater weight:

- a recent letter or certificate from a medical professional, dated and on headed paper; this includes GPs, consultants, midwives and nurses as well as psychiatrists and other mental health practitioners;
- an appointment letter, hospital discharge letter or other medical documentation, dated and on headed paper;
- a letter from the student's employer, dated and on headed paper or an email from the student's employer, sent from the employer's email address;
- for students running their own business, a letter, dated and on headed paper, from a business partner, solicitor or accountant or other independent evidence such as financial statements;
- a police crime report;

- a letter or other evidence from another professional service, such as the local council, domestic violence services, a family solicitor, etc;
- a supporting letter from another University of York service such as the Open Door Team, Disability Services or Student Hub;
- a written account from an independent third party from outside the University who directly witnessed the circumstances.

10.9 The following types of evidence carry less weight:

- a letter or certificate from a medical professional that simply repeats the student's own description of events and does not provide an independent assessment;
- a letter or certificate from a complementary therapist;
- a written account from the student's family or friends who have directly witnessed the circumstances, or their impact on the student's wellbeing or ability to perform in assessment;
- for students running their own business, their own statement about the situation.

10.10 The following types of evidence are unlikely to be accepted:

- a letter from the student's academic supervisor, module tutor or another academic contact regarding the student's circumstances;
- a written account from the student's family or friends, if they have not directly witnessed the submitted circumstances or their impact upon the student.

10.11 Where students require longer than three weeks after the assessment deadline to provide evidence, this may be permitted provided that they inform the University of this delay in obtaining evidence and the reasons for it before the three week deadline has passed. In cases where the student has not provided evidence before the date of the Board of Examiners meeting at which marks for the assessment will be approved, their claim will be rejected and the student advised of their right to appeal.

10.12 The University reserves the right to check the authenticity of all supporting evidence submitted. Where it is suspected that a student has submitted evidence that is not genuine, they may be referred for consideration under the University's [Regulation 7: student discipline procedure](#).



## 11. Reasons for informing the University late

11.1 Where a student informs the University of a disruption more than one week after the assessment deadline, they must demonstrate that they had a good reason for not declaring it sooner and include evidence of that reason.

11.2 The following are examples of 'good reasons':

- a genuine medical emergency which would have clearly prevented the student from notifying the University, such as hospitalisation;
- severe issues outside the student's control that meant they were unavoidably prevented from notifying the University;
- where the student was given misleading advice or incorrect information regarding this policy by an employee of the University, or an employee of the Students' Union (YUSU) or Graduate Students' Association (including full-time officers), or an individual or company employed or contracted to act on the University's behalf.

11.3 The following are not considered to be 'good reasons':

- a belief that the University would not take the issue seriously;
- ignorance of this policy, unless the student can evidence that they were misadvised;
- where the student was given misleading advice or incorrect information regarding this policy by another student;
- believing or hoping that they would do well enough in the assessments despite their situation;
- general embarrassment / a reluctance to disclose their circumstances;
- deciding not to disclose their circumstances because they wanted to demonstrate that they could succeed without help;
- that the student belongs to or grew up in a culture in which problems are not openly discussed or disclosed to others. *This is not accepted as a good reason for non-disclosure of disruptions because it would be unjust to accept claims from some students but not others on the basis of assumptions about cultural norms based on a student's nationality, ethnicity or religious faith. The University does not discriminate against students on the basis of nationality, ethnicity, faith or any other protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.*

## 12. Right to appeal

12.1 Students have the right to appeal within 28 days of receiving a claim outcome in any circumstance where their request is rejected, i.e.:

- where notification is received after the assessment deadline and the request is rejected or partially rejected, including where the “good reason” for not notifying the University earlier is rejected;
- where students notify the University of a disruption by submitting an Exceptional Circumstances claim or supporting evidence/information after module marks have been approved by the Board of Examiners.

### **13. Data protection and safeguarding**

13.1 Information and documents provided by students under this policy will be treated confidentially in line with the University of York [Data Protection Policy](#) and the [University's privacy notice for students](#).

13.2 The York Online Support Team typically obtains personal information directly from students e.g. when they contact us by email, telephone or video call, or when they submit an online Exceptional Circumstances claim form, a Leave of Absence application form or a Repeat Study request form. The York Online Support Team may also receive information or data from the student's academic department, their Student Success Coordinator or Disability Services.

13.3 Students' personal information is used to prepare and process claims; to inform claim outcomes (i.e. to establish whether the student's claim has grounds); to process claim outcomes (e.g. to ensure students are able to submit to a new submission point); and to establish whether they may benefit from additional support or signposting to other University services.

13.4 Personal information will be available to the York Online Support Team, and may be discussed within the team when one student case falls under multiple different processes (e.g. the Fit to Sit / Submit process; the Leave of Absence process; or the Repeat Study process). Evidence provided under one process may be used in support of a claim submitted through a different process, where applicable, with the student's permission (e.g. evidence submitted in support of an Fit to Sit / Submit claim may be used if a student submits a Leave of Absence request on the same grounds, but provides no evidence).

13.5 Where a team member believes a student may benefit from, or requires, additional information or support, personal information will be shared within the York Online Support Team in order to facilitate the provision of appropriate support (e.g. advising a student to submit a Leave of Absence application or checking in on a student's welfare).

13.6 Outcomes from claims made under this policy may be shared with a student's academic supervisor and / or their Student Success Coordinator to enable them to provide advice about progress and trajectory through the programme. Details of the claim itself (i.e. the reason for it and evidence submitted) will not be shared.

13.7 Personal information will be shared with the Chair of the Department's Exceptional Circumstances affecting Assessment Committee, or their deputy, if a claim requires consultation. Claims may also need to be shared with the Chair of Board of Studies where an outcome potentially affects achievement of the Programme Learning Outcomes or where a recommendation needs to be made to the Special Cases Committee (e.g. where a student might be eligible for an aegrotat award). In rare cases, an anonymised summary of the claim may be shared with the Chair of the Standing Committee on Assessment, or of Special Cases Committee, or support staff acting on the Chair's behalf, for advice on the application of this policy and to inform outcomes.

13.8 In the event that an appeal is submitted regarding a Fit to Sit / Submit outcomes, personal information will be shared with members of the Special Cases Team processing the appeal; the Chair of the Board of Studies who will approve recommendations about the appeal; members of the Special Cases Committee considering the appeal; and occasionally members of the Standing Committee on Assessment, in order to respond to an appeal. To investigate an appeal, the York Online Support Team may need to request relevant information from module tutors and/or academic supervisors; in such cases, the tutors or supervisors will be aware that an appeal has been submitted but will not be provided with personal information.

13.9 In the event that a student submits a complaint about their experience of this policy, the claim form, evidence and outcome will be reviewed as needed by the Head of Online Partnerships, or their deputy, in order to investigate the complaint and provide a response.

13.10 Where the York Online Support Team has a concern regarding the welfare of a student they may seek advice from the Open Door Team or Disability Services, and may share personal information where it is deemed necessary. Where students have a Student Support Plan in place, personal information may also be shared with the Department's disability contact to ensure that the Student Support Plan is supporting the student adequately.

13.11 Where the York Online Support Team has a concern regarding the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult they will seek advice from a Safeguarding Designated Contact, and may submit a safeguarding report containing a student's personal information. Please see the [University's Safeguarding Framework](#) on the University website.

## Appendix: Policy on Aegrotat Degrees for York Online programmes

In the event that a student is rendered, or can be reasonably judged to have become, permanently unable to complete their studies as the result of documented medical, personal or compassionate circumstances, the Board of Examiners may propose that a student be awarded an aegrotat award.

- i. Any aegrotat proposal should be for the next exit point. In order to support such a proposal, the Board of Examiners must present evidence that the student is likely to have met any programme level learning outcomes, and to show that the student was achieving at the appropriate level for the award in question. In order to be considered, the student will normally have been enrolled for more than half of the teaching between the exit award for which the student is already eligible and the next exit or award point for the level of award being proposed.
- ii. For the ISM of Taught Postgraduate degrees, the Boards of Examiners must present a statement from the supervisor indicating the scope of the project, and evidence that the student was likely to achieve the standard of research appropriate for the award. The proposal must also be supported by at least one piece of written work which indicates that the student is capable of producing work at the appropriate level (potentially produced during the taught portion of the degree). Where appropriate, the supervisor's report should point the external examiner and the Special Cases Committee to the salient points of the written submission.
- iii. Aegrotat awards will not be classified. They will make reference to the subject studied, though non-aegrotat awards at the same level may not.
- iv. All proposals for aegrotat awards must have the approval of an external examiner before being put to the Special Cases Committee.