



## Hull York Medical School

### Policy on Exceptional Circumstances affecting Assessment and Examination

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<b>Committee</b>	<b>Outcome/Date of approval</b>
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<a href="#">Website</a>	1 August 2019

To obtain this Code of Practice in an alternative format contact [governance@hyms.ac.uk](mailto:governance@hyms.ac.uk)

**This Policy is currently under review. An amended policy is expected to be approved and applied during academic year 2019-20. This current published policy remains in place until an amended policy is approved and is not subject to any caveat before being replaced.**

## Definition of terms

The following terms will apply throughout this Policy:

<b>Assessment</b>	refers specifically to a piece of academic work which is a requirement for academic progression at programme level. This will include summative and formative assessment. There is a wide range of assessment types such as written essays, portfolio submissions, written examinations, oral examinations, posters, presentations, online activities and practical work.
<b>Affected assessment</b>	is one where the outcome is likely to have been affected by relevant exceptional circumstances for which acceptable evidence has been provided. The assessment may have been missed, failed or passed.
<b>Assignment submissions</b>	are assessments that require work to be submitted by a specific deadline. Such assessments might include essays, portfolio submissions, online activities, posters and practical work books.
<b>Non-clinical examinations</b>	are assessments that occur on a specific, dedicated fixed date and require a student to participate in an examined piece of work individually or as a group. These might include written examinations, oral examinations, practical examinations, presentations.
<b>Clinical examinations</b>	are assessments that occur on a specific, dedicated fixed date and require a student to participate in an examined piece of work involving real or simulated patients in a clinical setting. These include OSCEs and OSLEs.
<b>Fit to Sit</b>	A student who attends or participates in a <b>clinical examination</b> (e.g. with patients/simulated patients) is declaring themselves to be in a fit state to do so. By declaring themselves 'fit to sit' a student cannot normally submit a retrospective claim that their performance was adversely affected by exceptional circumstances. This is aligned with the principle that a Medical Practitioner must be 'Fit to Practise' and has a responsibility and duty of care to ensure that this is the case. <i>In some cases, exceptional circumstances on the day of or during an examination may be taken into consideration (see <a href="#">Section 7.8</a>).</i>
<b>Day</b>	is a working day: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday or Friday ( <i>excluding public holidays/university shutdown days</i> ).
<b>Student</b>	includes all students studying a Hull York Medical School programme.

## Student support

If a student is experiencing any problems, difficulties or circumstances affecting their ability to study, whether personal, medical, financial or other, and no matter how big or small, they should contact the School Student Support Team in the first instance, for advice on the best course of action to take.

Email: [student.support@hyms.ac.uk](mailto:student.support@hyms.ac.uk) (this email address is for both UG and PG students).

Alternatively, students can ring the Hull York Medical School Student Support Team on one of the following numbers:

- Student Support Manager 01482 464025
- Student Support Assistant (Hull) 01482 463074
- Student Support Assistant (York) 01904 321695
- Postgraduate Research Administrator (Hull) 01482 464123
- Postgraduate Taught Administrator (York) 01904 321360

**Other School Policies available, which may be relevant to particular circumstances include:**

[Policy on Disability and Reasonable Adjustments in Assessments](#)

[Policy on Student Welfare and Support](#)

[Policy on Leave of Absence](#)

[Equal Opportunities Policy for Students](#)

### **All applicants should note the following:**

Where a claimant discloses information of a specific nature, which would give rise to **safeguarding concerns**, this information will be made available (in strictest confidence) to the School Student Support Manager, regardless of the eventual outcome of the claim and may be investigated further by the School.

Where a claimant discloses information of a specific nature, which would give rise to **student fitness to study concerns**, this may result in a referral by the Case Management Group to the Student Fitness to Study Panel, under the terms of the [Hull York Medical School Code of Practice on Student Fitness to Study](#).

Where a claimant **falsifies information** or discloses information of a specific nature, which would give rise to **student fitness to practise concerns**, this may result in a referral by the Case Management Group to the Student Fitness to Practise Committee, under the terms of the [Hull York Medical School Code of Practice on Student Fitness to Practise](#).

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## 1. Preface and purpose

- 1.1. Hull York Medical School aims to provide all students with the support and guidance needed to successfully complete a programme of study. The aim of the exceptional circumstances process is to ensure that fairness and academic standards are maintained for all our students who endeavour to manage the challenges inherent in academic study. It is imperative that only *exceptional* circumstances are approved under this Policy.
- 1.2. The Policy on Exceptional Circumstances Affecting Assessment and Examination is adopted from both the University of York Exceptional Circumstances affecting Assessment Policy and the University of Hull Code of Practice: Mitigating Circumstances. The School aligns its key policies with its parent Universities to ensure that we consistently meet the standards set out within the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education.
- 1.3. This Policy applies to extension requests for assignment submission deadlines and exceptional circumstances affecting any examinations. Students can submit a claim for Exceptional Circumstances which can result in being offered the opportunity to take an exam again 'as if for the first time' or being offered an extension to a submission deadline.
- 1.4. Exceptional circumstances are medical or personal issues that a student may encounter, which are **serious** and **unusual**, and go beyond the normal daily challenges experienced in academic study. They are usually **unpredictable** (i.e. the student could not reasonably have been expected either to avoid or to allow for them in planning for or preparing assessment work), take place in **close proximity** to an assessment or deadline and have **seriously impaired** a student's academic performance during the assessment period for which they are claiming.
- 1.5. If a student's preparation for, performance in, or completion of an assessment or examination has been seriously impaired by medical or other unforeseen exceptional adverse circumstances, then this may be taken into account under this Policy. No allowance can be made within this process for circumstances affecting attendance or other work during the unit of study, except where the assessment itself is closely linked with the attendance.
- 1.6. The School promotes valid submission of exceptional circumstances claims as a **proactive student support process** enabling students to complete their programme of study successfully. Students must take responsibility for their own submission of exceptional circumstances and for seeking academic and pastoral support at the earliest opportunity when they have encountered problems during their studies.
- 1.7. For more long-standing conditions, disabilities and circumstances<sup>1</sup> students will be expected to have made full use of the appropriate support services provided by the

Universities (e.g. Disability Services) in order to have relevant reasonable adjustments made, and/or to develop coping strategies which will enable them not only to be successful in their studies but also in post-university life. Please refer to the [Hull York Medical School Policy on Disabilities and Reasonable Adjustments in Assessments](#)

- 1.8. Where students are aware of pre-existing long-standing conditions, disabilities and circumstances, it is **expected** that these are declared to the parent University as soon as they are known to allow the School to agree appropriate reasonable adjustments in advance of any assessed work. Applications for exceptional circumstances where these relate to a pre-existing condition will not normally be accepted, unless there has been a substantial and unforeseen change in the condition.

**Example:** A student has been diagnosed with a specific learning difficulty before joining the Medical School. The student should make an appointment at the start of their programme of study, with their home University Learning Support, Disability Advice or equivalent service. The student will then be assessed by the relevant University team and a support plan, including recommendations for reasonable adjustments to assessments, will be produced. The support plan and recommendations will be made available to the School Student Support Team who will then meet with the student and agree on what adjustments can be made.

- 1.9. Where necessary, students with conditions or circumstances which cannot be resolved or accommodated within a programme of study may need to consider temporary Leave of Absence from the programme in order to allow them to re-engage when they are better able to do so. Please refer to the [Hull York Medical School Policy on Leave of Absence](#).
- 1.10. In exceptional circumstances, and as a supportive mechanism, Hull York Medical School reserves the right to initiate a Leave of Absence for a student on any Hull York Medical School module or programme, who is judged, on substantial evidence, to be unfit to study by reason of health, behaviour or conduct and where continuation of study may pose a risk to themselves or others. In such circumstances the student's studies may be suspended even in the absence of the student's consent provided the appropriate procedures are followed. This may involve referral to a number of agencies such as Occupational Health and will require adherence to the requirements of the respective universities' fitness to study policies, referral via the [Hull York Medical School Code of Practice on Student Fitness to Study](#) and in some cases onward referral via the [Hull York Medical School Code of Practice on Student Fitness to Practise](#).

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<sup>1</sup> The definition of a disability is a physical or mental health issue 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 issues and long-standing or recurrent mental ill-health.

1.11. Both Hull York Medical School and its parent Universities offer a range of student support services and opportunities to enable students to manage the challenges and demands of academic study<sup>2</sup>. All support services are accessible to all students directly, without the need for referral. Accessing support when required is a strength and will never be interpreted by the School as a sign of weakness. It is a feature of academic and subsequent professional success for some students to access support services in order to identify and develop appropriate strategies. It is an **expectation** that Hull York Medical School students will access the relevant services if they require them, sometimes signposted by their supervisor or other members of the academic community.

## 2. Students with disabilities

- 2.1. If a student has a physical or mental health issue that has a substantial and long-term negative impact on their ability to study, they should seek support and reasonable adjustments to assessment(s) through Hull York Medical School Student Support, and Disability Services at their University of registration. Support and reasonable adjustments, including variable adjustments such as extensions for fluctuating conditions, should be approved as part of a University provided Student Support Plan, and will not normally be accommodated using the Policy on Exceptional Circumstances Affecting Assessment and Examination.
- 2.2. If a student has a disability, a claim for exceptional circumstances can still be submitted where adjustments have not been made in time for an assessment, as long as the delay in the implementation of the adjustments was not caused by the student's failure to engage with appropriate support.
- 2.3. Consideration of a previously declared, long-term 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 Exceptional Circumstances Committee (ECC) would need to consider whether the student had the opportunity, experience or time to manage the situation.

**Example:** A student has been coping with an inflammatory bowel disease (a long-term medical condition for more than one year) and making satisfactory academic progress from Year 2 to Year 3. However, near the period of the Year 3 end-of-year summative examinations, the condition worsens suddenly and affects the student's ability to prepare for the examinations. The student should be encouraged to submit a claim for exceptional circumstances providing medical evidence that there has been a change or increase in severity of their condition.

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<sup>2</sup>These may include financial, emotional, mental health or disability related issues or may result from difficulties in terms of housing, visa application or other difficulties that certain students may face.

- 2.4. 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.

### 3. Authority and principles

- 3.1. The Hull York Medical School ECC is responsible for the consideration of all Hull York Medical School student claims for exceptional circumstances affecting assessments, in accordance with this Policy. It is a sub-committee of, and accountable to, the MB BS Board of Examiners, Intercalated Board of Examiners, and Postgraduate Board of Examiners. Each decision made by the ECC on student claims of exceptional circumstances will be communicated to, and ratified by, the appropriate Board of Examiners.
- 3.2. The ECC must meet, electronically or in person, at the conclusion of each defined examination period. Meetings may occur more frequently as required. Each meeting should, where possible, be held at least three working days prior to any relevant Board of Examiners meeting in order that these recommendations may appear on the relevant reports.
- 3.3. Consideration of exceptional circumstances must always take place prior to consideration of any assessment result by the Board of Examiners. Each Board of Examiners has responsibility for making assessment and examination recommendations for individual students, in light of the ECC's decision regarding a submitted claim. The Board of Examiners will communicate the outcome of each claim to the student in a timely manner.
  - 3.3.1. External examiners must not be involved in the exceptional circumstances decisions made by the ECC, but can be consulted as part of the Board of Examiners recommendation for adjustments to assessments and/or examinations.
- 3.4. The Board of Examiners has the authority to challenge the decision of the ECC. If the outcome of the claim is changed, this change must be reported formally to the Hull York Medical School Board of Studies in writing.
- 3.5. Each Board of Examiners is ultimately accountable to the Board of Studies, which is the final arbiter of the interpretation of this Policy. Ratification of claims of exceptional circumstance should be reported to the Board of Studies by each Board of Examiners on an annual basis.
- 3.6. Consideration of exceptional circumstances cannot be *anonymous* but should remain *confidential*. Documentation submitted should only be shared with relevant members of the ECC and senior Hull York Medical School staff, on a need to know basis. Circumstances will not normally be disclosed outside the Committee, the School Student Support Team and the recording of decisions. See [Sections 3.8, 3.9](#) and [3.25](#) for exceptions to this rule. All documentation relating to a claim will be stored securely and confidentially by the School.



- 3.7. The ECC may not interview any individual when considering exceptional circumstances.
- 3.8. In cases where a student discloses information of a specific nature, which would give rise to safeguarding concerns, this information will be made available (in strictest confidence) to the School Student Support Manager and senior School staff, regardless of the eventual outcome of the claim. The School has a duty of care to all students and will pursue safe-guarding concerns in accordance with the [Hull York Medical School Policy on Student Welfare and Support](#).

**Example:** A student submits a claim which discloses a serious mental health problem (with suicidal ideation) previously undisclosed to the school. The claim on this occasion is rejected because it was not submitted within the specified timeframe. However, the information disclosed in the claim needs to be passed to the Student Support Team to ensure the student is fully supported moving forward.

- 3.9. Where a claimant discloses information of a specific nature, which would give rise to **student fitness to study concerns**, this may result in a referral by the Case Management Group to the Student Fitness to Study Panel, under the terms of the [Hull York Medical School Code of Practice on Student Fitness to Study](#).
- 3.10. It is the responsibility of Boards of Examiners to set and publish the deadlines for the submission of exceptional circumstances in relation to particular assessments.
- 3.11. Exceptional circumstances should normally be considered, and any recommendations applied, before the end of the stage of the programme during which they occur.
- 3.11.1. Consideration of exceptional circumstances should take place throughout the academic year to ensure students receive the outcome of their submission in a timely fashion.
- 3.11.2. As far as possible, approval of arrangements to alter the deadline for completion of an assessment (whether coursework submission or formal examination) must be made in advance of the deadline.
- 3.11.3. Consideration of exceptional circumstances with a view to promote to a higher class of degree (e.g. MB BS with Honours or PGT with Distinction) will not normally be accepted. Exceptional circumstances should be received, considered and decisions made throughout the programme of study, so should not be re-visited at the end.
- 3.11.4. Where it has not been possible for a claim to be submitted and considered before the end of the stage of the programme during which the exceptional circumstances occurred, a student may appeal the recommendation of the Board of Examiners. In such cases, students should be informed of their right to appeal within 28 calendar days of receipt of the Board of Examiners recommendations, and follow the procedure set out in the [Hull York Medical School Code of Practice on Academic and Fitness to Practise Appeals](#).

It is not expected, however, that the award of a higher class of degree would be recommended without full and formal consideration of the individual circumstances of any such case.

- 3.12. Where an assessment or examination is affected by exceptional circumstances, the normal timescale for **completion of the programme** should be adhered to as far as possible.
- 3.12.1. This principle applies to situations where assessments have been affected by exceptional circumstances rather than to situations where attendance/receipt of teaching has been affected.
- 3.12.2. Where a student has not received teaching or met attendance requirements as a result of exceptional circumstances, a leave of absence or repeat year of study, which will extend the normal length of the programme, may be required.
- 3.13. Third-party applications for the consideration of exceptional circumstances should not be accepted, unless the submitter has power of attorney for the student concerned.
- 3.14. Where a claim is approved and the student is offered an attempt 'as if for the first time', the options which will be available if that attempt is failed must be explained to the student before the attempt takes place. Where the student fails an assessment taken 'as if for the first time' at a particular period of the academic year, a leave of absence may be needed to accommodate any further (re-)assessment.
- 3.15. Where a claim is approved and the student is offered an attempt 'as a second (re-sit) attempt', the options which will be available if that attempt is failed must be explained to the student before the attempt takes place. Where the student fails an assessment taken 'as a second (re-sit) attempt' the student's programme of study should be terminated, subject to the usual route of appeal.
- 3.16. Where a decision of exceptional circumstances is taken outside a meeting of the ECC, by Chair's Action, a report of such decisions should be made to the next meeting of the ECC, whether that is the scheduled meeting or an interim meeting called by the Chair of the ECC, and thereby recommended to the relevant Board of Examiners. The student record system should be updated with the decision as soon as possible and, in any case, within a week of each formal meeting.
- 3.17. Where a student registered to a Hull York Medical School Programme is undertaking an intercalated degree at a different institution or a host department within the University of Hull or the University of York and **is registered with that department or institution for the duration of their intercalated study**, any claim of exceptional circumstances should be applied for with, and processed by, the relevant host department or institution in accordance with their exceptional circumstances policy and procedure. Decisions made by the host department or institution should be reported to the Hull York Medical School Intercalated Board of Examiners for record.
- 3.18. Where a student registered to a Hull York Medical School Programme is undertaking a module of study at a host department within the University of Hull or the University

of York (e.g. as part of the MSc in Physicians Associate Studies or Postgraduate Training Scheme), any claim of exceptional circumstances should be applied for through this Policy and procedure. The outcome will then be reported to the School Board of Examiners and the to the relevant host department's module board, by Hull York Medical School

- 3.19. Where a student is not registered to a Hull York Medical School Programme but is undertaking a Hull York Medical School module (e.g. a student studying Archaeology at the University of York and taking the Virtual Anatomy module with Hull York Medical School), any claim of exceptional circumstances should be applied for through the exceptional circumstances policy of their registered Programme and not this Policy and procedure. The student's registered Programme will then be required to report the outcome of the claim to the School, before the relevant School Board of Examiners meeting.
- 3.20. Circumstances which might be acceptable as exceptional under this Policy will not normally be acceptable as a defence against the award of penalties in relation to academic misconduct. For the treatment of exceptional circumstances with respect to academic misconduct, please refer to the [Hull York Medical School Code of Practice on Academic Integrity and Conduct](#).

**Example:** The death of a close relative is an exceptional circumstance against the award of a particular mark for a summative assessment, since the death adversely affected the student's performance on the assessment for which that mark was awarded. This death is not an exceptional circumstance against the award of penalties for having committed academic misconduct on the assessment (e.g. plagiarism or cheating in a written exam).

- 3.21. In accordance with the [Hull York Medical School Code of Practice on Investigation and Determination of Student Complaints](#), students have the right to make a complaint against the exceptional circumstances process but cannot appeal the outcome of a claim. Appeals against a decision of an Exceptional Circumstances Committee can only be made on the basis of procedural irregularity in the decision making or because there is evidence that could not have provided at the appropriate time, and that the student believes may alter the outcome of a claim.
- 3.22. In accordance with the [Hull York Medical School Code of Practice on Academic and Fitness to Practise Appeals](#), students have the right to appeal a progression recommendation within 28 calendar days of Board of Examiners ratification.
- 3.23. This Policy should be applied in accordance with [Hull York Medical School Equal Opportunities Policy for Students](#).
- 3.24. Providing false information within a claim application is considered a disciplinary offence by the School and both Parent Universities. To seek to gain an advantage through providing false information is liable to action being taken under the [Hull York Medical School Code of Practice on Academic Integrity and Conduct](#).
- 3.25. Falsifying information or disclosing information of a specific nature, which would give rise to student fitness to practise concerns may result in a referral by the Case

Management Group to the Student Fitness to Practise Committee, under the terms of the [Hull York Medical School Code of Practice on Student Fitness to Practise](#).

## 4. Evidence

- 4.1. For any claim of exceptional circumstances to be properly considered and an outcome be agreed upon by the Committee, appropriate supporting evidence **must** be submitted with the claim. Any claim without such evidence will normally be rejected.
- 4.2. Evidence must give **direct confirmation of the circumstances leading to the submission, from which it is possible to infer their effect on the student's ability to engage with work in general, or assessment tasks in particular.**
- 4.3. Evidence must be written in English or as an official translation into English obtained by the student. The ECC may take reasonable steps to satisfy themselves of the authenticity of any documentation and the relationship of the author to the claimant.
- 4.4. Evidence must be made at the time of the circumstances or as soon as possible thereafter and indicate the period of disruption, including the duration of the impact. Institutional support services can only provide the type of evidence required when a student has used, or is currently using, the services provided to address the circumstances. The person providing any medical evidence should normally be an independent and relevantly-qualified third party professional.
- 4.5. If a student is too ill or suspects themselves to be too unwell to attend a doctor's surgery or other support service at the time of the assessment or examination, they should contact the School Student Support Team via telephone or email at the earliest opportunity.
- 4.6. In the event that the person providing evidence does not see the student at the time of the affected assessment or examination, but believes the circumstances have prevented the student both from engaging with the affected assessment/examination AND with support services, a claim may still be considered. The evidence in such a case needs to clearly explain the extent to which the circumstances have affected the student and how they could have prevented the student from engaging with professional support services at the time.
- 4.7. In the event evidence is not available at the time of submitting the claim form, it **should, where possible, be received within ten working days of the claim being submitted.**
- 4.8. If a claim is received, but supporting evidence has not been provided by the aforementioned deadline, the Committee may consider the claim and make a provisional decision 'Pending Evidence' if the following conditions are met:

4.8.1. Stated the nature of the evidence

4.8.2. Stated why evidence is not currently available and the ECC accepts the reason(s)

4.8.3. Stated when the evidence will be available and it is submitted by this date

**Example:** A student has an accident close to the time of an assessment and medical evidence has been requested but not yet supplied by the doctor in time for ECC consideration.

4.9. Where the Committee has made a decision 'Pending Evidence', the evidence should be received before ratification of results by the relevant Board of Examiners. If appropriate evidence is received within this period, a final decision will be made and the outcome ratified by Board of Examiners. If no evidence is received within this period, the claim will be dismissed and the original mark for the assessment or examination will stand.

## 5. Circumstances normally approved and types of acceptable evidence

*The following examples are indicative but not exhaustive.*

<b>Circumstances normally accepted</b>	<b>Examples of evidence that would support a claim based on this circumstance (original documents required)</b>
<b>Compassionate grounds</b> (e.g. exceptional personal/emotional circumstances)	A letter from the Open Door Team at the University of York, Student Wellbeing, Learning and Welfare Support at the University of Hull, a counsellor or a relevant independent third-party explaining that, <i>in their professional opinion</i> , the circumstances have had a serious impact on their ability to engage with academic work effectively during the assessment period in question.
<b>Exceptional Medical grounds</b> (e.g. serious or incapacitating illness, injury or medical condition, sudden and significant deterioration of on-going/longer-term medical condition, or emergency operation on or shortly before the day of an examination or assessment deadline, or during the revision period)	An original medical certificate or letter (on headed paper) from a suitably qualified medical practitioner (normally a GP or hospital specialist, who is registered with the General Medical Council in the UK or the equivalent overseas practitioner), psychiatrist or educational psychologist as appropriate. The student should have had a consultation with this individual <b>during the period of illness for diagnosis or treatment</b> and is therefore able to attest to the student's condition at the time and the impact of the circumstances on their academic performance.  Retrospective certification of a condition will not normally be accepted (that is, a note from the doctor/practitioner indicating that the illness/condition was presented to them after the event but the student

	<p>was not seen at the time of the illness). However, refer to <a href="#">Section 4.5</a> for further information.</p> <p>In the case of hospitalisation, the student should provide documentation showing the date of the admission and discharge from hospital and details of the condition that resulted in admission. The documentation should also detail any health issues that may follow on from this hospitalisation.</p>
<p><b>Sudden serious illness or death of a dependent or close family member</b> (The following relatives are accepted as 'close' without further evidence: partner, child, parent, sibling, grandparent, and grandchild. For other individuals, evidence of dependence or closeness in the form of a statement from a third-party should also be provided).</p>	<p>Medical certification, death certificate, letter from an independent relevant professional confirming the nature and severity of the illness or death (e.g. doctor, solicitor or an undertaker) or an order or service from the funeral ceremony. In the case of serious illness of a dependent or close family member, the impact this has had on the student's ability to study and/or complete an assessment/examination should be clearly indicated, (e.g. visiting relative in a hospice, having to shoulder extra responsibilities, etc.).</p>
<p><b>Victim of a serious crime, involvement in accident, or any other incident involving the emergency services</b></p>	<p>Written statement of events, supported by written evidence from the relevant emergency service (e.g. police report) OR a crime reference number OR an insurance claim OR a valid medical report</p>
<p><b>Disabilities for which reasonable adjustments are not yet in place and where the delay in their implementation is not the fault of the student</b></p>	<p>A letter from a home university Disability Service OR relevant Medical Evidence.</p>
<p><b>Exceptional and unforeseeable transport difficulties (major transport incident, cancelled flights but not every-day issues e.g. traffic congestion, missed train or bus)</b></p>	<p>A letter from the relevant transport company or evidence of a major road accident (e.g. a copy of online or newspaper reports on the accident/delay). For longer distance travel, original travel tickets/documents should be provided which indicate an intention to travel to arrive at least one hour before the examination or deadline for submission of work. Documents for revised travel arrangements should also be provided.</p>
<p><b>Jury Service (UK citizens only)</b></p>	<p>The Courts will permit Jury Service to be deferred for students in higher education on one occasion. Jury Service will therefore only be considered as an acceptable exceptional circumstance if a deferral has been refused in which case the student should provide a letter from the Court with proof that their request for a deferral was rejected or with proof that a previous request was accepted.</p>
<p><b>Legal proceedings requiring attendance</b></p>	<p>Official correspondence from a solicitor or the Court confirming the date and time of required attendance.</p>

(e.g. being charged with criminal offence)	
<b>Divorce or significant relationship breakdown (parental or self)</b>	If a student is involved in divorce proceedings and misses an assessment, the student needs to provide official correspondence from the Court confirming the date and time of the required attendance. If parents are involved in divorce proceedings and this has impacted significantly on a student's ability to study, the student will need to provide appropriate evidence of this ( <a href="#">see Compassionate Grounds</a> ).
<b>Interviews for work placements or for employment which cannot be changed</b>	Evidence showing that the interview date cannot be rearranged.
<b>Paid work commitments or constraints arising from paid employment (for part-time students only)</b>	If a student is studying part-time while in full- or part-time employment, it is expected that the student will have informed their employer of this and of the need for the student to be present for assessments at certain times of the year. There may, however, be extraordinary circumstances at work which will mean that it is impossible for the student to be present. In such cases, the student will need to provide evidence of employment explaining that the circumstances have had a serious impact on their ability to engage with academic work effectively during the assessment period in question.

## 6. Circumstances not normally approved and reasons why

*The following examples are indicative but not exhaustive.*

<b>Exceptional circumstances not normally deemed to be acceptable</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>A claim without appropriate, independent supporting evidence</b>	It is the student's responsibility to provide appropriate, independent supporting evidence. Letters from family, fellow students, academic supervisors, tutors or mentors are not normally sufficient on their own.
<b>A claim which fails to make clear to the ECC which assessments have been affected or the way in which they have been significantly affected</b>	It is the student's responsibility to make clear to the ECC how their circumstances have adversely affected their academic performance.
<b>A claim submitted more than ten working days after the deadline for submission of a claim</b>	Deadlines are clearly communicated to students by the School

<p><b>A claim is submitted after the assessment marks have been ratified by the Board of Examiners.</b></p>	<p>The claim is submitted after the assessment marks have been ratified by the Board of Examiners. Claims submitted after ratification cannot be considered by an ECC. Such claims must be considered as formal appeals and students should refer to the <a href="#">Hull York Medical School Code of Practice on Academic and Fitness to Practise Appeals</a>.</p>
<p><b>Reluctance to disclose circumstances as they are personal, sensitive or confidential</b></p>	<p>The ECC can only consider circumstances if they are disclosed in line with this Policy. The student's circumstances are considered by a small group of Committee members which considers all cases in strictest confidence. As educated citizens, students are responsible for their own wellbeing and should proactively seek academic and pastoral support from School Student Support Team at the earliest opportunity when they have encountered problems during their studies.</p>
<p><b>Circumstances are not in close proximity to the assessment or over and above normal difficulties</b></p>	<p>The timing of the circumstances cited would not have adversely affected the specified assessment(s) or examination(s). The nature of the circumstances cited is not over and above the normal difficulties experienced in life or the evidence submitted does not support the claim that the nature of the circumstances was over and above the normal difficulties experienced in life.</p>
<p><b>Circumstances have already been used in a previous claim</b></p>	<p>Sufficient adjustment has already been made for the same circumstances; the evidence has already been used to support adjustment for the same assessment or examination and no new evidence has been provided.</p>
<p><b>Minor illnesses</b> (e.g. coughs, cold, hay-fever)</p>	<p>Students are expected to manage these and they do not normally have a significant impact on academic performance.</p>
<p><b>Pregnancy</b></p>	<p>Pregnancy is not an exceptional circumstance, unless the pregnancy results in a medical condition, in which case appropriate evidence should be submitted. If pregnancy results in a medical condition that affects assessment or examination, students are encouraged to approach University Disability Services who will discuss each case in relation to possible reasonable adjustments.</p>
<p><b>Self-diagnosed examination nerves, stress, insomnia</b></p>	<p>Most students experience these and similar symptoms ahead of and during assessment periods. These are not therefore normally considered as acceptable exceptional circumstances unless a medical diagnosis of illness has been made, in which case a letter from a medical practitioner should be provided.</p>



<b>Disabilities for which reasonable adjustments have been made or where the student has experience and sufficient time to manage the situation</b>	Reasonable adjustments made by the School should have addressed the needs of diagnosed disabilities.
<b>Long-term illness or disability where earlier disclosure would have enabled Disability Services to have put reasonable adjustments in place</b>	Unless the disability was diagnosed part way through studies and consideration needs to be given to the period when reasonable adjustments were not in place, long-term illness and/or disabilities are not normally considered as acceptable exceptional circumstances as consideration has already been given to them. It is a student's responsibility to proactively disclose and seek help for their long-term illness and/or disabilities.
<b>Refusals to take up support offered by the Disability Services</b>	If students do not take up support offered, they cannot later expect the ECC to take into account difficulties they may be experienced and which impacted on their studies.
<b>Personal/domestic events that could have been anticipated and/or arrangements made or choices in a student's personal life</b> (e.g. family holidays, family celebrations, weddings, attending or taking part in sporting, social or extra-curricular activities, moving house, routine childcare)	These are not normally accepted as exceptional circumstances as such events can be anticipated and alternative arrangements made.  If personal/domestic events coincide with submission deadlines it is the responsibility of the student to submit work before the stated submission deadline or inform the School an examination will be missed. In the case of missed examinations, the Board of Examiners may permit a student to re-sit but this would count as a second attempt and the results will be capped.
<b>Oversleeping</b>	It is a student's responsibility to ensure that they submit work by the published submission deadline and/or arrive at scheduled examination venues before the scheduled start time.
<b>Misreading the timetable</b>	It is a student's responsibility to ensure that they are aware of the location of an examination as well as the start time and duration.
<b>Examinations/deadlines which are scheduled close together or on the same day</b>	These are unlikely to constitute acceptable exceptional circumstances as students are aware of such scheduling in advance and are expected to manage their time accordingly.
<b>Academic workload</b>	Students are expected to manage their academic workload.
<b>Paid employment/voluntary work or constraints arising from paid employment/ voluntary work for full-time students</b>	Full-time students are only permitted to work part-time, i.e. for a maximum of 20 hours per week to support their studies and should arrange such work or voluntary work so that it does not conflict with their responsibilities as a student.
<b>IT and/or computer issues,</b> (e.g. submission of incorrect document, file type or file size,	Loss or corruption of files is not an acceptable exceptional circumstance as students are expected

computer crash, loss of work not backed-up or printing problems close to the deadline, upload after a submission deadline, technical issues without proof of error message or system failure)	to keep a back-up copy of work which is electronically generated and stored. Students are expected to submit work electronically with care to avoid mistakes. Students should submit work electronically before a deadline, allowing sufficient time to troubleshoot and resolve any problems they may encounter before the deadline.
<b>Problems in group work where other members of the group do not cooperate</b>	This should have been raised with the School and resolved at the time.
<b>Minor, local transport problems</b> (e.g. normal rush hour traffic, not allowing enough time in travel plans for minor unanticipated delays, missed public transport)	Students are expected to plan travel to campus / placement / assessment site in such a way that there is some contingency for unanticipated delays due to road works, a minor accident, etc.
<b>Visa problems which prevent a student from returning to the UK for examinations</b>	It is a student's responsibility to take steps to apply for a visa well ahead of their return and to anticipate that there may be some minor delays. If, however, an application was submitted in a timely fashion and the delay occurred at UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI) or other relevant agencies, the student will need to provide evidence of the date of their request for a visa and any other documentation from the UKVI relating to the processing of their visa.
<b>Cultural celebrations</b>	If these coincide with submission deadlines, it is a student's responsibility to submit work or inform the School an examination will be missed ahead of such events. In the case of missed examinations, the Board of Examiners may permit a student to re-sit but this would count as a second attempt and the results will be capped.
<b>Driving test</b>	If a driving test interferes with studies (i.e. prevents a student taking an examination or submitting work on time), this is both foreseeable and preventable and students are expected to reschedule.
<b>Planned health appointments</b>	These are foreseeable and clashes should be avoidable. Students are expected to reschedule appointments
<b>Financial difficulties</b>	These are not normally exceptional circumstances. The acceptance of financial difficulties as Exceptional circumstances will require evidence not only that they occurred, but also that they were unforeseeable, unavoidable and had a significant impact on the student's assessment. Students should inform the School of these difficulties at the earliest opportunity so that appropriate support is available.
<b>Unavailability of course books/resources</b>	It is a student's responsibility to ensure that they have access to learning materials made available by the School

<b>Breakdown of personal relationships</b>	Unless these lead to compassionate circumstances in which case appropriate evidence detailed above should be provided <a href="#">(see Compassionate Grounds)</a>
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## 7. Process for submitting a claim

- 7.1 If exceptional circumstances occur, students should seek appropriate support as closely as possible to the time of the occurrence. Early consideration means that decisions can be made and recommendations applied in a timely fashion.
- 7.2 Students should be advised to read through this Policy before completing and submitting a claim. They should attempt to discuss each application for exceptional circumstances with an appropriate member of the Hull York Medical School Student Support Team or Academic Staff, to ensure appropriate support and advice is received to complete the application in full.
- 7.3 Claims for exceptional circumstances will not normally be considered by the ECC without completion of the Hull York Medical School Exceptional Circumstances claim form and submission of appropriate and satisfactory supporting evidence, from an independent and relevantly qualified third-party professional. See [Section 4](#) and [Section 5](#) for further information relating to evidence requirements.
- 7.4 For an application of any kind to be considered *at all* it should be **received no later than ten working days after the assessment or date of the examination.**
- 7.5 Any claim submitted more than ten working days after the assessment deadline or examination will first need to be considered by the Chair of the Committee, who will determine whether there is sufficient evidence supporting a valid reason for late submission. Only if there is a valid, supported reason for the lateness of a submission, will it subsequently be considered by the ECC. Where there is no valid reason for late submission, the claim will not normally be considered.
- 7.6 Requesting an extension to assignment submission(s) deadline**
- 7.6.1 The intention in granting an extension is to compensate for any working time lost through the exceptional circumstances described in a claim.
- 7.6.2 Students should always work to the original deadline where possible. However, if a student's circumstances adversely affect the assignment being carried out, then a request for an extension should be made by completing a claim form and submitting it with evidence at the earliest opportunity. Having submitted a claim, Students should then work to their requested, extended deadline but try to submit the assignment as soon as possible. If the extension request is approved, the assignment will be marked without penalty. If the extension request is rejected, the assignment will incur late submission penalties, in accordance with the relevant and specific Programme regulations.

- 7.6.3 An application for an extension to an assignment submission deadline should normally be received no later than **24 hours before the original deadline**, to allow time for consideration in advance of the deadline.
- 7.6.4 Where a claim for an extension is received up to 48 hours before the original deadline, the claim should normally be considered and ratified, and the outcome communicated to the student, in time for them to meet the original deadline in the event that the claim is rejected. Claims received less than 48 hours before and up to ten working days after the original submission deadline will be dealt with as soon as possible thereafter.
- 7.6.5 The length of time requested for an extension to a deadline will be dealt with on an individual basis, according to each student's circumstances. The length of time requested should normally be supported by the evidence provided. For example, if a student applies for a two-week extension then the Committee would expect to receive evidence from a GP or another third party professional confirming that a two-week period was affected by the circumstances.
- 7.6.6 Extensions are granted for whole working days and are made from the date of the original submission deadline. Revised submission deadlines will be on a working day.
- 7.6.7 Where an extension goes beyond the Board of Examiners' scheduled meetings, students must be advised of the consequences of reassessment should they fail.
- 7.6.8 Extending a submission deadline may help ease the impact of exceptional circumstances, however the granting of an extension cannot subsequently be regarded as an exceptional circumstance for disruption to studies or failure in that or subsequent assessments. The granting of extensions will be agreed upon in the best interests of the student and any extension given, that moves a submission deadline into the next unit of study, will be discussed with the academic lead and, where necessary, the Student Support Team to ensure a student is appropriately supported throughout.

**Example:** A student is granted a ten-day extension to a submission deadline, which moves the new deadline into the next module of study with its own assessed piece of work. The student will be expected to complete the outstanding piece of work by the new deadline **and** the next piece of work by its original deadline. The student cannot submit a new claim of Exceptional circumstances for 'missing' two weeks in the following module.

- 7.6.9 It is the responsibility of the student to manage their time according to the assessment submission schedule and ensure that work is submitted by the published deadline. Missing a deadline will generally mean that work is subject to a penalty or may not be marked at all.

## **7.7 Exceptional circumstances affecting NON-CLINICAL examinations**

- 7.7.1 Exceptional circumstance claims relating to **non-clinical examinations** (e.g. written examinations, oral examinations, practical examinations, presentations) may be submitted before or immediately after attempting the examination, or if an examination is missed. Note, that the procedure for clinical assessments is excluded from this – see [Section 7.8](#).
- 7.7.2 As outlined in [Section 7.4](#), students will normally have ten working days from the date of the examination to submit a claim of exceptional circumstances with supporting evidence to the ECC.
- 7.7.3 If a student is taken ill during a non-clinical examination, they must report this to the examination invigilator who will submit a report to the appropriate Board of Examiners. The student is unable to continue they will be expected to leave the examination venue. Students will be required to submit a completed claim form within ten working days of the examination and should provide appropriate supporting evidence with the completed claim form.

## **7.8 Exceptional circumstances affecting CLINICAL examinations**

- 7.8.1 Students should be made aware at the start of the unit of teaching whether an assessment is defined as a 'clinical examination' (e.g. with patients/simulated patients). If it is, it will be subject to the 'Fit to Sit' policy.
- 7.8.2 **Exceptional circumstance claims relating to clinical examinations** (e.g. OSCEs, OSLEs) **can only be submitted if the student has not taken part in the examination.**
- 7.8.3 By taking part in a clinical examination, a student is declaring themselves 'Fit to Sit'. As future medical practitioners, students have a responsibility to practise medicine safely and maintain professional conduct in all settings. This is aligned to General Medical Council (GMC) and Faculty of Physician Associates (FPA) guidance that registered medical practitioners have a duty to recognise whether or not they are fit to practise and if they are not, then it is their responsibility to declare this and not attend work.
- 7.8.4 If a student is *taken ill during a clinical examination* to the point where they are unable to continue, they should inform the lead examiner or invigilator, who will submit a report to the Board of Examiners and the student will be expected to leave the examination venue. The student will then be required to submit a completed exceptional circumstances claim form within ten working days of the affected exam day(s) and should provide appropriate supporting evidence with the completed claim form.
- 7.8.5 If a student declares themselves 'Fit to Sit' and completes a clinical examination, but subsequently believes an underlying medical condition (e.g. mental health issue or a physical health condition that progressively worsens or persists throughout the examination) has affected their overall performance

or their judgement in deciding whether they were fit to sit or not, they have the right to appeal the progression recommendation made by Board of Examiners. In this situation, students should contact the School Student Support Team at the earliest opportunity and refer to the [Hull York Medical School Code of Practice on Academic and Fitness to Practise Appeals](#). However, a short-term mitigation is not normally the correct resolution for such situations and a Leave of Absence should be considered. Students should refer to the [Hull York Medical School Policy on Leave of Absence](#).

## 8. Outcomes and recommendations available to students

- 8.1. The Exceptional Circumstances Committee is responsible for making a decision on the *validity and outcome* of each submitted claim. The Committee report the outcome(s) to the relevant Board of Examiners, who in turn are responsible for making examination and/or assessment adjustment *recommendations* and communicating both outcome and recommendation(s) to the student.
- 8.2. Once the process is complete, the relevant Board of Examiners will communicate the outcome and recommendation(s) in a timely manner, via a letter from the Chair of the Board, emailed to the student. The expected turnaround time is three working days from the point the claim is received, though this may need to be longer if the claim is a complex case or during busy assessment periods.
- 8.3. There are three possible **outcomes** to an exceptional circumstances claim:
  - 8.3.1. **Claim Approved** (circumstances meet criteria with sufficient supporting evidence).
  - 8.3.2. **Claim Rejected** (circumstances do not meet criteria, either because they are not exceptional or there is insufficient supporting evidence).
  - 8.3.3. **Claim Approved Pending Evidence** – more details required (circumstances may meet criteria but insufficient evidence has been provided or queries have been raised).
- 8.4. The following *recommendation(s)* may be made by a Board of Examiners in response to an '**Approved**' claim outcome.
  - 8.4.1. For assignment submissions, the original deadline may be extended. Any extension granted will be determined by the length of time that the exceptional circumstances have affected the assignment, in addition to the time taken by the ECC to arrive at the decision.
    - 8.4.1.1. An extension will normally be **no longer than the period for which the circumstances have affected performance** and should be for a **maximum of 10 working days from the original submission deadline**. Requests for longer extensions can be considered by Board of Examiners, but should never be longer than the total time originally available to complete the work and may require a student to take a Leave of Absence.

- 8.4.1.2. In the case of students in their final year of study, permission to complete the assignment after the end of the programme will result in a postponement of graduation, and requires permission from the Board of Studies. In the case of taught postgraduate students, the Board of Studies can approve extensions of up to six months. The deadline for extensions for non-final year students beyond the end date of the summer term in other years should not be later than the end of August. If an extension beyond the end of August is necessary, a leave of absence may be appropriate and requires permission from the Board of Studies.
- 8.4.2. For examinations (clinical and non-clinical), the opportunity to take an examination 'as if for the first time' during the specified re-sit period or next appropriate/scheduled opportunity.
- 8.4.2.1. Where an examination is taken, and a new attempt 'as if for the first time' is offered as compensation for exceptional circumstances, the mark from the new assessment would replace any mark already obtained from the original impaired assessment, irrespective of which is higher. Please note that there is no provision for adjusting a student's assessment mark or degree class where a claim is approved. A new attempt or submission will be required and a new mark applied to this.
- 8.4.2.2. Where the opportunity for a sit 'as if for the first time' is offered, the student is permitted to *decline* that opportunity and their original mark will stand. If the offer of a sit 'as if for the first time' is accepted, the mark from the new sit will stand, even if it is lower than the previous mark achieved. Students are not permitted to choose between two marks. Failure to attend or submit 'as if for the first time' will be treated as declining the opportunity to do so.
- 8.4.2.3. Within the confirmation of the outcome letter, the School will set a date by which students must confirm to the relevant Board of Examiners their decision to accept or decline the sit(s)/submission 'as if for the first time'.
- 8.4.3. For examinations (clinical and non-clinical) the opportunity to take a different form of assessment to the original assessment, 'as if for the first time'. This will usually be for practical reasons, e.g. so that the assessment can take place in time for the next stage of the programme or if the original assessment involves group work which cannot be carried out in the re-assessment period. Alternative assessments must be feasible, fair, proportionate and give equivalent outcomes and cannot be in a format that the student has never previously encountered.
- 8.4.4. Completion of additional work to complete the original learning outcomes of the programme (e.g. where practical work has been only partially completed).
- 8.4.5. The opportunity to repeat of some or all elements of previous study.
- 8.4.6. For all credit bearing, modular programmes: if a single module mark is created from a number of marks from assessments testing the same learning outcomes, the following rule may apply: The relevant Board of Examiners can, in order to produce a module mark, recommend to the Board of Studies

waiving no more than 20% of the overall module mark. This is only possible when the learning outcomes for the module have been met 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 40 credits per stage, provided that the learning outcomes for the module(s) have been achieved. Where the exceptional circumstance affects an assessment that contributes more than 20% of the overall mark, the student will be expected to complete the assessment component following the recommendation of the ECC.

8.4.6.1. If a module has been approved by Hull York Medical School Joint Senate Committee to be non-re-assessable, a revised submission (referral) of work already submitted may be permitted. Nevertheless, the following are never permitted:

- Substitution of marks
- Changing of marks

The following is only permitted with the approval of the Hull York Medical School Board of Studies:

- Waiving or pro-rating of marks beyond that permitted above

8.5. The following *recommendations* may be made by a Board of Examiners in response to a '**Rejected**' claim outcome:

8.5.1. **For non-submission by a stated deadline**, a zero or 'Fail' grade will be awarded for the first piece of work. Students will be required to submit a piece of work by the agreed re-sit/re-submission deadline, the mark for which will be capped in accordance with the Programme of Study.

8.5.2. **For late submission after a stated deadline**, normal late submission penalties for that submission within the Programme of Study will be applied.

8.5.3. **For a missed examination**, a zero or 'Fail' grade will be awarded for the first sitting. Students will be required to sit the examination(s), as a re-sit, during the agreed re-sit period. The grade for the affected re-sit examination(s) will be capped in accordance with the Programme of Study.

8.5.4. **For an examination that has been sat**, the original grade awarded based on student performance in the examination will stand. In the case of Undergraduate examinations, if this is a 'Fail' grade the student will be required to sit the failed examination(s) as a re-sit, during the agreed re-sit period, provided the examination is not already a final attempt. In the case of Postgraduate Taught programmes if a grade of 'Fail' in an examination results in an overall failure of a module of study, the student will be required to re-sit the whole module. The grade for the affected re-sit examination(s) or module will be capped in accordance with the Programme of Study.



8.5.5. If a claim is 'Rejected' but there is evidence that was not brought to the attention of the ECC, at the time of their decision, that could have led them to a different decision on the claim, and there is good reason why the evidence was not presented at the appropriate time, the recommendation from the Board of Examiners can be appealed and students must follow the procedure set out in [Hull York Medical School Code of Practice on Academic and Fitness to Practise Appeals](#).

8.6. The following *recommendation(s)* may be made by a Board of Examiners in response to an '**Approved Pending Evidence**' claim outcome.

8.6.1. All possible recommendations outlined in [Section 8.4](#) may be made with the caveat that appropriate supporting evidence be received by the Committee by a specified deadline, which will be communicated in the outcome letter.

8.6.2. If evidence is not received by the deadline given or documents submitted as evidence fail to meet the criteria laid out in [Section 4](#) or [Section 5](#), the outcome of the claim will be amended to 'Rejected'. In such cases, the relevant recommendations outlined in [Section 8.5](#) will be applied by the Board of Examiners.

Under Review

## Appendix A: Terms of Reference of the Exceptional Circumstances Committee (ECC)

*(A sub-committee of MB BS Board of Examiners, Intercalated Board of Examiners, and Postgraduate Board of Examiners)*

### Membership

The Membership of the ECC requires approval by the Board of Studies. The ECC must consist of a minimum of seven members, selected by the Chair of the Board of Studies in consultation with the Dean of Hull York Medical School, as follows:

- **Chair** - an experienced academic member of School staff who is not the Chair of any School Boards of Examiners or Board of Studies
- **A Deputy Chair** - this should be a permanent member of the Committee, nominated by the Chair to deputise on their behalf where necessary
- **Two academic members** of School staff from the **MB BS Programme**
- **One academic member** of School staff from the **Intercalated Programme(s)**
- **Two academic members** of School staff from the **Postgraduate Programme(s)**
- **One member** with expertise in **disability support**

The ECC meetings should be serviced by the Secretary of ECC, and all decisions must be recorded.

The term of service of the Chair and all members should normally be three years and may be extended to four years in exceptional circumstances approved by the Board of Studies.

In cases where a formal complaint has been lodged against a member of the ECC by a student making a claim of exceptional circumstances, or there is an evidenced conflict of interest for a member of the ECC, that member should exclude themselves from the consideration of the relevant case(s). If, as a result of such exclusions, the ECC has insufficient members to conduct its business, then the Chair of ECC may propose to the Board of Studies that alternative members should be co-opted.

Quorum for Committee decision: **3 members\*\*** (including the Chair OR Deputy Chair)

*\*\*in most cases it is expected that the Chair of the ECC will take Chair's Action for individual claims, rather than each going to full Committee decision. Where a claim is more complex or the initial decision is to reject the claim, it will be put before a full Committee for a final decision to be made.*

Students are not permitted to attend the ECC meetings.

### Frequency of meetings

The ECC shall meet in advance of Boards of Examiners meetings. It shall also meet to review and evaluate exceptional circumstance claims as they present themselves throughout the academic year to ensure that students receive the outcome of their claims in a timely fashion.

Meetings may take place either in person or virtually (via email or other suitable electronic means). However, in all cases, quorum must be adhered to and adequate records kept of all decisions made.

## Terms of Reference

1. To establish and review appropriate policies and procedures for exceptional circumstances of students undertaking a Programme of Study.
2. To review exceptional circumstance claims submitted by students in order to reach a decision, in accordance with Policy on Exceptional Circumstances affecting Assessment and Examination, on whether those circumstances have affected a student's academic performance adversely during the assessment period for which they are claiming.
3. To operate under delegated powers from the Boards of Examiners and to ensure that decisions are made on a fair, impartial and consistent basis. Any conflict of interest shall be declared at each meeting.
4. To ensure that decisions regarding the approval or rejection of exceptional circumstances are entirely evidence-based. The Exceptional Circumstances Committee shall not endorse exceptional circumstances where no evidence is submitted. Decisions on an outcome can be pending where exceptional events cause delay in obtaining evidence.
5. To take account of the severity and duration of the circumstances described and their coincidence with a critical point in the assessment period. Each claim will be considered on an individual basis.
6. To make formal recommendations to the relevant Board of Examiners in regard to the decisions of exceptional circumstances:
  - 6.1. **Claim Approved** (circumstances meet criteria with sufficient supporting evidence).
  - 6.2. **Claim Rejected** (circumstances do not meet criteria, either because they are not exceptional or there is insufficient supporting evidence).
  - 6.3. **Claim Approved Pending Evidence** – more details required (circumstances may meet criteria but insufficient evidence has been provided or queries have been raised).
7. To determine if the student should be referred to the School Student Support Team for pastoral support in the light of the circumstances described.
8. To monitor and review exceptional circumstances trend data and provide an annual report to the Boards of Examiners.