

Exceptional Circumstance Procedure

Approved by: Education & Student Experience Committee	Effective date: 1 August 2023	Next review: 2023-24
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Procedure statement

The University recognises students may experience exceptional, short-term and unexpected difficulties outside their control which adversely impact their ability to complete or perform in assessments. The Exceptional Circumstance procedure sets out the processes through which students in these circumstances can request short-term assessment-related support.

Who needs to know about the Procedure?

- Deans of Faculty and Pro Vice-Chancellors
- Heads of School and Department
- All staff, including those at Partner Institutions
- Registered students, including Apprentices and those studying at Partner Institutions

Purpose of the Procedure

The Exceptional Circumstance procedure sets out how students experiencing exceptional, short-term, unexpected difficulties outside their control can request a short extension for a coursework deadline, or a postponed/further examination or time-constrained assessment (TCA).

Contacts

Registry Services is responsible for:

- Monitoring implementation across the University and its Partner Institutions
- Providing advice and assistance to staff
- Providing guidance and templates
- Procedural training
- Institutional level annual reporting

The team can be contacted by emailing: exceptionalcircumstances@canterbury.ac.uk

Faculties and Partner Institutions are responsible for:

- Operational implementation of the procedures
- Providing advice and assistance to students
- Operational training for staff
- Faculty level annual reporting

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1. Introduction

Context

- 1.1. Students are expected to plan their work so they can meet assessment deadlines at the same time as any other obligations which they may have, study-related or otherwise.
- 1.2. It is the responsibility of all students to:
 - 1.2.1. ensure they are fit to undertake assessments; *and*
 - 1.2.2. undertake assessments as required and at the right time; *and*
 - 1.2.3. show proper diligence in the completion of all assessments; *and*
 - 1.2.4. overcome the effects of minor illness or personal difficulties and not use an Exceptional Circumstance request as a substitute for personal effort.
- 1.3. The University recognises students may experience exceptional, short-term and unexpected difficulties outside their control during their studies, which could adversely impact their ability to complete or perform in assessments.

Key Terminology and Definitions

- 1.4. A full set of definitions for key terms referred to in this procedure is available [here](#).
- 1.5. In the context of this procedure, the University defines three main time periods:
 - 1.5.1. **Short-term** is something which affects a student for no more than 14 calendar days.
 - 1.5.2. **Medium-term** is something which affects a student for more than 14 calendar days and up to the duration of a Semester or Trimester.
 - 1.5.3. **Long-term** is something which affects a student for more than a single Semester or Trimester and (potentially) up to a maximum of the student's current academic year.
- 1.6. In this procedure the term 'days' refers to consecutive **calendar** days, unless explicitly stated as 'working days'. In the context of this procedure, calendar (or working) days exclude Bank Holidays and periods of University¹ business closure.
- 1.7. Where this procedure refers to 'academic year' this is the student's current academic year, unless otherwise stated. A 'Student's current Academic Year' is the period in which a student is expected to complete the current level/stage of study or their course. The boundaries of a student's academic year are defined by the course's academic calendar (including dates related to Board of Examiners), the validated course length and the cohort intake date on which a student is registered (e.g. September, January, June).

¹ Or Partner Institution business closure periods, where appropriate.

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- 1.8. Where this procedure refers to 'assessment', the same principles apply for reassessment unless explicitly stated as otherwise.
- 1.9. Where this procedure refers to Course Director, this may include equivalent Course roles and the Course Director's nominee, where appropriate. The Course Director's nominee is expected to be an appropriate member of the academic Course Team or another Course Director from the same School (where appropriate).
- 1.10. Where the procedure refers to 'extensions', this refers to where an academic coursework deadline has been extended to a later date in the same Semester/Trimester. The assessment is submitted and marked in time to be considered at the relevant Module Board; **the extended date cannot be beyond the relevant Board date.**
- 1.11. Where the procedure refers to 'deferral', this refers to the postponement of an examination or TCA to the next designated assessment period after the relevant Module Board (and in line with the Course's academic calendar).

Scope

- 1.12. This procedure provides academic support for students with short-term, unexpected personal difficulties (outside of their control) which directly impact one or more academic assessments.
- 1.13. They apply to:
 - 1.13.1. all academic, summative assessments and reassessments; *and*
 - 1.13.2. all Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught courses; *and*
 - 1.13.3. all courses delivered by the University and its collaborative Partner Institutions (unless otherwise formally agreed).
- 1.14. They do not apply to Postgraduate Research students.
- 1.15. They do not apply to attendance on placements or to practice-based assessments, but they do apply to any academic assessments that arise from placements.
- 1.16. They do not apply where a University-wide disruption to learning, assessment or other institutional services has occurred which may have impacted a cohort, group or all students. Where this type of issue occurs a common approach will be determined by the University and applied to all affected students, in order to ensure equity.
- 1.17. They cannot be applied to assessment or reassessment attempts which have already been presented to, and agreed by a Board of Examiners.
- 1.18. They cannot be used for situations where a student is incapacitated (or otherwise unable to directly contact their Course Team) and unable to engage with their studies. Where such cases are reported to

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the University by the student's Trusted Contact, it must be referred to Student Wellbeing Services and dealt with through alternative processes.

- 1.19. In order for a personal difficulty to be considered as an 'Exceptional Circumstance' it must meet all of the following criteria:
 - 1.19.1. Be short-term; *and*
 - 1.19.2. Exceptional (above and beyond the normal challenges faced by students); *and*
 - 1.19.3. Unexpected (i.e. could not reasonably have been anticipated by a student); *and*
 - 1.19.4. Outside of the student's control; *and*
 - 1.19.5. Have a demonstrable negative impact upon the student's ability to complete an assessment by the scheduled date or perform in an examination or TCA.
- 1.20. The University has defined tiers of decision making for Exceptional Circumstance requests, which each have clearly defined responsibilities (see sections 2 and 5).
- 1.21. The Exceptional Circumstance procedure cannot:
 - 1.21.1. Make changes to academic marks awarded; *or*
 - 1.21.2. Approve a change in the mode of assessment; *or*
 - 1.21.3. Extend the duration of an examination or TCA; *or*
 - 1.21.4. Change a reassessment (confirmed by a Board of Examiners) to a first (uncapped) assessment.
- 1.22. The following circumstances fall outside this procedure, and must be taken through the appropriate alternative procedure (or route):
 - 1.22.1. **Medium- and Long-term Difficulties (unrelated to Disability):** The Temporary Learning Agreement (TLA) procedure² is intended to offer support in these circumstances, where a student meets the relevant criteria. The student must discuss the matter with their Personal Academic Tutor (PAT)³ in the first instance, to determine if they are eligible for a TLA and, if so, develop the TLA in line with the relevant Procedure.
 - 1.22.1..1. Students with an agreed TLA may make an Impaired Performance request if they believe an additional short-term issue, unrelated to their TLA reason(s) impacted their performance. They may not use Exceptional Circumstance requests to further extend or postpone assessment already extended/postponed via their TLA.
 - 1.22.2. **Reasonable Adjustment:** Where a student identifies a disability which has not previously been disclosed to the University, they must make contact with Student Wellbeing Services (or in the case of students at Partner Institutions, with the relevant designated staff member) in order to discuss and agree what reasonable adjustments can be made, and formalise a Learning Support Plan ([LSP](#)) regarding this.
 - 1.22.2..1. For students with LSPs which do not include extensions as a specified reasonable adjustment, should they experience an additional short-term issue unrelated to their

² Student guidance [here](#); staff guidance [here](#).

³ Or equivalent, for Partner Institutions.

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LSP condition, an Exceptional Circumstance request may be made to support assessment affected by that short-term issue.

1.22.2..2. For students with extensions as a specified reasonable adjustment in their LSP, they may make an Impaired Performance request if they believe an additional short-term issue unrelated to their LSP condition impacted their performance. They may not use Exceptional Circumstance requests to further extend/postpone assessments already extended/postponed via their LSP.

1.22.3. **Material Administrative Error in relation to assessment:** students must report concerns of this nature as soon as possible, directly to either the relevant office of the Registry or their Course Director, dependent on which area is responsible for organising the assessment.

2. Types of Exceptional Circumstance Request

- 2.1. There are three types of Exceptional Circumstance request a student may make (listed below), each of which have specific criteria, processes and decision-making requirements.
 - 2.1.1. Self-Certification
 - 2.1.2. Evidence-Based Extensions
 - 2.1.3. Impaired Performance

Principles applicable to all request types

- 2.2. All Exceptional Circumstance requests must be made directly by the student, and cannot be submitted by a third party.
- 2.3. Exceptional Circumstance requests must be made individually, the University cannot accept group requests.
- 2.4. All Exceptional Circumstance requests must be submitted to the relevant Course Team, using the appropriate form.
 - 2.4.1. Where a student is studying with more than one subject (e.g. combined honours), they must submit a single request to both subject areas regardless of the assessments listed on the form.
- 2.5. Only assessments listed on an Exceptional Circumstance request will be considered.
 - 2.5.1. Students may not ask for additional assessments to be added to a request once it has been approved; should they wish to request additional assessments are considered, they would need to make a new Exceptional Circumstance request.
- 2.6. Where the request relates to group work assessment, the following principles apply:
 - 2.6.1. If the assessment involves submission of individual pieces of coursework, an approved Exceptional Circumstance applies to the individual student's submission deadline only; all other members of the group without approved Exceptional Circumstance requests are required to submit on the scheduled deadline.

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- 2.6.2. When considering a request in relation to group work, staff should also consider the guidance available on marking group work activities.
- 2.7. Students and staff must ensure they meet their responsibilities regarding Exceptional Circumstances, as set out within this procedure.
- 2.8. The Exceptional Circumstance procedure can offer a student a maximum of 14 days extension **in total** from the original published coursework deadline.
- 2.8.1. Where a student requests a Self-Certification and then an Evidence-Based Extension request for the same assessment attempt, the Evidence-Based Extension cannot result in a further 14 days extension, unless the case is considered by a Faculty Panel (having been referred by the Course Director as complex) and they determine it warrants more than the maximum 14 days.
- 2.9. When calculating a coursework extension for an approved Exceptional Circumstance:
- 2.9.1. the extension period starts from the scheduled deadline for the attempt in question, not the date of receipt for the Exceptional Circumstance request or the decision date for that request.
- 2.9.2. only periods of official University⁴ business closure may be excluded when calculating the revised extension date.
- 2.10. Where a coursework extension is agreed, the date for that assessment's mark and feedback return⁵ is governed by the agreed extension date and not the original published submission date.
- 2.11. Where a student has been offered a coursework extension or postponed/further opportunity to complete an examination or TCA, the new deadline/date is binding and must be met in order to achieve a mark for that assessment.
- 2.12. If, in processing or considering a request, the Course Team or Faculty Panel identify either of the below, they should take the recommended action, taking into account the provisions set out in 2.13 where appropriate:
- 2.12.1. They believe a student's circumstances may amount to a disability or other circumstance covered by the Equality Act 2010, but the student does not have an LSP, they should ensure the student is made aware of the Student Wellbeing Service disclosure process and encouraged to seek a LSP to provide long-term support.
- 2.12.2. They have any concern that the student may be at risk, they should make a Raising a Concern referral.
- 2.13. Where an Exceptional Circumstance request is declined, the communication of that decision to the student must:

⁴ Or Partner Institution.

⁵ Standard marking procedures and feedback timeframes will apply to extended assessments.

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- 2.13.1. Provide the reason for declining the request; *and*
- 2.13.2. Explain the appropriate route to take if they wish to request a review of the decision (see section 6 for details); *and*
- 2.13.3. Take care to mitigate any impact on the student, providing appropriate support options and ensuring the timing of the communication allows the student to access support e.g. communications should not generally be sent on a Friday afternoon.

Self-Certification

- 2.14. Self-Certification does not require the student to provide evidence or specify the reason for their request.
- 2.15. Students may request Self-Certification for assessment deadlines/dates they expect to miss, where they meet the criteria set out in this procedure.
 - 2.15.1. Self-Certification cannot be used for assessments deadlines/dates which have already passed.
 - 2.15.2. Self-Certification cannot be used for assessments already submitted/attempted.
- 2.16. Students may only have two *approved* Self-Certification requests in any academic year, even where a student studies with more than one subject (e.g. combined honours).
- 2.17. A Self-Certification Request can only be approved for coursework deadlines / examinations or TCAs which have not already been extended / postponed through an alternative Exceptional Circumstance request (of any type) or a TLA/LSP.
- 2.18. If a student with an approved Self-Certification extension/postponement subsequently wishes to request a further extension/postponement for the same assessment attempt, an Evidence-Based Extension request must be completed.

Timeframe for submitting a Self-Certification request

- 2.19. Students must submit a Self-Certification request:
 - 2.19.1. No earlier than 14 days before the relevant assessment deadline/date; *and*
 - 2.19.2. No later than:
 - 2.19.2..1. **For coursework:** by 2pm on the assessment deadline day.
 - 2.19.2..2. **For examinations / TCAs:** by the scheduled assessment start time on the relevant date.
 - 2.19.3. *Where multiple assessments are included on a single Self-Certification request, all deadlines/dates must meet both of the above criteria.*
- 2.20. Any request received later than the criteria set out in 2.19 will be declined and the student will be required to submit an Evidence-Based Extension request if they wish to ask for an extension/postponement of the assessment.

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Decision-Making Process and Permitted Outcomes for a Self-Certification Request

- 2.21. The Course Administrative team will make the decision based on the eligibility criteria below:
- 2.21.1. The request was submitted within the required timeframe; *and*
 - 2.21.2. The student has not already had two approved Self-Certification requests for the current academic year; *and*
 - 2.21.3. The assessment has not previously been extended / postponed; *and*
 - 2.21.4. **For examinations/TCAs**, there is a future designated assessment period for the academic calendar, to which the assessment can be postponed (see 2.25.3).
- 2.22. The Course Administrative team's decision will normally be communicated to the student within 3 working days of receipt of the Self-Certification Request.
- 2.23. If a Self-Certification Request is approved, the only outcomes a student can be offered are:
- 2.23.1. **For coursework**: a 7-day extension to the original published assessment deadline.
 - 2.23.2. **For examinations/TCAs**: a postponed opportunity to take the assessment at the next designated assessment period⁶, following the approval of the request (see 2.24-25).
- 2.24. Where an examination/TCA is postponed the Course Director is responsible for determining the next designated period for the new opportunity. The postponed opportunity will occur either:
- 2.24.1. Prior to the relevant Board of Examiners where it is possible to facilitate this; *or*
 - 2.24.2. In the next designated assessment period for the relevant academic calendar, reported to the Board of Examiners as a deferral.
- 2.25. Where an examination/TCA is deferred:
- 2.25.1. **For an assessment**, the postponed attempt will remain a first attempt (i.e. without a mark cap)
 - 2.25.2. **For a reassessment**, the postponed attempt will remain a reassessment attempt (i.e. capped).
 - 2.25.3. **Please note**: Under the Regulations for Taught Awards, assessments **cannot** be deferred into the next academic year unless the student is otherwise able to progress (including Trail & Progress) or is studying on a Trimester course and the assessment(s) in question are from Trimester three modules.

Evidence-Based Extensions

- 2.26. Students may submit an Evidence-Based Extension request for assessment deadlines/dates they expect to miss or have missed, where they meet the criteria set out in this procedure.
- 2.26.1. Evidence-Based Extensions cannot be used for assessments already submitted/attempted.

⁶ This period will be determined by relevant calendar timescales and course factors, as appropriate (for example differences can apply to the timing of postponed attempts for some Apprenticeship courses).

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2.26.2. Evidence-Based Extensions cannot be used to further extend deadlines / postpone dates already extended/postponed via a previous Evidence-Based Extension request, TLA or LSP.

2.27. Evidence-Based Extension requests must specify the reason for the request.

2.27.1. The acceptable reasons upon which a request may be made are set out in Appendix 1.

2.27.2. Requests made on grounds considered unacceptable by the University will be declined. Appendix 1 provides a list of reasons not normally considered acceptable.

2.28. Evidence-Based Extension requests must be submitted with appropriate supporting evidence, in line with criteria set out in Section 3.

2.28.1. A student may confirm when submitting their request that the University already holds the evidence regarding their circumstances;

2.28.2. It is not possible to consider a request where no evidence, or information about evidence already held, has been provided; any such requests will be declined.

Timeframes for submitting an Evidence-Based Extension Request

2.29. Students must submit an Evidence-Based Extension Request:

2.29.1. No earlier than 14 days before the relevant assessment deadline/date; *and*

2.29.2. No later than 7 days after the relevant assessment deadline/date.

2.29.3. *Where multiple assessments are included on a single request, all deadlines/dates must meet both of the above criteria.*

2.30. Any requests that do not meet the timeframes set out above (2.29) are considered as a 'Late Request'.

2.31. The University recognises there may be occasions where, for good reason, a student submits a request later than the timeframes in 2.29. For example, having been an in-patient at a hospital. In such cases, students are required to provide a statement in their request (and where appropriate supporting evidence) demonstrating the reason why they could not reasonably submit the request on time.

2.31.1. If the student provides a reason for late submission, the request will be referred to the Faculty Panel for a decision.

2.31.2. If a student fails to provide a reason for late submission, the request will be declined by the Course Director.

2.32. Any request received after the assessment has been presented to and agreed at a Board of Examiners cannot be considered under the Exceptional Circumstance procedure and must be declined by the Course Team (see 6.1).

Decision-Making Process and Permitted Outcomes from an Evidence-Based Extension Request

2.33. Evidence-Based Extension requests will be considered by the Course Director.

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- 2.34. The Course Director will make the decision based on the eligibility criteria below:
- 2.34.1. The request was submitted within the required timeframe; *and*
 - 2.34.2. The reason is acceptable (see Appendix 1): *and*
 - 2.34.3. The evidence is appropriate and sufficiently supports the reason for request (see section 3); *and*
 - 2.34.4. The assessment is eligible to be considered (e.g. not yet submitted/attempted, not already extended under a previous Evidence-Based Extension request, TLA or LSP); *and*
 - 2.34.5. **For examinations/TCAs**, there is a future designated assessment period for the academic calendar, to which the assessment can be postponed (see 2.39 for more details).
- 2.35. The Course Director's decision will normally be communicated to the student within 3 working days of receipt of the request, including notification where the request has been referred to Faculty Panel for a decision.
- 2.36. The decisions available to the Course Director are limited to:
- 2.36.1. Approve the request in full; *or*
 - 2.36.2. Decline the request in full ; *or*
 - 2.36.3. Approve the request in part and decline in part; *or*
 - 2.36.4. Refer the case to the Faculty Panel for a decision, where they believe it is a 'complex case' or a 'late request' (where this meets 2.31.1)
- 2.37. Where the request is approved, the available outcomes the Course Director may grant are restricted to one of the following:
- 2.37.1. **For Coursework:** a 7- or 14-day extension to the to the original published assessment deadline.
 - 2.37.1..1. the decision whether to offer 7 or 14 days needs to be commensurate with the evidenced time affected; *and*
 - 2.37.1..2. if the assessment in question was previously extended via Self-Certification, the maximum extension that can be given through the Evidence-Based Extension is 7 days.
NB: *Students may have a maximum of 14 days extension in total from the original published deadline.*
 - 2.37.2. **For Examinations/TCAs:** a postponed opportunity to take the assessment at the next designated assessment period⁷ following the approval of the request (see 2.39).
- 2.38. Where coursework is to be extended:
- 2.38.1. Only periods of official University business closure may be excluded when calculating the revised extension date.
 - 2.38.2. Where a coursework extension is agreed, the date for that assessment's mark and feedback return is governed by the agreed extension date and not the original published submission date.

⁷ This period will be determined by relevant calendar timescales and course factors, as appropriate (for example differences can apply to the timing of postponed attempts for some Apprenticeship courses).

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- 2.39. Where an examination/TCA is postponed:
- 2.39.1. the Course Director will be responsible for determining the next designated period for that postponed opportunity and ensuring it is reported to the relevant Board of Examiners as a deferral, where appropriate. Postponed attempts will occur either:
 - 2.39.1..1. Prior to the relevant Board of Examiners where it is possible to facilitate this; *or*
 - 2.39.1..2. In the next designated assessment period for the relevant academic calendar, reported to the Board of Examiners as a deferral.
 - 2.39.2. **For an assessment**, the postponed attempt will be recorded at the relevant Board of Examiners as a deferred first attempt (i.e. without a mark cap)
 - 2.39.3. **For a reassessment**, the postponed attempt will be recorded at the relevant Board of Examiners as a deferred reassessment attempt (i.e. capped).
 - 2.39.4. **Please note:** Under the Regulations for Taught Awards, assessments **cannot** be deferred into the next academic year unless the student is otherwise able to progress (including Trail & Progress) or is studying on a Trimester course and the assessment(s) in question are from Trimester three modules.
- 2.40. Where the request is referred to the Faculty Panel (2.36.4), the Course Director is expected to provide the Faculty Panel with all relevant information required in order to reach a decision on the request.
- 2.41. The Faculty Panel's decision will normally be communicated to the student within 21 working days of receipt of the Evidence-Based Extension Request.
- 2.42. The decisions available to the Faculty Panel are limited to:
- 2.42.1. Approve the request in full and grant:
 - 2.42.1..1. An outcome in line with sections 2.37; *or*:
 - 2.42.1..2. In **very rare cases** where the evidence warrants it, a coursework extension of greater than 14 days. The longer deadline should be agreed in discussion with the Course Director and must ensure the work is submitted and marked prior to the relevant Module Board.
 - 2.42.2. Decline the request in full; *or*
 - 2.42.3. Approve the request in part (granting appropriate outcomes as per 2.37 for the approved assessments only), and decline in part.
- 2.43. Where the Panel believes the student's reasons are not short-term, they may approve the request and give an outcome from 2.42 but additionally require the Course Team to discuss more appropriate medium- or long-term support options with the student in place of further exceptional circumstance requests.

Impaired Performance

- 2.44. Students may only make an Impaired Performance request for examinations or TCAs. Impaired Performance **cannot** be requested for any coursework assessment.

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- 2.45. An Impaired Performance request may be submitted if a student has attempted an examination or TCA, and believes their circumstances adversely affected their performance in that attempt, where they meet the criteria set out in this procedure.
- 2.45.1. Impaired Performance cannot be used for assessments not attempted. The student must have started the examination/TCA on the date and time scheduled, even if they had to abandon that attempt before the end.
- 2.46. Impaired Performance requests must specify the reason for the request.
- 2.46.1. The acceptable reasons upon which a request may be made are set out in Appendix 1.
2.46.2. Requests made on grounds considered unacceptable by the University will be declined. Appendix 1 provides a list of reasons not normally considered acceptable.
- 2.47. Impaired Performance requests must be submitted with appropriate supporting evidence, in line with criteria set out in Section 3.
- 2.47.1. A student may confirm when submitting their request that the University already holds the evidence regarding their circumstances;
2.47.2. It is not possible to consider a request where no evidence, or information about evidence already held, has been provided; any such requests will be declined.

Timeframes for submitting an Impaired Performance Request

- 2.48. Students must submit an Impaired Performance Request:
- 2.48.1. No earlier than the relevant assessment date and start time; *and*
2.48.2. No later than 7 days after the relevant assessment date.
2.48.3. *Where multiple assessments are included on a single request, all dates must meet both of the above criteria.*
- 2.49. Requests which are submitted before the assessment date and time, or where there is no evidence the student attempted the assessment, will be declined by the Course Team and advice given as to the appropriate Exceptional Circumstance request option.
- 2.50. Any requests that do not meet the timeframes set out above (2.48) are considered as a 'Late Request'.
- 2.51. The University recognises there may be occasions where, for good reason, a student submits a request later than the timeframes in 2.48 but before 2.52 applies. For example, having been an in-patient at a hospital. In such cases, students are required to provide a statement in their request (and where appropriate supporting evidence) demonstrating the reason why they could not reasonably submit the request on time.
- 2.51.1. If the student provides a reason for late submission, the request will be referred to the Faculty Panel for a decision.
2.51.2. If the student fails to provide a reason for late submission, the request will be declined.

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2.52. Requests received in either of the following situations cannot be considered under the Exceptional Circumstance procedure and must be declined by the Course Team:

- 2.52.1. after the mark and/or feedback have been returned for the assessment in question; *or*
- 2.52.2. after the assessment has been presented to and agreed at a Board of Examiners.

Decision-Making Process and Permitted Outcomes from an Impaired Performance Request

2.53. Impaired Performance requests will be considered by the Faculty Panel.

2.54. The Course Director is expected to review each Impaired Performance Request before it is sent to Faculty Panel, and provide the Panel with any relevant information required in order to reach their decision.

2.55. The Faculty Panel will make the decision based on the eligibility criteria below:

- 2.55.1. The request was submitted within the required timeframe; *and*
- 2.55.2. The reason is acceptable (see Appendix 1); *and*
- 2.55.3. The evidence is appropriate and sufficiently supports the reason for request (section 3); *and*
- 2.55.4. **For examinations/TCAs**, there is a future designated assessment period for the academic calendar, to which the assessment can be postponed (see 2.60.3).

2.56. The decisions available to the Faculty Panel are limited to:

- 2.56.1. Approve the request in full; *or*
- 2.56.2. Decline the request in full; *or*
- 2.56.3. Approve the request in part, and decline in part.

2.57. The Faculty Panel's decision will normally be communicated to the student within 21 working days of receipt of the Impaired Performance Request.

2.58. Where the request is approved, the Faculty Panel will grant a further opportunity to take the assessment (see 2.59-60).

- 2.58.1. The original attempt will be considered void. The student will not receive the mark and/or feedback for that original assessment attempt, and may not subsequently request their original attempt is reinstated.
- 2.58.2. The student will need to undertake the further opportunity in order to receive a mark.

2.59. The Course Director will be responsible for determining the next designated period for the further opportunity and ensuring it is reported to the relevant Board of Examiners as a deferral, where appropriate. Postponed attempts will occur either:

- 2.59.1. Prior to the relevant Board of Examiners where it is possible to facilitate this; *or*

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2.59.2. In the next designated assessment period for the relevant academic calendar, reported to the Board of Examiners as a deferral.

2.60. Where an assessment is deferred:

2.60.1. **For an assessment**, the new attempt will remain a first attempt (i.e. without a mark cap)

2.60.2. **For a reassessment**, the new attempt will remain a reassessment attempt (i.e. capped).

2.60.3. **Please note:** Under the Regulations for Taught Awards, assessments **cannot** be deferred into the next academic year unless the student is otherwise able to progress (including Trail & Progress) or is studying on a Trimester course and the assessment(s) in question are from Trimester three modules.

3. Criteria for Supporting Evidence (for Evidence-Based Extensions & Impaired Performance)

- 3.1. All Evidence-Based Extension and Impaired Performance requests must be supported by evidence appropriate to the reason for making the request.
- 3.2. Evidence (or information about evidence already held, see section 3.5) must be submitted with the request.
- 3.3. The evidence supplied is the student's choice, but must:
 - 3.3.1. Be in the form of documentation (i.e. not video or audio files); *and*
 - 3.3.2. Be from a professional source⁸; *and*
 - 3.3.3. Name the student or (where the issue relates to a third party) clarify the relationship of that individual to the student; *and*
 - 3.3.4. Be dated; *and*
 - 3.3.5. Sufficiently demonstrate the student's circumstances and its impact on the timeframe around the assessment deadline.
- 3.4. The University cannot accept the following items as the sole form of evidence for a request:
 - 3.4.1. Statements from family or friends;
 - 3.4.2. Newspaper articles or social media postings;
 - 3.4.3. Appointment cards (where the reason for the visit is not specified);
 - 3.4.4. Photocopies⁹ of over-the-counter medications;
 - 3.4.5. Photographs of a personal nature.

⁸ Professional sources of evidence can vary and should be appropriate to the reason. They can include statements by University Student Wellbeing Services or Chaplaincy staff, employers, external bodies such as registered Charities or the Citizens' Advice Bureau, community or faith leaders.

⁹ Including scanned pictures of over-the-counter medication packaging.

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- 3.5. If a student asks for evidence already held within the University to be added to their Exceptional Circumstance request, they must do so at the point of submitting their request.
- 3.5.1. Evidence will not be sought from within the University without a specific, written request from the student to do so, and only where they have provided clear information about what evidence they wish accessed and from whom/where.
- 3.5.2. The University will not seek evidence from outside the University (from an individual or organisation) on a student's behalf.
- 3.6. Where a student is providing evidence that relates to a living person other than themselves (for example to demonstrate caring responsibilities), in their request they must provide confirmation of that person's permission for the evidence to be shared with the University for the purposes of Exceptional Circumstance consideration¹⁰.

4. Student Responsibilities

- 4.1. It is the responsibility of students to ensure they:
- 4.1.1. are aware of their assessment deadlines/dates and take appropriate steps to ensure they meet those deadlines/dates wherever possible; *and*
- 4.1.2. have read information provided by the Course Team and University on the Exceptional Circumstance procedure, and sought timely clarification from their Course Team if needed; *and*
- 4.1.3. are aware of and have considered the implications of making an Exceptional Circumstance request before submitting it (and where they are unclear, discuss this with their Course Team), for example:
- 4.1.3.1. extending a deadline / postponing an examination/TCA may impact upon other, future deadlines;
- 4.1.3.2. students are not permitted to request additional coursework extensions or postponed examinations/TCAs on the basis of increased workload as a result of previous extensions/postponements;
- 4.1.3.3. coursework extensions or postponed examinations/TCAs may lead to delays in the provision of Module results (and in some cases, progression or award decisions);
- 4.1.3.4. for students subject to visa requirements, delayed results (particularly where this occurs close to the end of their course), could impact upon their visa requirements and/or application to the Graduate Route.
- 4.1.4. continue to work towards completing or taking their assessment, and for coursework assessments submit as soon as possible, whilst awaiting an outcome for any request submitted; *and*
- 4.1.5. meet the submission, timeframe, criteria and evidence requirements for the type of request they are making, as set out in this procedure; *and*
- 4.1.6. identify in their request the specific timeframe their circumstance will/have affected them for; *and*

¹⁰ Unless GDPR exceptions apply, see EC webpage guidance for more details.

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- 4.1.7. save a copy of their request, for their record; *and*
 - 4.1.8. monitor their email account on a regular basis following submission of their request, respond in a timely fashion to any communications from a member of their Course Team and contact the Course Team in a timely fashion if they have questions about their request outcome; *and*
 - 4.1.9. are aware of any new deadline/date (and associated assessment requirements), set as a result of an approved request, in advance of that deadline/date.
- 4.2. Students are expected to act with integrity in making use of this procedure.
- 4.2.1. Where there is reasonable suspicion that student misconduct may have occurred in relation to any element of the Exceptional Circumstance procedure, the student may be subject to action under the University's Student Conduct Procedure.
- 4.3. If a student believes the Exceptional Circumstance procedure has not been followed in processing or reaching a decision on their request, they may raise this matter through the relevant route. See section 6 for details.
- 4.4. Should a student fail to meet an extended coursework deadline offered through an approved Exceptional Circumstance, the standard procedure in relation to late submission of coursework will apply (or the assessment will be recorded as a 'non-submission' where no attempt is made).
- 4.5. Should a student fail to attempt a postponed / further opportunity for an examination or TCA resulting from an approved Exceptional Circumstance request, the assessment will be recorded as a 'non-submission'.

5. Staff Responsibilities

Course responsibilities

- 5.1. All staff responsible for any element of this procedure (administrative or decision-making) must undertake training. **NB:** *Course/School Teams will be responsible for identifying staff which require training in a timely fashion.*
- 5.2. It is the responsibility of the relevant Course Team to:
- 5.2.1. process Exceptional Circumstance requests in accordance with this procedure; *and*
 - 5.2.2. consider each request on its merits and impartially; *and*
 - 5.2.3. communicate the decision and, where approved, outcome to the student within the timescales set in this procedure; *and*
 - 5.2.4. where declining a request, provide a reason for doing so and information about the appropriate route to request a Review of the decision; *and*
 - 5.2.5. for Student Route students, take into consideration whether any issues raised within the request may impact the student's attendance/engagement and, where appropriate, notify to the Compliance team.

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- 5.3. Where a student is studying with more than one subject (e.g. combined honours), the receiving Course Team is expected to ensure the other subject's Administrative Team (and where relevant Course Director) are aware of the student's request, and (where required) are involved in the decision making for that request.
- 5.4. Where a student studies with a Partner Institution, the Partner is responsible for ensuring all relevant University staff are notified of the decision outcome in a timely fashion.
- 5.5. Should there be reasonable suspicion of student misconduct in relation to any element of the Exceptional Circumstance procedure, take timely and appropriate action in line with the University's Student Conduct Procedure.
- 5.6. It is the responsibility of the Faculty receiving the request to maintain a record of all requests and decisions taken, storing all data securely in line with the University's [Student Privacy Notice](#) and [Retention Schedule](#).
- 5.7. The Course Team will report any Exceptional Circumstance decisions which result in a deferral to the Board of Examiners for agreement. The Board will take its decision on the deferral in line with the Regulations for Taught Awards.
- 5.8. Where a decision is taken by the Faculty Panel, the Course Team is responsible for:
 - 5.8.1. implementing the outcome from the Panel, in line with all relevant University procedures.
 - 5.8.2. providing any additional information to the student regarding the assessment arrangements, as required.
 - 5.8.3. where a Panel has required the Course Team to discuss appropriate medium- or long-term support options with the student, this action is undertaken in a timely fashion after the decision, a record of that discussion is retained and the outcome of the discussion is reported to the Panel for information.

Composition, convening and conduct of a Faculty Panel

- 5.9. The Director of Registry Services, in consultation with the relevant Dean of Faculty, will approve the arrangements for the establishment of Faculty Panels and may appoint suitable individuals to serve on those Panels.
- 5.10. At least two members will sit on each Faculty Panel, one of whom shall be the Chair. A Panel may however consist of more than two members.
- 5.11. A Panel Chair will be independent from the student under consideration and therefore may not be the Course Director or Chair of the Course's Board of Examiners. **NB:** *Chairs should be individuals with significant experience of Board of Examiners processes.*

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- 5.12. A Panel Member will be independent from the student under consideration and therefore may not be the Course Director or Chair of the Course's Board of Examiners. **NB:** *Panel members will be drawn from academic staff.*
- 5.13. Panels will meet on a regular basis to ensure timely consideration of requests. Panels may consider requests from a range of courses at the same meeting.
- 5.14. Panels are not course specific and therefore may consider any request from a student on any undergraduate or taught postgraduate course.
- 5.15. The Panel will consider each request on its own merits and, where the request is approved, offer an appropriate outcome based on this procedure.
- 5.16. Where a proposed extension length or date for a postponed/new opportunity has been provided by the Course Team, the Panel will confirm whether that timeframe/date is considered acceptable and may therefore be applied.
 - 5.16.1. In very rare cases, where the Panel agree a coursework extension of more than 14 days as appropriate, they will agree the extension deadline in consultation with the Course Director and taking into account the relevant Board of Examiner timeframe.
- 5.17. The Panel Administrative officer is responsible for:
 - 5.17.1. ensuring all decisions are communicated to the student within the timeframes; *and*
 - 5.17.2. the relevant Course staff are made aware of the decision.

6. Requesting a Review of an Exceptional Circumstance decision

Scope

- 6.1. Students may only use this process where they have received a decision for a submitted Exceptional Circumstance request.
 - 6.1.1. If a student has not submitted an Exceptional Circumstance request but, after a Board of Examiners decision has been provided to them, wishes to identify issues which may have impacted their studies or assessment, they must do so through the [Academic Appeal Procedure](#).
- 6.2. Where a student's request is declined due to one of the following reasons (which fall outside the scope of the Exceptional Circumstance procedure), the student may not use the Exceptional Circumstance Review route. If the student wishes to request consideration of their issues in relation to the assessment(s) in question, they must use the Academic Appeal Procedure to do so.
 - 6.2.1. A Self-Certification or Evidence-Based Request was received for an assessment already submitted; *or*
 - 6.2.2. Any type of request was received after marks and/or feedback had been provided for the assessment(s); *or*

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- 6.2.3. Any type of request was received after the assessment(s) had already been presented to and agreed by a Board of Examiners.

Timeframe and Process for making a Review request

- 6.3. An Exceptional Circumstance Review request must be received within 10 working days of the decision notification.
- 6.3.1. The Director of Registry Services or nominee may agree to extend the time allowed to submit a Review request, where there is a good cause to do so. For example, the student being ill or otherwise incapacitated.
- 6.3.2. Review Requests received after the assessment in question has been presented to and agreed by a Board of Examiners will not be considered.
- 6.4. To request a Review of an Exceptional Circumstance decision (other than those listed in 6.1-2), a student must use the appropriate form.
- 6.5. Students must submit with their form, appropriate supporting evidence which demonstrates the issues raised in their request statement.
- 6.6. Students may get advice on completing the Review request form from CCSU Advice Centre (advice@ccsu.co.uk).
- 6.7. Students will receive confirmation of the form's submission.
- 6.8. Students are advised to retain a copy of their form for their record.

Grounds on which a Review will be considered

- 6.9. A Review Request will only be considered under one (or more) of the following grounds:
- 6.9.1. There is evidence which demonstrates the processing and/or decision-making for a request was not undertaken in line with the Procedure.
- 6.9.2. There is new evidence available which could not reasonably have been provided at the time of submitting the request, and which may have had a material impact on the decision reached on the request.
- 6.10. Students are not permitted to request a Review of:
- 6.10.1. The professional judgement of an Exceptional Circumstance decision maker or Faculty Panel in determining whether the request met the criteria for approval and, where approved, the outcome offered in line with the procedure.
- 6.10.2. The proposed date for postponed / new examination or TCA attempt.
- 6.10.3. The application of the Regulations for Taught Awards regarding deferrals.

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Consideration of a Review request and possible outcomes

- 6.11. If a Review request is received which is not eligible for consideration under the Exceptional Circumstance Procedure, the request will be declined and details of the reason for doing so will be provided to the student.
- 6.12. If the request is eligible for consideration, the Director of Registry Services will appoint a Reviewer to consider the case.
- 6.13. The Reviewer will be a member of staff outside of the student's Faculty, and not involved in the consideration of the case previously.
- 6.14. The purpose of the review is to determine (as appropriate to the ground(s) set out by the student):
 - 6.14.1. whether the procedure was appropriately followed in processing and/or taking a decision on the Exceptional Circumstance request;
 - 6.14.2. whether the evidence provided is new and may have had a material impact on the decision for the request.
- 6.15. In reaching a decision, the Reviewer will consider the statement and evidence provided by the student, along with any relevant information / evidence held by the University (or the relevant Partner Institution) regarding the Exceptional Circumstance request in question.
 - 6.15.1. The Reviewer will not meet with the student or staff members, however they may request additional written information or evidence from either party, where this is necessary in order to reach a decision.
- 6.16. The Review will normally be completed within 20 working days of assignment to the Reviewer.
 - 6.16.1. Occasionally, it may be necessary to extend the timeframe for completing the review. Where this is the case, the Reviewer will notify the student and keep them regularly informed of progress and the expected date they will receive the review outcome.
- 6.17. If the Reviewer determines one or more ground has been demonstrated as met, the only outcome which will be given is to void the original Exceptional Circumstance decision and refer the Exceptional Circumstance request to a Faculty Panel for a new decision.
 - 6.17.1. The new decision of the Panel will be binding.
 - 6.17.2. Where the decision to which the Review relates was made by a Faculty Panel, the case will be referred to an alternative Panel within the University.
- 6.18. If the Reviewer determines the case has not demonstrated it meets one or more ground, they will confirm this to the student and the original Exceptional Circumstance request decision will continue to stand. This represents the end of the internal procedure.

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Completion of the University's internal Exceptional Circumstance procedure

- 6.19. The following decisions represent the completion of the University's internal Exceptional Circumstance procedure:
- 6.19.1. A Review request is submitted too late for consideration under the Exceptional Circumstance procedure; *or*
 - 6.19.2. Where the Reviewer refers the Exceptional Circumstance request to a Faculty Panel (6.17), and that Panel declines the request; *or*
 - 6.19.3. The Reviewer finds no grounds to have been demonstrated by the student.
- 6.20. The University subscribes to the Office of Independent Adjudicator (OIA) scheme. Should a student remain dissatisfied after finishing the internal Exceptional Circumstance procedure, they have the right to submit a complaint to the OIA.
- 6.20.1. The student should refer to the OIA website to establish whether their complaint is something that the OIA would consider under its Rules. The OIA will normally only review issues after a student has completed the University's internal Exceptional Circumstance Procedure. Full details regarding the OIA's rules and guidelines are available on their website: [Can you complain to us? - OIAHE](#).

7. Quality Assurance

- 7.1. The Faculty will review anonymised data on Exceptional Circumstance implementation on an annual basis, for the purpose of identifying areas of good practice or development.
- 7.2. The University will review the operation of arrangements annually, including data on implementation within Partner Institutions.
- 7.3. In submitting an Exceptional Circumstance request a student may reveal sensitive personal information (including Special Category Data). The University will respect confidentiality, and ensure such information is managed and stored in line with the Student Privacy Notice.
- 7.4. An Exceptional Circumstance will not be recorded on a student's final Transcript.

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8. Acceptable & Unacceptable Reasons for Requests

8.1. Circumstances that would normally be considered as grounds for requesting an Exceptional Circumstance:

Acceptable Grounds for Making a Request	
Reason Category	Additional details
Accident or injury	
Appearance at Court	
Recent Bereavement	
Crime	including being the victim of violent crime, theft or being investigated by the police
Exceptional Unexpected Caring Responsibilities	including illness of child, parent, sibling, spouse or partner
Exceptional Unexpected Professional Difficulties	including direct involvement with OFSTED or other professional body inspection
Exceptional Family Crisis	including major illness of relative or partner, divorce or separation
Exceptional Financial Difficulties	where there is clear evidence that the situation is serious, unexpected and not of the student's own making
Hospital Appointment	when reasonably cannot be rescheduled and directly conflicts with an examination or time-constrained assessment
Involvement in a national or international event	including participation in a national or international sporting, fine art or musical event
Major and Exceptional Travel Disruptions	where evidence clearly shows that an alternate mode would not be possible or could not have been remedied by better time organisation
Pregnancy, Maternity and Paternity	including a difficult or unplanned pregnancy
Serious or significant personal incidents	including house fire, homelessness, unexpected house move, direct experience of natural disaster
Short-term Illness	including flu, gastroenteritis, migraine, emergency dental issues

8.2. Circumstances that would **not** normally be considered as grounds for requesting an Exceptional Circumstance:

Unacceptable Grounds for Making a Request
Term-time holidays or weddings
Normal work/life/study pressures
Childcare issues (unless exceptional and unexpected)
Pregnancy of a relative or friend (not student's partner or wife)
General financial difficulties

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Minor ailments e.g. cough, cold or headache
Hangover
Oversleeping
Misreading assessment deadline/date or examination timetable
Medical conditions not diagnosed or properly supported by a medical professional, including medical notes that state 'patient informs me that...' or 'student declared they had been unwell...'
Taking the wrong examination
Doing the wrong coursework assessment
Stress resulting from involvement in an Academic Misconduct, Student Conduct, Professional Suitability or Low-Level Concerns and Student Fitness to Practise case
Academic workload pressure: including multiple deadlines within a short period of time, including where this has resulted from previous approved Exceptional Circumstance requests
Not understanding the subject or question
Difficulties in accessing resources or computing accounts due to outstanding University debt (unless evidence to prove that it is not of the students own making)
Issues between friends
Illness or loss of pets
Unexceptional transportation difficulties including delayed public transport or car breakdown
Computer difficulties or equipment failure: including loss of file, uploading incorrect file to the relevant VLE, inability to access internet or computer breakdown (unless this relates to specialist software/equipment required for reasonable adjustment in relation to a student's disability)
Supporting a friend at court
Circumstances supported solely by evidence from a relative/partner/friend, or individual where there is a conflict of interest

Exceptional Circumstance Procedure

Document Information	Description of Document Information
Document Title	Exceptional Circumstance Procedure
Department Owner	Registry Services
Document Category	Academic Administrative Practice Students
Document Owner	Director of Registry Services
Document Manager	Registry Policy & Projects Manager
Related University Policies	Student Engagement with Learning Policy UKVI Sponsored Students: Attendance & Engagement Policy and Procedure Academic Integrity Policy Interruption Policy Regulations for Taught Awards
Related University Procedures	Temporary Learning Agreement Procedure Expectations for Student Behaviour Student Conduct Procedure Academic Misconduct Procedure Procedure for Formal Examinations Late Penalties Procedure Student Privacy Notice Retention Schedule
Approved by	Education and Student Experience Committee
Date Approved	4 August 2023
Date of Commencement	1 August 2023
Review Date	June 2024
Version	5
History of revisions of the Document	Version 4, approved by the Education and Student Experience Committee: 6 November 2019
Web Address	https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/quality-and-standards-office/regulations-policies-and-procedures/regulation-and-credit-framework/assessment-procedures.aspx