



UNIVERSITY
of York

GUIDE TO ASSESSMENT, STANDARDS, MARKING & FEEDBACK

EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES AFFECTING ASSESSMENT POLICY 2023/24



Exceptional Circumstances affecting Assessment

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EC 1 Preface and Principles

EC 1.1 Principles for making assessment adjustments

Each assessment should be a fair but rigorous evaluation of each individual student's learning and development. In the interests of fairness and to ensure the integrity of assessments conducted, students are generally expected to complete assessments to the same deadlines and in the same circumstances as each other. There may, however, be situations in which a student's individual circumstances make it important, for the sake of their welfare and the overall fairness of their assessment, to adjust the circumstances under which they complete an assessed task. The nature and extent of adjustment should rationally and proportionately relate to the claim that the student has made and such evidence as they have been able to produce to support it. As a general principle, claims should be accepted in good faith by schools/departments but with the expectation that students should explain and demonstrate, as well as they reasonably can, the nature of their situation and the reasons for being permitted to depart from the assessment schedule specified for them and for other students.

EC 1.2 Scope of this policy

Exceptional circumstances ('EC') and self-certification ('SC') adjustments apply to situations where a student has been subject to an event or circumstance that has had a temporary and relatively short-term, but significant, effect on their ability to complete assessed work to their usual standard and which was not an event or circumstance that the student could reasonably have anticipated and taken reasonable steps to factor into the completion of the assessment to their usual standards in the timeframe allowed.

EC and SC adjustments are **not** intended to apply to the following situations:

- *The impact of events or circumstances on non-assessed learning activities:* To the extent that a claim is for the impact on learning during the year outside of assessment activities, a student should seek support from their school/department in relation to the difficulties in engaging with the programme of study and may consider Leave of Absence for any long-term impacts on their ability to study in any given academic year.
- *Conditions or circumstances of a lasting nature that may be provided for under a Student Support Plan:* Where a student has a lasting condition or circumstances¹, these may be addressed using a Student Support Plan or other forms of disability support available via [Disability Services](#) rather than as adjustments under this policy. Note, however, that exceptional circumstances claims are available for situations that would be covered under a Student Support Plan where that is not yet in place.

¹ The definition of a disability is a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on a person's ability to do normal daily activities. Long term is defined as lasting one year or more or likely to last one year or more. 'Normal daily activities' includes mobility, manual dexterity, lifting, hearing, eyesight, speech, memory, and the ability to concentrate, learn or understand. It includes, but is not limited to, physical and cognitive impairments and long-standing or recurrent mental ill-health.

- *Adjustments to students on York Online Programmes*, which are resolved under the Fitness to Submit/Sit Policy (please refer to the [York Online Fit to Sit/Submit Policy](#)).
- *Events or circumstances that are predictable, recurrent and/or could have been reasonably anticipated and accommodated within the student's planning of the completion of the assessment*: Except where particular provided for under this policy, adjustments are not available for scheduled assessment activities based on work commitments, social and family events, extra-curricular activities, etc that a student undertakes except where such events or circumstances have an impact on the completion of assessments in ways that are beyond a student's reasonable control and are provided for in this policy.

More detail is set out as to particular types of exceptional circumstances in section [EC 3 below](#).

Any requests for consideration of exceptional circumstances that cannot be accommodated within this policy should be pursued by the [academic appeal process](#).

EC 1.3 Exceptional Circumstances Policy and Equality

This Policy should be applied and interpreted in accordance with the University's equality policies, which are located at www.york.ac.uk/admin/eo/policies/index.htm

EC 1.4 Exceptional Circumstances and Academic Misconduct

Circumstances which might be acceptable as exceptional under this policy will not necessarily be acceptable as a defence in relation to cases brought under the Academic Misconduct Policy. Where events or circumstances impact on the ability of a student to complete an assessment appropriately, the student is expected to use the provisions under this policy to seek adjustments so that the student can complete the assessment in an appropriate manner without resorting to academic misconduct. For the narrower category of exceptional circumstances relevant for consideration where academic misconduct is alleged, please refer to the [Academic Misconduct Policy](#).

EC 1.5 Confidentiality

Information and documents provided by students under this policy will be treated confidentially in line with the [University of York Data Protection Policy \(PDF , 211kb\)](#) and the [University's privacy notice for students](#) but may be shared where appropriate as set out in [EC 9 \(Confidentiality, data protection and safeguarding\)](#) of this policy.

EC2 Outcomes available in response to an Exceptional Circumstances claim

Only the adjustments set out below are available in response to an accepted EC claim:

- The opportunity to sit or resit the assessment at a later date ‘as if for the first time’ (see [EC 2.1](#))
- Extensions to an existing assessment deadline (see [EC 2.2](#))
- The opportunity to sit an alternative form of assessment ‘as if for the first time’ (see [EC 2.3](#))
- Additional assessment tasks (see [EC 2.4](#))
- Waiver of up to 20% of a module’s assessment components (see [EC 2.5](#))
- Recommendation to Special Cases for an adjustment of undergraduate degree outcome (see [EC 7](#))
- Recommendation to Special Cases for a ‘aegrotat’ degree (see [EC 8](#))

Where a claim is accepted, such adjustments should enable the student to complete the assessment fairly in light of the circumstances they have established. Adjustments may be combined at the point of making a decision or when a decision is reviewed (e.g. a student might be given a 7-day extension and then permitted a ‘sit as if for the first time’ rather than given a longer extension).

Please note, there is no provision for adjusting a student’s assessment mark or (other than where a recommendation is made to Special Cases under EC 7) degree class.

EC 2.1 Reassessment ‘as if for the first time’

A student may be given the opportunity to take or submit the same type of assessment ‘as if for the first time’ at another appropriate time. If the exceptional circumstances apply to a student’s resit of a failed assessment, the student will instead be entitled to resit that assessment ‘as if for the first time.’ (All references to a ‘sit as if for the first time’ or ‘as if for the first time’ in this policy apply equally to a ‘resit as if for the first time’).

EC 2.1.1 Marks to be awarded following a sit as if for the first time

Where a student takes an assessment as if for the first time, the mark for the subsequent ‘as if for the first time’ assessment will stand. Students will not be able to choose between marks gained at the first and second attempt, and the original mark will become void when the second attempt takes place except in the two following situations:

1. Where the assessment is taken in the subsequent stage of study under EC 2.1.7; or
2. Where, due to further exceptional circumstances applying to the ‘as for the first time’ attempt, use of the original mark is subsequently approved following appeal.

EC 2.1.2 Timing of ‘sit as if for the first time’ assessments

An ‘as for the first time’ reassessment opportunity should ordinarily take place within the standard reassessment period for the programme of study but other deadlines or times may be specified if in the students’ overall interest and if appropriate support can be offered to the student in dealing

with the challenges of coping with such an assessment alongside other learning activities.

Unlike resit attempts, students granted 'as if for the first time' assessment opportunities need not be given a set notice period (i.e. 5 weeks for an undergraduate or 3 weeks for a postgraduate), but given a reasonable amount of time to prepare for or complete the reassessment.

EC 2.1.3 Option to decline an 'as if for the first time' reassessment

When a student is offered the opportunity for a reassessment 'as if for the first time', the student is permitted to decline that opportunity, and in such cases the original affected mark will stand. Failure to attend or submit an 'as if for the first time' assessment will be treated as declining the opportunity to do so.

Schools/departments should set a date by which students must inform them of their decision to accept or decline the 'as if for the first time' assessment. This date should be after the ratification panel/Exam Board for the students' programme so that the student understands their overall grade profile but in sufficient time for students to have notice of the assessment task (as set out above). Students should be made aware of their original mark and of marks in all other modules at the time of being required to decide whether to take a 'sit as if for the first time.'

Departments/schools may specify different deadlines and require students to make a choice at an earlier point in the year if doing so is in the particular student's interest (e.g. an earlier deadline for finalists to allow award results to be processed in time for graduation or if the nature of the assessment requires it to take place at a particular time) but the student should in such cases have been informed of their result in the particular module and advised of the risks of a lower mark by sitting the assessment again as if for the first time.

EC 2.1.4 Revision of work already submitted

Where a student is taking an assessment 'as if for the first time', the student should not generally be permitted to answer the same assessment question or task although there may be particular reasons related to the assessment task (e.g. a reflective portfolio on activities undertaken) why this will be permitted. A revised submission (referral) of work already submitted may be permitted in such circumstances but steps should be taken when assessing such work to ensure the student is not unduly advantaged by this relative to other students.

EC 2.1.5 Deferral of assessments

A student who is given the option to take an assessment as if for the first time may choose not to submit work at all for the impacted assessment (i.e. to 'defer' the assessment to the later date). Deferral increases the risk of failure on the student's part and reduces their choices once all assessment results become available following Exam Boards. For these reasons students should be informed, when told the outcome of their EC application, that they can submit to the original deadline and should be encouraged to do so.

Where a student is entitled to 'defer' an assessment under the self-certification policy or as one of the adjustments set out in section [EC 3.3.8](#) below (adjustments analogous to self-certification

claims), they may **not** submit a piece of work to the original deadline and, if they do, it should not be marked.

EC 2.1.6 Information for students about ‘as if for the first time’ reassessments

When a student is informed that they are entitled to sit the assessment again as if for the first time as the outcome of a claim, they must be informed when the reassessment opportunity is likely to take place. They must also be advised of the consequences of failure of that second attempt. Specifically, the student must be told that if the student fails that second attempt during the reassessment period at the end of the academic year (or cannot take the assessment for whatever reason), the student will not be able to progress if they do not therefore have the credits for the module and that a leave of absence may therefore be needed to accommodate any further assessment (or re-assessment). A student should be advised (as noted above) to attempt a submission of the first (affected) assessment so that there may be a mark that may be used to allow progression if the student is unable to complete the second assessment opportunity.

EC 2.1.7 Sits as if for the first time in the following academic year or stage

If a student has met the necessary requirements to progress to the next stage of study by passing modules but the student also has an entitlement to sit some of the assessments used for the progression decision as if for the first time, the student may be permitted to sit the affected assessments in a limited number of modules as if for the first time during the next academic stage.

A student will only be permitted to sit affected assessments that are contained within up to 40 credits of modules in each stage. If a student has affected assessments in more than 40 credits of modules, the student must choose which assessments within which 40 credits of modules to take.

Where a student resits modules in the following stage under this provision, the student will retain the better of the affected mark and the ‘as if for the first time’ reassessment mark for the sake of progression and award. This is an exception to the general rule on reassessment marks.

EC 2.2 Extensions

A student may be allowed an extension to the submission deadline for an assessment. This includes situations where an extension is granted retrospectively to remove a late submission penalty.

The principles set out below should also be applied in relation to occasional extensions under Student Support Plans.

EC 2.2.1 Duration of, and limits on, extensions

An extension to an assessment deadline should be proportionate to the student’s circumstances and of such duration as is reasonably necessary to allow the student to complete the assessment to the standard they reasonably could expect to achieve if the circumstances did not exist.

Any decision to offer an extension should take into account the impact of that particular extension

on the student's ability to complete other pending assessments to a suitable standard as well as the impact on the student's welfare of extending deadlines.

Schools/departments may specify that extensions are not an appropriate adjustment for some assessments or impose limits on the usual length of extensions for particular assessments taking into account the nature of the assessment (for example an assessment with a short turnaround time may have a maximum limit specified for an extension).

Limits may also be set on the length of extensions to ensure that students are not able to gain an unfair advantage by continuing to work on an assessment after feedback and post-assessment information has been provided to other students undertaking that same assessment. As a general principle, students should not be able to continue working on an assessment after information has been given to other students about how that piece of work should have been completed or has been graded.

Any limits on extension periods for assessments should be made clear to all students taking the module and, where possible, through general information about assessments on that programme. Other schools/departments with students taking the module in question should be informed of such limits.

Where any limits are imposed on extensions under the principles set out above, consideration should be given to any additional adjustments that may be necessary to ensure that a student's circumstances are properly addressed by way of adjustments. If an extension is limited, additional adjustments (e.g. the option to submit as if for the first time in addition to a shorter period of extension) might be offered.

EC 2.2.2 Impact of extensions on progress, award and return of marks

Schools/departments should identify a last date by which work can be reasonably guaranteed to be marked, moderated and processed in time for progression or award boards (taking into consideration the likely impact on overall departmental workload of extensions).

Schools/departments may consider setting a date (a 'cut-off date') after which the processing of marks in time for such a board cannot be guaranteed. Any cut-off date should be clearly identified to all students taking modules on programmes for which the school/department is responsible (including students from other schools/departments) and the assessment administration teams and Exceptional Circumstances Committees of students taking modules in their school/department.

Where an extension is put in place for an assessment task, grades and feedback for that task do not necessarily have to be returned to that student on the standard date specified for that assessment. Schools/departments are required, however, to use their best endeavours to ensure that all work is returned to students in as timely manner as possible so that the student can use the feedback for the purposes of future learning and assessment activities.

In the case of finalists, permission to complete the assessment after the scheduled end of the programme will result in a postponement of graduation which may require permission through the Special Cases procedure.

EC 2.2.3 *Information for students when an extension is granted*

When a student is informed that an extension has been granted, they should be informed of the new deadline and, if relevant to their situation, any alternative submission method or submission point to that originally specified. Students must be warned of any risk to progression or award due to extensions if work is submitted after a 'cut-off date' as specified EC 2.2.2 and of any impact on the likely return of marks or feedback due to the extension granted.

EC 2.3 An alternative form of assessment

A student may be offered an opportunity to take a different form of assessment than the original assessment 'as if for the first time, as long as the module learning outcomes have been assessed.' This will usually be for practical reasons, e.g. so that the assessment can take place in time for a progression or award board or where the student is unable to attend the place of assessment or access relevant assessment materials. Such alternative assessments cannot be of a type or in a format that the student has never before encountered.

EC 2.4 Additional assessment opportunities

Where the student's situation has meant that ongoing assessed work has been only partially completed, the student may be given the opportunity to undertake additional tasks to complete the original learning outcomes of the module. The amount and quantity of work should be such as would reasonably replace the missed assessment opportunities.

EC 2.5 Waiver of assessment components

If a single module mark is created from a number of marks from assessments testing the same learning outcomes, assessments amounting to no more than 20% of the overall module mark may be waived. 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 60 credits per academic year and only in relation to modules all taken in the same semester, provided that the learning outcomes for the module(s) have been achieved.

Where an assessment has been waived in this way, the module mark will be calculated using the remaining assessments marks, which will form 100% of the module mark in proportion to their relative weighting before waiver. For example, where a module has two assessments each amounting to 20% of the module and another assessment worth 60% and one of the 20% assessments is waived, the remaining modules will form the module mark in the ratio 20:60 (i.e. 1:3 or 25%:75%).

EC 3 Determining ‘exceptional circumstances’

EC 3.1 What exceptional circumstances can form the basis of a claim?

Decisions about whether a circumstance is ‘exceptional’ should be made in line with the principles set out at EC 1.2 above. This means that the student should have shown the circumstances to be:

- Temporary and relatively short-term in their impact (see [EC 1.2](#) for alternatives to exceptional circumstances for longer-term impacts);
- Sufficiently significant in their impact on the student’s ability to complete the affected assessment to their usual standard; and
- Of a nature that the student could not reasonably have anticipated or taken reasonable steps to factor into planning how to complete the assessment to their usual standard.

The exceptional circumstances must have had an impact on the assessment(s) identified in the claim rather than the student’s engagement with the programme in general.

Whether a particular situation fits within the policy must be decided by the relevant decision maker using the student’s application and the evidence provided to determine whether the case fits within one of the following circumstances:

- Temporary physical and mental illness, health or wellbeing difficulties or conditions including treatment and therapy (see [EC 3.3.1](#));
- Disabilities for which reasonable adjustments under a Student Support Plan are not yet in place (see [EC 3.3.2](#));
- Bereavement: the recent death of a person to whom the student can show a sufficiently close relationship that the death is likely to have had an impact on the student’s ability to complete assessment tasks (see [EC 3.3.3](#));
- Being a victim of a crime or otherwise involved in a criminal matter or other legal proceedings (see [EC 3.3.4](#));
- Disruptions to transport or travel that were not reasonably avoidable (see [EC 3.3.5](#));
- Disruptions to necessary IT systems beyond the student’s reasonable control ([EC 3.3.6](#))
- Commitments and obligations conflicting with the completion of the assessment that were not reasonably avoidable (see [EC 3.3.7](#));
- Any other situation or condition that is shown to be temporary or short term, sufficiently impactful on the student’s ability to complete assessments and for which they could not reasonably have made adjustments (see [EC 3.1.1](#) and [3.1.2](#)).

Exceptional circumstances claims can also be accepted in the following situations to allow adjustments that could be made under the self-certification policy:

- For assessments with deadlines up to 72 hours after another assessment deadline for which a self-certification claim has been used (‘Bunched assessments’ under [EC 3.3.8.1](#));
- Where the student has a University-produced letter identifying them as being within a category of students for whom it would be appropriate to allow such adjustments (see ‘Students in “vulnerable” categories’ under [EC 3.3.8.2](#)); or

- Where a student establishes that they had to use one of their 3 self-certification claims unnecessarily (see [EC 3.3.8.3](#)).

EC 3.1.1 Deciding whether a situation is Impactful on the student's ability to complete assessments

For the purposes of applying the EC policy it is the impact of the circumstances on the student's ability to complete the assessment(s) rather than to engage with the learning activities more generally that should be considered. Larger impacts on the ability to study should be dealt with under wider support mechanisms (see [EC 1.2](#)). Consideration should be given to when assessment instructions were given, what time has been set aside to allow for preparation for and completion of assessments and whether the circumstances that the student raises will have had a significant impact on the student's ability to prepare for or complete assessments during this period. In some circumstances this period may overlap with periods of teaching and this is particularly likely to be the case for forms of continuous or in-semester assessment. In such cases, thought should be given to the impact on the student's ability to balance assessment and learning activities given the circumstances claimed.

EC 3.1.2 Deciding whether it is reasonable for the student to have anticipated or made adjustments for the circumstances

In most cases, the circumstances should be unusual or unpredictable (i.e. exceptional). Matters that are ordinary parts of life are not likely to be exceptional. This includes minor illnesses, the general stress of completing assessment activities, balancing assessments with other daily commitments, etc. Students may also be expected usually to prioritise their learning and assessment activities over voluntary activities and paid employment and may generally be expected or organise their time around any other commitments or obligations (but see exceptions in relation to unavoidable commitments under [EC 3.3.6](#) below and in relation to certain groups of students with particular responsibilities under [EC 3.3.8.2](#)).

Where a student's application reveals circumstances of such a significant, general and ongoing nature (i.e. beyond the particular assessment(s)), consideration should be given to whether it would be better to make other adjustments than those under this policy (such as a leave of absence) in order to support the student more appropriately.

EC 3.2 Requirements for evidence

EC 3.2.1 General principles and evidential requirements

Claims under the exceptional circumstances process should generally be supported by sufficient evidence to support the claim and sufficiency should be decided in proportion with the nature of the claim and the adjustments requested.

EC 3.2.2.1 Proportionality

The sufficiency of evidence should be determined with proportionality in mind. The amount and

nature of evidence required to be 'sufficient' depends on what the student is claiming and, particularly, the amount of adjustment the student is seeking. Where a student is alleging relatively minor exceptional circumstances, a smaller level of adjustment (e.g. an extension of a number of days and generally under a week) might be appropriate but this can be approved on less strong evidence. Where, however, the adjustment the student is seeking is more substantial (a longer extension, a chance to sit an assessment as if for the first time), evidence should generally be stronger: i.e. sufficiently strong to show that the student merits a significantly longer time to take the assessment than other students or that a second chance to take the assessment is an appropriate adjustment.

Decision makers may apply the principle of proportionality to make a less significant adjustment than the student has requested: where the evidence does not show that what the student has requested is appropriate but shows that some sort of adjustment should be made, the decision maker may make such adjustment as the evidence appears to support. Decision makers may also offer more significant adjustments if the evidence shows a more significant need than the student has alleged.

EC 3.2.2.2 Sufficiency of evidence

There should be sufficient evidence to determine both whether an adjustment should be made and what sort of adjustment is most appropriate. Evidence must confirm the circumstances and either show the effect on the student's ability to engage with the assessment or allow a decision maker to make a reasonable inference about it.

Keeping in mind the principle of proportionality, evidence will be sufficient if it is:

- i. Reasonably contemporaneous to the situation the student alleges.*
Evidence that is produced significantly after the events in question may be less credible in supporting the student's account. Where the claim and any non-contemporaneous evidence indicate that the students' circumstances could have prevented them from securing evidence at an earlier point, the claim can still be considered.
- ii. Independent of the student making the claim.*
Evidence should normally be provided by a third party who may be reasonably concluded to be independent of the student. In certain circumstances it may be proportionate in an application seeking minor adjustments to accept evidence from a person close or related to the student if it might be difficult for the student to produce more independent evidence.
- iii. Of such nature to allow the decision maker to make a reasonably objective determination of the case (i.e. it provides some basis of determining the nature and impact of the circumstances beyond the student's mere assertion).* The evidence should support the student's account of the disruption, including the nature and duration of its impact, to show that the adjustments asked for are appropriate and fair (or to allow the decision maker to make a decision as to what alternative adjustment to make).

EC 3.2.2.3 Sufficiency, proportionality and professional or non-professional evidence

Evidence does not necessarily need to be produced by a professional or expert so long as the evidence is reasonably contemporary, independent and objective. The more serious the claim and adjustment sought, the more appropriate it may be to expect professional or expert diagnosis to be produced as evidence. In other situations, evidence from independent support workers within the university (student wellbeing officers, the student's college, supervisor, etc) or outside of it may be enough to justify relatively minor adjustments.

EC 3.2.2 Claims without evidence

Claims can be submitted in advance of evidence becoming available. If a student is unable to provide evidence at the time of the claim, they should submit the claim and identify any evidence they hope to produce and, if possible, by when they hope to obtain it. Evidence must be submitted as soon as possible and in any event by the final decision deadline under [EC 4.3.2](#).

EC 3.2.2.1 Claims 'subject to evidence'

Where a claim is submitted but there is no (or insufficient) evidence to support it, consideration should be given as to whether, taking into account the student's explanation of the absence of evidence and the steps to be taken to secure it, the claim should be accepted provisionally 'subject to evidence'. Such a provisional decision can also be made when there is some, but not sufficient, evidence.

A provisional decision is made based on the circumstances as set out in the claim form. If they *could reasonably* amount to a valid claim once further evidence is obtained, *and* there is reason to believe that evidence is being or can realistically be obtained, then a decision about the claim can be made subject to such evidence being produced. In such a case, the student should be informed that the claim is conditional and informed of the risk that the claim will be retrospectively rejected if the evidence is not produced. The student should also be strongly encouraged to submit work ahead of any deadline or participate in an assessment activity if possible so that there is a piece of work to be marked (without penalty) if the claim is rejected. Rigid deadlines for the production of evidence should, however, be avoided.

Once evidence is submitted by the student, the claim should be reviewed and either accepted, accepted in part, rejected or made subject to further requests for evidence.

Schools/departments should set in place steps to review outstanding 'subject to evidence' claims on a regular basis to ensure that students produce evidence (and therefore secure a final decision on the claim).

EC 3.2.2.2 Deciding a case without evidence

If it is evident, at the time of first deciding the application or when resolving any claims at the final decision deadline (under [EC 4.3.2](#)), that obtaining independent third-party evidence for a claim is not possible or practicable, the requirement to produce evidence may be waived. In deciding whether to waive the requirement for evidence, regard should be had to the nature of the claim

and the proportionality of requiring evidence to be produced to support the adjustment that is being requested.

If a claim has been allowed 'subject to evidence' as specified under [EC 3.2.2.1](#), but the student has not been able to produce evidence by the time of the final decision deadline under [EC 4.3.2](#), the claim should be reviewed and a decision made whether to accept the claim (wholly or in part) without evidence or to reject it.

EC 3.2.2.3 Review of claims rejected for lack of evidence

If a claim is rejected due to the lack of evidence, the students may seek further evidence and submit it for consideration so long as any evidence and request for reconsideration is made before the date of the final decision date specified under [EC 4.3.2](#).

EC 3.2.3 *Translations of evidence*

Evidence must be provided in English or, where the original evidence is in a different language, the EC Committee may request from the student a translation of the evidence into English. Any translation should be reasonably credible and should be compatible with the principles that evidence be independent and objective to a degree that is proportionate to the student's claim and the need for translation of the document in question. There may therefore be circumstances where it is reasonably possible to understand the document with no, or limited translation, so that it would not be proportionate to request an official translation. Where, however, the claim is significant and/or the document is both complicated and central to an understanding of the student's claim, there may be a need for a more official or professional translation.

A department may, with the express consent of the student, use Google translate or other translation software to interpret documents not in English. Care should be taken when doing so to respect the confidentiality of the student - personal names and details should not be uploaded into an online applications and consideration must be given to the risk of misinterpretation where a non-native speaker attempts translation using such software. Where possible and necessary other translation approaches should be adopted except in cases where quick understanding of small terms or phrases is best achieved in such a way.

EC 3.3 Further guidance on types of claims

EC 3.3.1 *Physical and mental illness, health, wellbeing, treatment and therapy*

This will include immediate physical or mental illness or health emergencies (including hospitalisation, or incapacitation through injury, illness, or mental health crisis). It also includes situations where a student is subject to treatment (including steps to obtain a diagnosis) that have had a sufficient impact on the student's ability to undertake the required assessment activities and which the student cannot reasonably change or be expected to delay.

Evidence to support such a claim may come from health professionals or support workers but may

also consist, particularly in minor cases, of evidence of attempts to secure appointments or access support for distinct ailments that are claimed by the student.

Claims in relation to mental health may be supported by evidence from mental health professionals (including the Open Door team) but it may be appropriate to accept relatively minor claims (e.g. under one week of extension) on the basis of university staff whose role it is to support students (Student Welfare Officers, members of colleges, personal academic supervisors, etc) or support workers from outside of the university. Care should be taken, however, when making adjustments in relation to mental health to ensure that the student is properly supported and that exceptional circumstances adjustments do not exacerbate the student's situation. Repeated uses of minor extensions by a student is unlikely to be either fair or appropriate from an assessment perspective nor supportive of the particular student's needs.

Decision makers are not expected to develop expertise in medical or mental health conditions and should therefore base any decisions about appropriate adjustments on the student's explanation of the impact as supported by the evidence presented.

EC 3.3.2 Disabilities for which adjustments are not yet in place

A student who has an ongoing condition or disability that merits an adjustment to their assessments should seek a Student Support Plan, which will set out ongoing adjustments to their assessments. Where, however, a claim and its evidence reveal that a student has such an ongoing condition or disability and such a plan is not yet in place, such adjustments can be made as seem appropriate based on the information and evidence provided.

As a general principle significant or frequent adjustments should not be made under the exceptional circumstances policy for a student claiming a disability: adjustments under this policy are therefore intended to be temporary pending more appropriate support. Such a student must, therefore, be encouraged to seek a support plan via Disability Services when the exceptional circumstances adjustment is communicated to them.

EC 3.3.3 Bereavement

A student may seek adjustments by reason of the recent death of a person to whom the student can show a sufficiently close relationship that the death is likely to have had an impact on the student's ability to complete assessment tasks. Closeness may be inferred in relation to close relatives (parents, grandparents, siblings, spouses or long-term partners, children of the family and equivalent step-relatives) and in relation to anyone with whom the student was living at the time of bereavement. Closeness can be inferred in other cases depending on the circumstances explained by the student in the application and the evidence presented.

Particular consideration should be given to the proportionality of requests for evidence of bereavement given the potential difficulties in establishing both the fact of death and closeness of relationship. Evidence does not necessarily need to be in the form of a death certificate or

evidence of a funeral service: other evidence which may reasonably prove the fact of bereavement may also be accepted. Further, although there is no limit to the period of time that a student may claim for adjustments on the grounds of bereavement, consideration should be given to whether relatively short adjustments might be made on the basis of less cogent initial evidence with the possibility of a later review in the light of evidence produced subsequently (which may include different impacts such as those on mental health or relating to the practical impacts on the student of dealing with the consequences of the death).

EC 3.3.4 Crimes, criminal matters and legal proceedings

This applies where a student is a victim of a crime or has otherwise become involved in criminal proceedings (whether as a witness, defendant, etc) in a way that is likely to have an impact on their ability to complete assessments. Adjustment may also be made for involvement in other types of legal proceedings and requirements to undertake jury service. Involvement in criminal and other legal proceedings in whatever capacity may have mental health impacts in addition to any practical impacts on time to complete assessments. Adjustments should therefore be made based on the impact on the student's wellbeing and the likely disruption to their ability to complete assessments by reason of the demands on their time. This impact and disruption should be identified and evidenced in the exceptional circumstances application or inferred from it.

Evidence in such claims is likely to take the form of police or court documents but may also be evidenced by letters from legal representatives as well as, in appropriate cases, supporting statements from members of staff within the university responsible for supporting the student.

EC 3.3.5 Disruptions to transport or travel

Students may generally be expected to make themselves available for assessments due to take place at the University (or other designated place for a physical assessment) and should take steps to ensure that they arrive in good time ahead of such activities by factoring the risk of some delay. Where, however, there is evidence of a significant delay or other transport disruption that the student could not reasonably have anticipated or taken steps to avoid, an exceptional circumstances claim may be accepted to allow the student another chance to take the assessment as if for the first time. Transport disruption will not normally justify assessment extensions but there may be cases where the significant nature of the travel disruption has put a student in a situation where they could not complete the assessment within the scheduled time. Consideration should be given to the extent of any such disruption that is beyond what the student could reasonably have anticipated or taken steps to accommodate within their plans to complete or attend the relevant assessment. Evidence to support such a claim will usually take the form of public announcements or information, relevant news items, or any direct communications with the student about the disrupted travel.

EC 3.3.6 IT difficulties beyond the student's control

Students may generally be expected to ensure that they have reasonably good access to internet connections, relevant IT software and hardware, etc for the purposes of completion of assessments and it should be noted that they have access to the University's IT facilities, work

areas, etc. Furthermore students should ensure that they allow sufficient time for the submission of coursework to overcome any slow internet connections, etc. Late submission where a student has started to submit work close to an assessment deadline (without some other good reasons for the delay) can in nearly all cases be treated as poor planning on the student's part rather than an exceptional circumstance related to any IT difficulties. Students may also be expected to back up work regularly. Planning the timely completion of assessments should factor in the risk of slow internet speeds and the risk of computer crashes that may delay the completion of appropriately backed up work. As a general rule, therefore, slowness of IT systems and loss of work will not form the basis of an exceptional circumstances claim.

There may, however, be situations in which an IT problem that a student has experienced is much more significant or of a very different nature than what it was reasonable for the student to expect. In this situation, a student might be allowed an extension or even an opportunity to retake an assessment as if for the first time.

A claim and its supporting evidence should demonstrate the nature of the technical problem and should show or allow the decision maker to infer the extent to which this was something that the student could not be expected to have made allowance for when planning the completion of the assessment. Evidence might take the form of announcements or communications about power or systems failures, etc.

EC 3.3.7 Unavoidable commitments and obligations

Students are expected to prioritise the completion of their assessments during relevant assessment periods. Social, work, family or other commitments may generally be expected to be deferred in light of a scheduled assessment event such as an exam or during the completion of a short assessment period. Equally such social, work, family or other commitments should be factored into any general planning for an assessment with a longer period to complete. For these reasons such activities or obligations will not generally form the basis of an exceptional circumstances adjustment.

There may, however, be situations where an obligation is so timed (e.g. a particular job interview) and/or of such impact (an ongoing unavoidable legal obligation) that it will have an impact on the student's ability to take an assessment at a particular time or complete an assessment in an expected timeframe. Where the claim and the supporting evidence indicate such an impact and also that the student could not reasonably avoid the particular obligation, an exceptional circumstance adjustment may be appropriate (e.g. extension of a deadline to factor in the level of disruption, the opportunity to take the assessment at a later date as if for the first time).

There may be situations which are voluntary on the student's part but of sufficient significance to the student or otherwise (e.g. an interview, the opportunity to participate in a sporting event to represent a professional team or the student's country, etc) that it may be appropriate to allow the student an assessment adjustment so long as the overall outcome remains reasonably fair to the student and to other students taking the same assessment.

EC 3.3.8 Adjustments analogous to self-certification claims

Where an adjustment is made on the basis of EC 3.3.8.1 to EC 3.3.8.3 below, a student can gain an extension of up to 4 days or deferral of the assessment equivalent to a self-certification adjustment as set out in Section 5 of this policy. What is appropriate will depend on the usual adjustment identified for that assessment in line with the 'self certification' provisions in this policy.

A student permitted to 'defer' an assessment in this way may not submit the work on the deadline (see [EC 2.1.4](#) above) and if they do, it should not be marked. If the student would like an opportunity to submit to the original deadline with the option to sit the work 'as if for the first time' on the affected assessment, they would have to establish one of the bases set out in EC 3.1.

EC 3.3.8.1 'Bunched assessments'

Where a student has used self-certification to seek an adjustment for a particular assessment and there are other assessment deadlines within the 72 hours after that deadline, the student may seek further self-certification adjustments (i.e. 4-day extensions or deferral as appropriate) for each such assessment within that 72-hour period. The student is not obliged to seek adjustments for all such assessments.

To seek such an adjustment, the student should submit an EC request. The request under this process must be made before any such submission deadline to be extended or start of exam to be deferred. The claim should be evidenced using the acknowledgement email received for the self-certification. Assessments that cannot be adjusted under the self-certification process cannot be adjusted using this process. More complicated requests for adjustments must be based on one of the other circumstances set out under EC 3.1.

The purpose of this provision is to deal with technical limits preventing self-certification through e:Vision from covering a number of days or the allocation of a different number of uses for students on different programmes. Please bear this aim in mind when applying this part of the policy.

EC 3.3.8.2 Adjustments for students in 'vulnerable' categories

A student in one of the following groups will be able to make an application for either a 4-day extension or deferral of assessment as set out above using as evidence a letter produced by the University that identifies them as eligible for such an adjustment during the whole academic year:

- a) Students in receipt of hardship funding or University Bursaries;
- b) Estranged Students;
- c) Care Experienced students;
- d) Students with caring responsibilities;
- e) Students with children;
- f) Students being supported by Sexual Violence Liaison Officers; and
- g) Students on active Support to Study cases.

Students in the following groups will be eligible for similar adjustments but only during the term specified in the letter:

- h) Students subject to or bringing disciplinary action;
- i) Students who are actively seeking disability support adjustments but who have not yet been able to have an SSP put in place.

Students in these categories will receive a letter confirming their eligibility for this adjustment and may seek the adjustment by making an exceptional circumstances application. No further evidence needs to be produced for a 4-day extension or deferral (if appropriate for the particular assessment) although additional evidence may be required if the student requests more substantial adjustment. Schools/departments should, however, keep track of the use of these requests by students and may refuse repeated applications on this basis and instead make other adjustments if allowing such a request seems to clearly contrary to the welfare of the student or the integrity of the assessments in question. In such cases, consideration should be given to what alternative support or adjustments will instead sufficiently support the student.

EC 3.3.8.3 Reinstatement of a self-certification use through an EC application

Where a student can show that they previously used self-certification to gain an extension or deferral of an assessment *and* that they were granted an exceptional circumstances adjustment for the same assessment, they may use the exceptional circumstances process to seek a further 4-day extension or deferral in relation to a further assessment.

The principle to adopt in such a case is that the second exceptional circumstances application reinstates one of the three uses of self-certification that ultimately turned out to be a valid exceptional circumstances case but where the student at that time acted reasonably in seeking both self-certification and exceptional circumstances in relation to that case. This might be the case, for example, where the student was faced with a situation close to a deadline and wanted to make sure that an extension or deferral would take place but a full exceptional circumstances application would have taken too long to process. Due to that principle, therefore, such a request for an additional self-certification adjustment may be refused if it appears that the student unnecessarily used self-certification on the first occasion. In considering whether initial self-certification was unnecessary, the timing and nature of relevant circumstances to which the first SC and EC applications related and the timing of that EC application must be taken into account to determine whether the student acted reasonably promptly on that occasion. Reinstatement under this provision should only generally happen where the student has shown that the initial application for exceptional circumstances was made in good time to allow a timely EC decision to be made or where the situation was one that did not allow such a timely application. As a general principle (to be adjusted in light of each particular situation) if a student applied for exceptional circumstances adjustments two or fewer working days from a relevant deadline on the first occasion, then such a reinstatement should not be allowed on a subsequent occasion unless the student can show that they were only aware of or able to make an exceptional circumstances application that close to the deadline.

Where an adjustment is made under this provision, similar adjustments can also be made in relation to any assessment taking place or with a deadline within 72 hours of that assessment in line with [EC 3.3.8.1](#).

EC4 Exceptional Circumstances procedures

A student who wishes exceptional circumstances to be considered must apply using the Exceptional Circumstances form. The form should set out the basis of the claim and the adjustment sought and evidence should be attached to it. Third party applications for consideration of exceptional circumstances should not be accepted unless it can be shown that the student lacks capacity to make an application at the relevant time.

EC 4.1 Who makes an exceptional circumstances decision for a student

Exceptional Circumstances decisions and processes in any school/department and in relation to each student are the responsibility of an Exceptional Circumstances (EC) Committee although the authority to make particular decisions should be delegated in line with EC 4.1.3 so far as possible to ensure that those aspects of EC processes that do not require academic judgement are made in a timely manner, with accurate tracking of student welfare and in ways that can ensure consistency of treatment of students.

EC 4.1.1 Exceptional Circumstances Committees

The Exceptional Circumstances (EC) Committee is a sub-committee of a Board of Studies and is responsible for the application of the exceptional circumstances policy for students on programmes that Board oversees. A Board of Studies may create separate EC Committees for distinct programmes (e.g. for joint programmes) if doing so would improve the making of relevant decisions for students concerned.

An EC Committee must consist of five members of staff selected by, but not including, the Chair of the Board of Studies in consultation with the Head of Department. The term of office for members of the EC Committee should normally be three years (renewable). The Chair of the relevant Board of Studies, in consultation with the Head(s) of School/Department, should appoint a fixed Chair of the EC Committee from its members.

EC 4.1.2 Decisions by EC Committees

Most decisions about individual exceptional circumstances should be made under delegated authority. An EC committee may retain authority to make decisions in difficult cases, however. The committee should also determine how delegated decision making will operate in relation to programmes for which it is responsible.

An EC committee may make decisions by meeting in person or online or by email correspondence but in all cases, at least three members of the Committee must be involved in any decision and adequate records kept of the decisions.

In the event that an EC Committee cannot come to an agreement about any matter under the EC policy, any benefit of the doubt should be given to any students affected.

EC 4.1.3 Delegation of authority to make exceptional circumstances decisions

An EC Committee should consider delegating the making of some EC decisions to individual members of the committee or other members of staff with relevant experience and involvement in the oversight and administration of assessments. This will usually be members of relevant professional support staff.

Where delegation takes place, the EC Committee should clearly specify what sorts of cases can be made by delegation (by type of circumstances, particular assessment activities, level or type of adjustment, etc) taking into account the workload capacity, relevant experience of university assessment processes and EC process as well as other factors that may make it more or less appropriate to delegate particular decisions. As a general principle, it will be appropriate to delegate authority to make standard adjustments (minor extensions, sit as if for the first time opportunities, etc) that do not require any academic judgement for most cases, with authority for more complicated decisions being retained by the EC Committee or a one or two members of that committee for cases requiring academic judgement.

Delegation can include authorising a smaller sub-committee of the EC Committee or individual members to make particular decisions in addition to any delegation to non-committee members of the school/department.

Where delegation of authority takes place, the EC Committee should ensure that the extent and nature of delegation is clearly specified in writing. The Committee should also ensure that the operation of delegated authority is overseen by someone with sufficient authority and seniority (such as a senior assessment administrator or Student Services Manager) to ensure that members of staff are sufficiently supported to ensure that decisions are made fairly and appropriately. Information about the number of types of EC claims and adjustments should be recorded so that the EC Committee can review the application of the policy.

EC 4.1.4 Conflicts of interest

In cases where a formal complaint has been lodged against a person responsible for making an EC decision in relation to a student making an EC claim, or where there is reasonable evidence of a conflict of interest, that person should not make a decision in that case and an alternative decision-maker should be found. If, as a result of such exclusion, the EC Committee or its delegated decision makers cannot make a decision, then the Chair of the EC Committee may seek approval from the Head of Department responsible for the student in question for other members of staff with sufficient knowledge of the programme in question to make that decision. If it is not possible to identify anyone who can make a decision without a conflict of interest, the matter should be referred to the Standing Committee on Assessment for a decision.

EC 4.2 Information about assessments and exceptional circumstances

Schools/departments should ensure that clear information about exceptional circumstances

policies and practices in the department is available at the start of the year so that students understand the usual exceptional circumstances decisions that are likely to be made by EC Committees in that department.

Information should include the following about each assessment for which the school/department is responsible:

- a. The year/stage of the assessment;
- b. The anticipated deadline/date (i.e. the week of submission during the semester or that it is to be submitted/sat during the assessment period);
- c. Whether the assessment can be subject to self-certification (and if so, what the result of self-certification will be);
- d. The types of adjustment that should usually be made under the Exceptional Circumstances policy for that assessment (e.g. whether certain types of adjustment are inappropriate for that particular assessment for any particular reason, whether a certain type of adjustment such as an extension of a particular length tends to be the default adjustment in most cases, etc); and
- e. Any limits on the usual adjustments that can be made under the Exceptional Circumstances policy for the purposes of ensuring the integrity or nature of the assessment (e.g. limits on duration of extensions due to the short-turnaround nature of coursework; limits on extensions past a date on which feedback/information is intended to be returned to students for the assessment, limits on 'sit as if for the first time' due to the nature of the assessment task, etc)

The purpose of such information is to ensure that all students are treated consistently and therefore fairly in relation to each assessment and that EC adjustments are not made that are inappropriate for the assessment in question.

Schools/departments with students taking modules in other departments (whether on combined programmes or for other reasons) should ensure that they have access to information from those other departments about appropriate adjustments for those assessments and should also make sure that such students have access to that information. Schools/departments should cooperate in sharing information for these purposes.

It may be best practice to create a single 'Schedule of Assessments' to store this information in a way that is accessible to all students taking any module for which the school/department is responsible. For the academic year 2023/24, however, a single document is not a requirement (but a recommendation) so long as the information is clear and easy to find in relation to each particular assessment for students taking that module and for members of staff needing to make EC decisions in relation to those students.

EC 4.3 The exceptional circumstances process

EC 4.3.1 Deadlines for making claims

Claims should be received by the deadline or time of the assessment unless there are good reasons for making a later claim. If a student submits a claim after the affected assessment or deadline but submits a claim before the final decision deadline under [EC 4.3.2](#), the claim can still be considered, if the student has demonstrated and evidenced a sufficiently good reason for not submitting the claim in good time. If the student cannot establish a good reason for submitting a claim late, the claim may be rejected.

A claim submitted after assessment marks have been ratified by a Module Board cannot be considered by an EC Committee. Such claims must be considered as formal University appeals.

Schools/departments are under no obligation to consider claims received after the final deadline for making EC decisions under [EC 4.3.2](#). Where a claim is submitted between the final decision deadline and the ratification of module results by the Board of Examiners the claim may be rejected and the student advised to appeal the outcome. Such an application may be considered, however, if it is realistically possible (having regard to the overall impact on schools/departments and the Progression and Awards team) for the case to be resolved in time for a ratification panel or held at that point pending a decision.

Students should be encouraged to make claims, where possible, at least two working days before the deadline/examination to which it relates, to allow time for consideration in advance of the deadline. Any claims made two or fewer working days before a deadline may not be determined by the deadline and students should be encouraged, if they make such late claims, to submit a piece of work to that deadline in case their claim is rejected. Students who submit two or fewer working days before a deadline who then use a self-certification claim may not be eligible to have that claim refunded unless they can subsequently show good reasons for submitting that late (see [EC 3.3.8.3](#)).

EC 4.3.2 Deadline for resolving claims

All EC claims in relation to modules assessed during Semesters 1 and 2 should be resolved, where possible, by the start of Week 2 of the Summer Semester to allow outcomes to be processed in time for Module Boards in Week 4 of that Semester. For other assessments, departments must clearly specify a deadline by which evidence must be received and claims resolved so that claims can be determined in time for ratification of results. Where it is not possible to resolve a claim by that time due to the timing of the circumstances or any difficulties in deciding the claim, by reason of circumstances beyond the student's reasonable control, the student's particular outcome may be held and resolved through Chair's action.

EC 4.3.3 Timely and regular decisions

Whether made by the EC Committee or by persons acting under delegated authority, EC decisions must be made in a sufficiently timely manner to give students a clear idea of whether their

applications have been accepted, what adjustments have been made and what further actions they may need to take to resolve their applications. As general principles, decisions should be made within two working days of receipt of a claim and claims relating to the nearest deadlines should take priority over claims for later assessments.

Whether decisions are delegated from the EC Committee or not, a process for regular decision making should be instituted by the school/department to enable decisions to be made quickly and particularly, so far as reasonably possible, for claims to be resolved ahead of any assessment deadlines or dates. Such planning should have regard to the increased frequency and likely higher incidence of EC claims during the scheduled end-of-semester assessment periods. Consideration of whether to delegate decision making authority (and of what types of claims and cases) should take into account this principle that decisions should be made in a timely manner and so far as possible ahead of assessment deadlines. Where an EC Committee retains any decision-making authority, it should meet with sufficient frequency to make timely decisions. Steps must be taken by schools/departments to ensure that members of staff are available to make necessary decisions and that committees are quorate during periods of intense assessment.

EC 4.3.4 Informing the student of the outcome

A student should be informed of the decision in relation to their claim as soon as reasonably practicable after receipt of the application. Notification should be by email to the student's address unless there are clear reasons for adopting a different approach. They should be informed of their right to appeal to Special Cases if they are dissatisfied with the decision and signposted to where they can access independent advice and support from YUSU/ GSA. Where a claim is rejected or partially rejected, reasons must be given for the decision, in sufficient detail for students to make an informed academic appeal if they wish. If the decision is conditional on further information or evidence, this should be clearly stated and the consequences of non-submission should be explained.

Students with a sit as if for the first time opportunity for an assessment should be advised to submit a piece of work to the original deadline, if possible, to reduce the risk to progression (as set out in [EC 2.1.5](#)).

Students allowed an extension of such length that their work can longer be guaranteed to be marked anonymously through Turnitin Feedback Studio should be warned of this fact.

EC 4.3.5 Records of the decision

When the procedure has been completed, the relevant claim form and supporting evidence should be retained in the departmental files in a way that respects the confidentiality of the students information. Information about the claim can only be shared in circumstances set out in [Part EC 9 below](#).

The student record system (SITS) should be updated with all decisions as soon as possible and before the final decision deadline specified in [EC 4.3.2](#).

EC 4.3.6 Applications in relation to modules in a different department

Where exceptional circumstances are claimed in relation to an assessment on a module delivered outside of a student's home department(s) (including where modules are delivered by a partner department on a combined programme), the decision should be made by the EC Committee for the student's programme (or those with delegated authority) in accordance with the principles and practices they have adopted for making exceptional circumstances decisions. Those making such a decision should, however, ensure that they understand the adjustments that are or are not appropriate for the assessment in question, whether by reference to information provided by the module's home department or by contacting the department and seeking clarification. Care must be taken to ensure that exceptional circumstances adjustments made for such students are not inconsistent with the pedagogy of the assessment in question and are not inconsistent with outcomes available to other students taking the same assessment.

EC 5 Self-certification for Assessment Policy and Procedure

'Self-certification' refers to a process by which a student uses e:Vision to seek an automatic 4-day extension or deferral of an assessment task.

EC 5.1 Purpose of self-certification for assessment.

Self-certification for assessment is intended to serve a number of purposes. Firstly, given the pressures on the health services and delays in seeking medical support, students should only be expected to engage with medical services if they require treatment or medical advice. They should not be required to engage with such services for the purpose of obtaining evidence for minor illnesses that do not need treatment. Secondly, there is recognition that many instances of other short-term disruption to students' studies can be impactful on the ability to complete assessments but challenging to evidence.

EC 5.2 Reasons for self-certification.

When a student asks for self-certification for assessment, approval will be automatic, as long as the criteria are met and the request is made on time. Students will be required to state the reason for the claim - i.e. one of the following:

- Exceptional Medical Circumstances (Physical Health)
- Exceptional Medical Circumstances (Mental Health)
- Exceptional Medical Circumstances (Physical and Mental Health)
- Exceptional Personal Circumstances
- Inadequate IT resources

Departments will be encouraged to track these approvals to look for patterns in student behaviour, to enable staff/supervisors to offer advice to students regarding support they may need.

Students with SSPs: Students with Student Support Plans should not use self-certification for occasional extensions that are covered by that SSP. They should rather apply in the usual way under the SSP. Students with SSPs may, however, use self-certification for circumstances not detailed in their SSP, for example if they have a short illness at the time of an assessment.

EC 5.3 Scope of self-certification

Self-certification will apply to most, but not all, forms of assessment. It will apply to all forms of examination, including online examinations, most forms of open coursework but will not apply to some specific forms of coursework - e.g. talks, practicals, or other assessments where extensions are not feasible.

EC 5.4 Limits on Self-certification for Assessment

Students may use self-certification for a **maximum of 3 assessments per academic year** - this is

automatically limited in the central e:Vision system². Students may cancel a self-certification prior to the deadline or date of the assessment. Once students have used all 3 opportunities for self-certification for assessment, they will have to submit an evidenced claim to the EC Committee in accordance with Parts 2-4 of this policy.

EC 5.4 Self-certified deferral of examinations.

- Students will be able to self-certify to defer examinations.
- Examinations will be deferred to the next available opportunity, and will be treated in the same way as the originally scheduled assessments (i.e. taken 'as if for the first time').
- Students may only apply for deferral before the start of the exam window. Deferral is not possible once the examination has started/examination window has opened.
- If a student defers an exam, and then subsequently submits an answer for that same exam, that submission will not be marked.
- An EC claim can be made for an exam, as usual, whether or not the exam has been attempted. Evidence will be required for such an EC claim.
- The following forms of examination will be available for deferral through self-certification:

Types of assessment eligible for deferral through self-certification	
SITS Code (as displayed on E:Vision)	Description
EXAM	Closed Examinations
AURL	Aural Examinations (Listening tests)
OPEN1A	Online Examinations
OPEN*	Open examinations up to 2 weeks of various durations

EC 5.5 Self-certified extensions for coursework

- Students will be able to self-certify to obtain a short extension of four calendar days for open coursework assessments.
- Students may only self-certify up to the submission deadline. Self-certified extensions can not be requested after the deadline has passed.
- If an extension of four calendar days is not sufficient to cover the circumstances, an EC claim should be submitted. A student may submit an EC claim even if they have applied for self-certification but should cancel their self-certification claim if the original deadline for the assessment has not passed. EC claims will need to be evidenced.
- An individual assessment task may only have one self-certified extension. If a further extension is required, the student will need to submit an EC claim.

² There may be instances where departments may operate a self-certification outside the E:vision system where approved by SCA.

- The following forms of coursework will be available for self-certification extensions:

Types of assessment eligible for extensions through self-certification	
SITS Code (as displayed on E:Vision)	Description
CSWK	Coursework/Essay
DISS	PGT Dissertations
PROJ	UG Projects

EC 5.6 Coursework not eligible for self-certification:

Schools/departments may specify that some assessment tasks are not eligible for self-certification. EC claims can be submitted, as usual under Parts 2-4 of this policy.

Reasons why self-certification is not possible include:

- Assessment is taking place in a specific timetabled event (e.g. practical assessments, talks and other presentations)
- Assessments of group work activity
- Assessment as part of an external placement
- Situations where extensions are not appropriate for the particular assessment task (e.g. worked solutions have to be released on a specific day within 4 days of submission)

The following forms of coursework will be not be available for self-certification:

Types of assessment are not eligible for self-certification	
SITS Code (as displayed on E:Vision)	Description
ATTD	Attendance Requirements (PSRB Requirements only)
OSCE	Objective Structured Clinical Examination
ORAL	Oral Examination/Presentation/Seminar
PLAC	Placement
PRAC	Practical
RHRS	Rehearsal (Music Dept Only)

<i>GRP</i>	<i>Groupwork (this 'type' would need to be created and identified by departments from the existing 'CSWK' assessments)</i>
<i>CSWK-NOEX</i>	<i>Coursework where extensions are not feasible or practicable.</i>

EC 6 Students with Disabilities

Students with physical or mental impairments that have a substantial and long-term negative impact on their ability to study should seek support and reasonable adjustments to assessment through Disability Services. Support and reasonable adjustments to the way that such a student is assessed, including variable adjustments such as the possibility of occasional extensions to respond to fluctuating or recurrent conditions, should be approved as part of a Student Support Plan, and should not be accommodated using the Exceptional Circumstances Policy.

Disability Services should recommend such adjustments to the standard methods of assessing a student as appropriate to the student's situation and, where approved, such adjustments should be dealt with outside of this Exceptional Circumstances Policy. In such cases, however, such recommendations must be included in the Student's Student Support Plan, and must be approved by the department and the Standing Committee on Assessment (which must be assured that such extensions are in keeping with the learning outcomes of the programme) (See: UOY Policy on Assessment, Examiners, Marking and Feedback, Section 4.4).

Students with disabilities can claim exceptional circumstances where adjustments have not been made in time for an assessment. Consideration of disability as an exceptional circumstance may also be appropriate where evidence is provided that an abnormal or unforeseeable temporary change or increase in severity of the disability has occurred. The decision maker would need to consider whether the student had the experience or time to manage the situation. Students with disabilities are, of course, also able to use the Exceptional Circumstances procedure when they encounter circumstances other than their disability which meet the criteria of the policy and go beyond their disabilities.

EC 7 Adjustment of undergraduate degree outcomes in light of exceptional circumstances

Adjustment of undergraduate degree outcomes (e.g. raising of degree class) is never allowed as a response to circumstances that can be dealt with through the other exceptional circumstances adjustments.

Where, however, it has not been possible for exceptional circumstances to be submitted and considered before the end of the stage of the programme during which they occurred, and the student does then present circumstances that are likely to have an impact on their overall degree classification a recommendation for a higher class of degree can be made in rare cases through the Special Cases procedure. The consideration of such a case does not require that the student be in a 'borderline' area before the alternate weighting is applied, although departments should not make a recommendation to Special Cases where the application of the ratio would make no difference to the student's degree classification.

Example: A student is diagnosed with a disability which is of an on-going nature, e.g. dyslexia, during their third year. Adjustments are made for that academic year, an improvement in academic performance is noted and the student's final mark is borderline. Assessments in previous stages (when no adjustments were made) are therefore likely to have been affected by the disability.

Recommendations in relation to such students will be considered through the Special Cases process, and must be received by the final date annually specified by the Progression and Awards team for processing results.

In the event that such a recommendation is approved following the Special Cases process, the following ratios will be applied to the credit weighted stage averages in order to determine whether the student reaches the required average for the higher degree classification:

	2nd Stage Affected	3rd Stage Affected	4th Stage Affected
Bachelor's Degree	1:3	N/A	N/A
Integrated Masters	1:3:3	4:3:8	N/A
	2:3:8		N/A

Please note: any exceptional circumstances which affected the final year of study must be addressed using the provisions Parts 2-4 of this policy.

Should the recommendation be approved, the award mark which is shown on the student transcript will remain the traditional 2:3 or 2:3:3 ratio. Only the degree classification itself will change.

EC 8 Aegrotat Degrees

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. All proposals for aegrotat awards must have the approval of an external examiner before being approved through the Special Cases procedure. This includes research degrees, where an external examiner may need to be appointed through the normal processes.
- ii. Any aegrotat proposal should be for the next exit point after the student's most recent progression. 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 or research period between the exit award for which the student is already eligible and the progression or award point for the level of award being proposed.
- iii. For research 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 identify the salient points of the written submission to the external examiner and as part of the Special Cases procedure.
- iv. Successful completion of a formal review of progress for a research student is not necessarily an indication that such a student should be considered for an aegrotat PhD rather than an MPhil, but rather any proposal for an aegrotat research degree should be based on the extent and quality of the research completed (whilst making allowances for its incomplete nature), and measured against the standards of the award in question without the benefit of a viva.
- v. The recommendation of an aegrotat award of the MPhil should be made if the examiners are of the view that the available sections of the thesis are of good presentation and style and with the supervisor's report shows evidence of the student's proficiency in the methods and techniques of research, demonstrating and adequate knowledge and discussion of the literature in a specific field of study. It must show initiative, independence of thought and must be a distinct contribution to scholarship.
- vi. The recommendation of an aegrotat award of the PhD degree should be made if the

examiners are of the view that the available sections of the thesis are of good presentation and style and, with the supervisor' report, show evidence of being a significant contribution to knowledge and of the student's capacity to pursue further research without supervision. The thesis must contain a significant amount of material worthy of publication.

vii. Aegrotat awards will not be classified. They will make reference to the subject studied, though non-aegrotat award at the same level may not.

EC 9 Confidentiality, data protection and safeguarding

EC 9.1 Personal information may be obtained directly from students by those responsible for administering or marking Exceptional Circumstances decisions when they submit a claim form and subsequently in the course of determining such an application for the purposes of making appropriate decisions under this policy.

EC 9.2 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.

EC 9.3 Personal information will be available to members of a school/department responsible for making an exceptional circumstances decision and may be discussed within the team responsible for doing so only to the extent necessary for the appropriate determination of the claim. Evidence provided in relation to one claim may be used in considering another a claim insofar as this will assist in reaching an appropriate outcome.

EC 9.4 Where a person dealing with an exceptional circumstances application believes a student may benefit from, or requires, additional information or support, personal information will be shared within the school/department 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).

EC 9.5 Outcomes from claims made under this policy may be shared with a student's academic supervisor 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.

EC 9.6 Personal information may be shared with the Chair of the Department's Exceptional Circumstances Committee, or their deputy, if a claim requires consultation. Claims may also need to be shared with the Chair of Board of Studies where a recommendation needs to be made to Special Cases. In rare cases, an anonymised summary of the claim may be shared with the Chair of the Standing Committee on Assessment or support staff acting on the Chair's behalf, or with members of staff working in Special Cases for advice on the application of this policy and to inform outcomes.

EC 9.7 In the event that an appeal is submitted regarding a an exceptional circumstances application or outcome, personal information may be shared with members of the Special Cases Team processing and determining the appeal; the Chair of the Board of Studies who will approve recommendations about the appeal; and occasionally members of the Standing Committee on Assessment, in order to respond to an appeal. To investigate an appeal, the members responsible

for exceptional circumstances cases within a school or department 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.

EC 9.8 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 Chair of the Board of Studies in order to investigate the complaint and provide a response.

EC 9.9 Where members of staff responsible for dealing with an exceptional circumstances claim in a school or department have 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 school/department's disability contact to ensure that the Student Support Plan is supporting the student adequately.

EC 9.10 Where members of staff responsible for dealing with an exceptional circumstances claim in a school or department have 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.