



UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Guidance for Staff on Extenuating Circumstances (reviewed July 2022)

This Guidance should be read in conjunction with the Code of Practice on Extenuating Circumstances.

Acronyms used in this document

EC(s)	Extenuating Circumstances
ECF	Extenuating Circumstances Form
ECO	Extenuating Circumstances Officer
ECP	Extenuating Circumstances Panel
PAU	Principal Academic Unit
RAP	Reasonable Adjustment Plan
RSA	Research Student Administration (Registry)
SCCA	Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals (Registry)
TSA	Taught Student Administration (Registry)

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1. Introduction

- a. This guidance is to support staff implementing the Code of Practice on Extenuating Circumstances.
- b. For Joint Honours programmes or similar, the Home School" (i.e. the School that leads the programme) will normally make decisions for all Extenuating Circumstances (EC) claims, even when the assessment is not part of a module within the School. A Home School must always tell the module-owning School of any decisions made by the EC Panel as soon as possible (email is fine). This does not include extensions, however, which should be dealt with by the School that owns the module and not the Home School.
- c. Additional College/School-based guidance should be provided to students about the ECs process, although Registry (Academic Services) will provide generic guidance for students. This applies to overseas provision also. School-based guidance should state the following (in an easily accessible place, for example, on a Canvas page) and normally be available from the start of the academic year:
 - i. Any professional requirements that may impact on the outcome of an



EC claim (for example when 'Award Notwithstanding Regulations' is not available as a professional body expects all assessments to be passed).

- ii. Contact details of relevant staff members
- iii. Relevant deadlines
- iv. Relevant information for PGTs and UGs, should practice vary within the School.

2. Related procedures (see also Appendix)

a. Deferrals

- This relates to deferral requests which are submitted within 10 University working days of the notification of the final exam timetable, based on known events, e.g. an elite sporting commitment. Elite sporting commitment covers those students who are current members of the University's Elite Dual Career Athletes Pathway (EDCAP). Elite sporting commitment may include students competing at international level, attending an international level selection event or National Governing Board training camp.
- The 10-day deadline applies to exams/assessments scheduled via the centrally-managed timetable. Schools can adopt a local process for locally-managed assessments.
- There should never be cause for students to use the deferral process and the ECs process. If a request for a deferral has been refused and there has been no change in the student's circumstances, then a submission requesting a deferral under the ECs process should not be accepted.

b. Short Extensions to Coursework Submission Deadlines

- Students facing difficulties submitting coursework (such as essays and dissertations) should utilise the Extension process in the first instance - see Guidance on Coursework Extensions for UG and PGT Students. Only if difficulties persist that aren't mitigated by the extension, should an EC be submitted

3. What are ECs?

- a. Students are advised that ECs are situations that:
 - i. They could not predict what would happen;
 - ii. They had no control over; and
 - iii. Have seriously affected their ability to study or do their exam/assessment.
- b. ECs don't necessarily need to happen around exam/assessment times – a student may have missed a significant amount of taught sessions, which would put them at a disadvantage in an assessment.
- c. If a student has a Reasonable Adjustment Plan (RAP) in place, this will not be accepted as an EC, unless there has been a specific period of deterioration (for example a student who takes medication to control a medical condition is advised to change their medication. This has a significant effect on the student and they are ill as a result. The student should submit an EC claim on the basis that whilst their RAP covers their medical condition, it does not take account of deterioration).
- d. Students with a known disability when joining the University should declare it at that time and get a RAP in place. If, however, a student is diagnosed whilst at University (for example they have dyslexia diagnosed in the second semester of the first year), ECs can be considered for the assessments as neither the University nor the student have had a chance to put in place any reasonable adjustments. A BoE may want to review a student's degree classification if the diagnosis was so late (for

example in the final year of study) that no reasonable adjustment was able to be put in place. In this instance, the student should submit all evidence of the diagnosis, as well as the date of diagnosis, to the EC Panel for consideration.

4. Grounds for consideration of ECs

- a. The following are valid reasons for making a claim for ECs if a student is able to show they have been prevented from studying and/or doing assessments. There are many more reasons than those listed below¹.
 - i. Illness or injury that has lasted for longer than one week that is serious enough to stop them from researching, writing, revising for assessments and studying as normal.
 - ii. Death of someone close to them, or the significant, ongoing effects of grief following the death of someone close to them.
 - iii. Being the victim of crime (including harassment and assault).
 - iv. Family difficulties (including crises, serious illness, unexpected childcare or caring responsibilities) meaning they need to provide significant support.
 - v. Financial hardship that they could not have foreseen or controlled.
 - vi. Major computer problems (including major Wi-Fi or system failure during an online assessment).
- b. Claims based on the following will not be successful.
 - i. Minor illnesses (such as colds).
 - ii. Minor computer problems that could have been prevented with adequate planning (for example, not allowing enough time to print assessments or for interruptions in internet coverage whilst travelling).
 - iii. Stress and anxiety (including panic attacks) caused by the assessment (unless the claim is supported by medical evidence and diagnosed as an illness).
 - iv. Misreading exam timetable or location details.
 - v. Having assessments close together.
 - vi. Moving house or attending events (such as weddings) that are planned in advance of the exam timetable being published.
 - vii. Employment or voluntary work (unless it is as a result of financial hardship that could not have been foreseen).
 - viii. Sports activities (unless the deferral of an examination process could not be used, for example if a student has received late confirmation of their selection for a particular team). However, where the claim is made by a student who is a current member of the University's Elite Dual Career Athletes Pathway (EDCAP) the University will seek to support the claim where it is reasonable and appropriate to do so. UoB Sports will ensure that Colleges, via their Wellbeing Officers, are kept updated of the current members of EDCAP.
 - ix. Extracurricular activities, such as evening classes.

The following reasons for making an ECs claim will normally only be accepted from part-time students and students on Apprenticeship programmes:

- i. Moving / Purchasing or unexpected renovations to a home – if the moving date clashes with teaching, submission of or preparation for assignments.
- ii. Increased workload at their main employment.
- iii. Change of employer / role.

5. EC Evidence

- a. Students will normally need to provide evidence with their Notification of Extenuating Circumstances Form (ECF) to support their claim. Students who have difficulty in obtaining the appropriate evidence in time should contact their College Wellbeing

¹ It is accepted that other reasons may be taken into account for non-standard programmes due to, e.g. funding models
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Officer.

- b. Students are responsible for getting and submitting all evidence they want to use to support their ECF. Staff do not gather the evidence for the student to support their ECF. Evidence should be provided by students by the advertised College deadline.
- c. If the evidence is not submitted (or not sufficient), it is appropriate for Wellbeing Officers (or other appropriate colleagues) to contact the student to request further information. The Wellbeing Officers (or other) will not liaise directly with third parties to gather more evidence on the student's behalf. However, the ultimate responsibility for supplying appropriate supporting evidence lies with the student.
- d. For students who have a RAP in place, if there has been an exacerbation of their medical condition, they should normally provide an updated letter/note from a registered medical professional that details that an exacerbation of the student's condition has occurred.'
- e. The evidence supplied does not have to be an original document. We will accept good quality photocopied or scanned documents, including photographs, but we may decide we need to see the original as well (particularly if we believe the evidence to be false, forged or tampered with).
- f. If staff suspect the evidence to be false, forged or tampered with in any way (for example if staff notice the headed paper on a medical note has a spelling mistake) staff should contact Student Conduct (conduct@contacts.bham.ac.uk). It is a disciplinary offence for a student to submit fraudulent evidence but, unfortunately, is not unheard of.
- g. For medical-related circumstances, students can submit the University Medical Certificate together with any additional corroborating evidence as listed in the table below.
- h. Students are responsible for obtaining and providing translations (with appropriate certifications) of medical documents which are not written in English.
- i. If staff have concerns about the veracity of certain items, e.g. evidence from a non- medical professional, please contact Registry for further guidance (contact details at Section 11 below).

As a guide, the following evidence is acceptable.

Extenuating Circumstance	Evidence includes:
Student has had to self-isolate due to Covid-19 and work has been affected as a result.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-isolation note obtained by the student via the NHS website (https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note/)• Can be obtained if the student<ul style="list-style-type: none">- has symptoms of coronavirus- lives with someone who has symptoms of coronavirus



Student experiences a technological issue during an online assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is accepted that this may be difficult to evidence, but the student should provide whatever evidence is available (e.g. screenshot) if possible. They should also have the name of an appropriate member of staff (e.g. invigilator) to contact as soon as possible to explain the situation.
Serious illness or an accident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter from a healthcare practitioner or hospital Must be on official, headed paper Must be written at the time of the illness or accident Must say student is or will be unfit to study at the time of the assessment. Evidence of appropriate engagement with the University's Wellbeing Service may be accepted as medical evidence. Evidence of appropriate prescriptions may be accepted as medical evidence, provided that a detailed explanation of the impact of the condition upon the student and the purpose of the prescription is also included with the student's claim. Copies of referral letters should also be included where available * All written evidence must be submitted in English or accompanied by English translations (with appropriate certifications)
Very close relative is seriously ill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter from a healthcare practitioner or hospital confirming the circumstances and the effect these are having on the student's ability to do the assessment Must be on official, headed paper or have an official stamp Must confirm the dates of the illness
Very close family member or friend dies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical letter explaining how the student's grief is affecting their ability to do the assessment Death certificate Order of Service for funeral Death Announcement
Victim of a crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Police report giving the date of the crime Must be on official, headed paper <p>We do not accept crime reference numbers alone without further information about the circumstances/impact</p>
Serious family difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter from a doctor, solicitor or other professional person confirming the circumstances and dates (must be on official, headed paper) Evidence from a relevant, third party, professional of how the problem is affecting the student's ability to do the assessment



There is a significant change to a student's financial circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bank statements showing student's current financial circumstances• Letter of support from services set up to assist with students suffering financial hardship• Must be on official, headed paper.
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*If the student is unable to obtain any of the medical evidence described above they should consult an appropriate member of staff (e.g. Wellbeing Officer) for advice on what other forms of evidence may be appropriate to include within their claim.

j. **Online consultations** – please see below advice previously provided by the UMO regarding medical evidence obtained via online consultations:

- The types of medical consultations that patients are now having is becoming increasingly varied and includes consultations with
 - their own GPs (either in person, telephone or email)
 - another local GP service such as a walk-in centre or out-of-hours centre (OOH)
 - a service away from Birmingham e.g. walk-in centre, out-of-hours centre or possibly involving a GP where the student was previously registered (at their parental address) as a temporary patient, online GP services
- A patient's registered GP will always have access to the patient's full medical record and will therefore be able to provide an accurate assessment of the student's medical condition - but there is no guarantee that other GPs will.
- Online service providers are unlikely to have access to medical records** - they would in general be reliant on information given to them by the student only, with no proof of its accuracy.
- The weight given by the University to medical evidence provided would need to vary depending on who completes it and whether there was any corroborating evidence available to the GP.
- Students should be strongly encouraged to see their registered GPs (where possible) for completion of certificates during exams, re-sits and where major assessed pieces of work are affected by illness such as dissertations or other major submissions and therefore discourage the use of online GPs for the purpose of certification.
- The University would have to be especially cautious when dealing with students suffering from mental illness such as anxiety, depression, eating disorders, psychoses etc if relying on documentation from an online consultation. An online consultation (especially as the GP would most likely NOT have any medical records to confer with) would NOT suffice when trying to complete a medical certificate. These students must be asked to consult with their registered GPs for certification. Also see above guidance with regard to prescriptions and evidence of referrals.

**In Registry, we are aware of 'Babylon GP at hand' where registered users can switch from their GP surgery to Babylon (which is different to the service provided by Push Doctor for example). Babylon's Privacy Policy makes clear that they will receive a client's medical history from their previous GP once they register. Therefore, if a student is able to confirm that they are fully signed up to the Babylon service, any evidence they provide from Babylon should reasonably be considered by the University, balanced against the usual judgements, e.g. whether the evidence is contemporaneous with the relevant period, if it sufficiently demonstrates that the health condition had a negative impact on academic performance, etc.



6. EC Form submission and deadlines

- a. Students must submit their claim on the ECF to the designated person, and by any published deadlines as directed in the School-based guidance.
- b. If a student believes their ECs to be sufficiently confidential, they can normally submit them marking the submission "strictly confidential and for the attention of the Chair of the EC Panel only". The details of the EC claim will only be viewed by the Chair and the Wellbeing Officer receiving the claim'. The Chair will take the decision as to whether the claim warrants a recommendation to the BoE.
- c. Deadlines for ECF submission should, where possible, be set at the start of the academic year and made clear to all students. If a student submits an ECF and / or evidence after the deadline has passed, it cannot be considered and must go through the academic appeals route.
- d. Where ECs are raised in relation to examinations, this covers campus-based or online examinations.
- e. When setting deadlines, you should consider the following.
 - i. The EC Panel needs to be held in advance of the BoE as they will be recommending action to the BoE.
 - ii. Multiple deadlines for submission of ECFs are fine, so long as they are clear. For example, if all coursework assessments are completed by the end of May, it's not unreasonable to have an end of May deadline for coursework ECFs, then additional deadlines throughout the exam period for EC Forms. Whilst you won't know the specific exam dates at the start of term, you must tell students that the EC deadline is, for example, 25th May 2023, with rolling 24-hour deadlines for EC Forms after each exam.
- f. At least one deadline needs to be after the final exam, as students have 24 hours within which to submit an EC Form. Evidence should be provided by students by the advertised College deadline.
 - i. The 24-hours starts at the end of the normal expected finish time of an exam (for example, in a 3-hour exam starting at 9am a student is taken ill at 10:30am and leaves. The student will have until 12pm the following day to submit their EC Form).

7. Organisation of EC Panels (composition and scheduling)

- a. EC Panels should not normally have more than 5 members, but in some cases (for example College- level EC Panels that require representation from every PAU) may exceed 5. This should be checked with Registry (Academic Services) to ensure consistency of practice. EC Panels should ideally have a minimum of 3 members but it is acknowledged that there may be circumstances where this requirement can be waived, e.g. decision made by Chair's Action.
- b. It is generally expected that the Chair of the EC Panel will be an academic role holder, e.g. Senior Tutor. Wellbeing Officers should not act as Chair as they will generally be involved in compiling cases for the Panel to consider.
- c. Members of the EC Panel should include Wellbeing Officers and academic representatives. Membership of the ECP will be decided by the Head of PAU, will normally reflect the appropriate range of programmes and will not usually exceed 5 members.
- d. If there are very large cohorts, with large numbers of EC Forms, it may be best to hold Programme-level EC Panels. Again, this should be checked with Registry to ensure consistency.



- e. EC Panels should be scheduled to convene at appropriate points in the academic year (taking account of individual programme requirements) and are not limited to the final assessment period of the year.
- f. Although no Board of Examiners will be held in January, an EC Panel should normally take place after the January assessment period to consider all ECs cases that have been submitted in accordance with the deadline which will be set and publicised by the PAU.
 - An EC Panel should normally take place for the May/June and August assessment periods to consider all ECs cases that have been submitted in accordance with the deadline which will be set and publicised by the PAU.
- g. EC Panels must only meet **after the deadline for EC Form submission has passed** but before the relevant BoE has sat.
- h. EC Panels that take place in January should report their recommendations to the Board of Examiners for consideration following the May/June assessment period (see paragraph 9 below for guidance on notifications to students about the time lapse).
- i. Panels are advised to meet using video conferencing software such as Teams or other University approved system. If this is not possible for any reason, meetings may be held via email, with due regard to the sensitive information being discussed and data protection considerations, including the potential for subject access requests. Appropriate records of meetings and decisions should be kept, as normal.
- j. When holding a meeting online, Panel members must ensure that they are able to work in a space which will allow for confidentiality when discussing student cases. This is due to the sensitive nature of the information which may be presented or discussed, to avoid any exposure to vulnerable members of the same household e.g. children, and because the information discussed may constitute special category personal data in accordance with GDPR if the student in question is identifiable
- k. Cases must not be discussed outside of the meeting.
- l. The ECP can only make recommendations on the paperwork submitted and cannot use existing knowledge or any additional factors when reviewing the submissions. If members are aware of additional or contradictory information pertinent to the submission, the case can be referred back to the student for further clarification.
- m. A record must be kept of the outcome, but the student must only be referred to by their ID number. This can be done in any format of the EC Panel's choosing but should include the outcome and brief summary of the reasons for the recommendation.

Whilst we wouldn't expect you to disclose this summary (the student should be told of the outcome/recommendation as soon as practicable), a student is entitled to see this information upon request.

- n. Further advice for ECP held online:

Issue for Consideration	Action
Software / Access	All staff with access to a University of Birmingham laptop or PC should also have access to Teams or



	<p>Zoom. Staff should login to these platforms using their University email address.</p> <p>Wellbeing Officers or EC panel administration staff should confirm that all panel meeting attendees have access to the agreed platform prior to the meeting and it is recommended that attendees test their equipment in advance of the meeting.</p>
Data Protection (GDPR)	<p>All recommended virtual conferencing software is GDPR compliant. All other data recorded from Virtual Extenuating Circumstances Panels will be recorded via the University's usual processes.</p> <p>The summary documentation prepared by Wellbeing Officers will be sent to panel participants via a password protected document. The password for this document will be sent to panel members in a separate email. Panel members should not save these documents to their computer but rather open, use then delete.</p>
Unforeseen issues	<p>In the event that an attendee cannot access the meeting due to unforeseen IT issues or they are unable to secure a confidential environment, it may be appropriate for them to leave the meeting.</p> <p>The Virtual Extenuating Circumstances Panel will be able to continue, providing the Chair of the Panel remains in a position to continue with the panel meeting.</p>
Confidentiality	<p>As laid out in the University's Extenuating Circumstances Code of Practice, confidentiality of the ECs panel is 'paramount'. Ensuring confidentiality in a virtual meeting presents a new set of challenges.</p> <p>Maintaining a confidential environment for this type of meeting means ensuring all panel participants are in a secure location without other individuals present. The volume of attendees' devices should be appropriate, so that they can hear and participate on the meeting, but not so loud that the meeting may be heard elsewhere. Where a participant may have vulnerable family members within the same household, steps must be taken to ensure that sensitive topics are discussed without exposing family members to such subjects. The meeting should not be digitally recorded in any way. Panel members should also be able to ensure these conditions will be maintained for the duration of the meeting.</p> <p>EC Panel attendees should be advised of these required conditions prior to the meeting and should be encouraged to raise any issues at the earliest opportunity prior to the meeting taking place.</p>

	If at any point during the meeting attendees encounter issues with maintaining confidentiality, they should halt the meeting until this can be addressed.
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8. Possible EC Outcomes

Possible Outcome	What this means
Allow further sit/submit opportunity*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Another attempt at the assessment and the mark achieved will not be capped at the pass mark. Should the student fail the additional attempt, they will be able to re-attempt the assessment, following the usual University legislation. The mark from the additional attempt will replace any previous mark that was affected by the ECs even where the previous mark was higher. <p>* Students can seek this outcome even where they have passed the assessment. It needs to be made clear to students that they will forego their previous mark if they take this option.</p>
Allow further re-sit/re-submit opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Another attempt at the assessment but this mark will be capped at the pass mark. Should the student fail the assessment, they will not be able to reattempt it again. The mark from the re-sit/re-submit opportunity will replace any previous mark that was affected by the student's ECs.
Waive late penalties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any penalties applied to work for being handed in late will be removed If the assessment was a resit, then the mark will still be capped at the pass mark. If the total mark received is below the pass mark after the penalties have been removed, the student will fail the assessment.
Repeat the year in full (internal candidate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempt the year again, and the marks will not be capped. Original marks will be replaced by repeat year marks. Should the student fail any of the assessments, they will be able to have another attempt at these. The student will be expected to attend teaching sessions. As an internal student, they may incur additional fees for this year (for example, on a pro-rata basis or an additional year of tuition fees).



Resit the year in full (external candidate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempt the year again and marks will normally be capped at the pass mark. Original marks will be replaced by re-sit year marks, unless they passed the original assessment. Should they fail any of the assessments the student will not have another attempt at these (unless they were first sits). Not expected to attend teaching sessions (except in cases of continual assessment). As an external student, they will not normally be required to pay additional fees (dependent on whether any internal sits/resits are required for the purposes of continual assessment).
Proceed with low credit*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A student must pass 100-credits to move to the next level of their degree. They will still need 100-credits as a minimum but could move to the next stage with a failed mark. This may become an issue if they fail any other modules later in their studies. Programme leads/ Personal Academic Tutors (or the EC's Officer, if appropriate) should discuss how this might impact on a student's studies. <p>*If the number of credits would be too low, the BoE would need to decide whether to make a decision notwithstanding regulations.</p>
ECs carried forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circumstances will be considered when a BoE is discussing the degree classification at the end of the student's studies.
Award Notwithstanding Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This option may not be available if studying for a professional certificate or a body outside of the University accredits the programme. Students may receive a qualification or higher degree classification, if they have failed to pass the requirements but have ECs. This would rarely be used and consultation with colleagues in TSA/RSA would be needed prior to making this decision and may also require approval of the University's Progress and Awards Board.
Action already taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The student has already had an extension for coursework, etc.
No action required / submission rejected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ECs have been rejected and no allowances will be made.
Inadmissible under the Code of Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The reasons cited for the EC by the student are not valid under the Code of Practice or the evidence provided does not meet the requirement.

Additional notes on EC outcomes:

- Where first sits / resits are granted to students following the January EC Panel, students will not be able to take these during the May/June assessment period; they will take place in the supplementary period.
- Alternative Assessments: it is not possible for students to request this via the ECs process. A student could be granted an alternative assessment as an in-year

decision if registered with a RAP, provided that it still enables them to meet the programme and / or learning outcomes.

- c. Aegrotat awards: EC Panels can make recommendations on these awards to BoE for consideration, in accordance with Regulation 7 – Assessment, Progression and Award.

9. Notifying students of EC Panel outcomes

- a. Where the ECP takes place in January, you should confirm the outcome/ recommendation to the student and **advise that the Board of Examiners will make the final decision taking into account the recommendation of the ECP once it meets in June.**
- b. Where the ECP takes place in June (for the May/June assessment period) or September (for the August supplementary period), students should be notified of the final decision once the BoE has taken place.
- c. In relation to point a above, staff should ideally email the student within 5 working-days of the recommendation being made. Emails should always be sent to the student's University account.
- d. It is best practice to inform a student of why their ECs have been rejected where that is the recommendation but be clear that the process has ended at that point and it is not a negotiation for further consideration. If a student wishes to pursue the matter, they can consider an academic appeal (if they can evidence that a procedural irregularity has occurred or if there is new evidence now available and justification as to why this wasn't submitted at the time) at the appropriate time.

10. Group Work

- a. Assessments of a single piece of work prepared by a group (i.e. where one mark is given to the group), the group can submit one ECs claim on the basis of the circumstance affected all members.
- b. Where an individual student is affected by ECs, but not the wider group, a claim can be submitted to the EC Panel by the individual student, but it should be noted that the affected assessment is group work. The EC Panel will determine the suitable approach to the group. For example, if the assessment is a single piece of work prepared by a group and results in one mark, the ECs can be taken into account for all members of the group, even though they haven't all submitted an EC Form. The EC Panel retains the right to exercise discretion in this regard.
- c. Where the group work is based solely upon individual contribution, the claim will be dealt with as an individual claim and on an individual basis.
- d. Confidentiality will be respected as per section 6.

Type of Group Work	Possible Outcome
Group of students work collaboratively to produce one piece of work, with one mark awarded to the Group. One or more member of the group submits ECs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Award ECs to the whole group, as even though only one has submitted an EC claim, the mark awarded to all students has been detrimentally affected.

Group of students work collaboratively to produce one piece of work, with individual marks awarded to the Group based on contribution. One member of the group submits ECs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deal with the claim on an individual basis.• Discretion can be used to ascertain whether the ECs had an impact on the Group as a whole, and whether or not to award ECs to all.
Group of students work collaboratively to produce one piece of work, with individual marks awarded to the Group based on contribution. Two or more members of the group submit ECs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As above - deal with individually, unless the whole group submits ECs. This can be separate or the same ECs.

11. Illustrative examples:

Example 1: ECs due to a pre-planned event

Student A is a full-time, undergraduate student and submits an EC Form stating that they have a family wedding on the same day as one of their exams. They have not made this known prior to the examination timetable being published. The claim should be **rejected** because the student knows from the outset of their studies that they are on a full time programme, and are required to attend all assessments. The dates of the examination period are known well in advance, even if the exact dates and times aren't available.

Students must make sure they are available throughout the relevant periods of engagement. A wedding is not 'unforeseen' as it is planned in advance and students should plan their time accordingly.

Example 2: ECs due to family difficulties (caring responsibilities)

Student B is a full-time student and single parent of three children, aged 3, 7 and 17. During the exam period, one of the children is taken ill and requires hospital treatment. Student B submits an EC Form on the basis that they were unable to study throughout the period due to their child's illness. They submit medical evidence from the child's doctor confirming the admittance to the hospital and the diagnosis. The claim should be **accepted** as the student's capacity to study for examinations has been interrupted by their caring duties.



Example 3: ECs due to family difficulties

Student C is a part-time student, living at home with their parents and siblings and has a part-time job. One parent is made redundant and as a result Student C has to work full-time until their parent secures employment, to support the family. They submit evidence of a redundancy letter from their parent's employer, as well as bank statements showing the transfer of money to their parents' account to pay for bills, etc. The claim should be **accepted**.

Example 4: ECs based on sporting activities

Student D is a full-time student and plays sport at an international level. An international tournament is scheduled for the exam period and the student is selected to play for their country. The student submits ECs before the exam schedule is known. Technically, this shouldn't be dealt with under the EC procedure. Whilst exam deferrals have been removed from the CoP on ECs, students can still defer if they know in advance of the exam period (must notify the School within 10-days of the timetable publication) that they are unable to attend the exams. The process can be found in the CoP on Assessment of Taught Programmes and Module Assessment and Feedback. There are very strict rules as to what may permit the deferral of exams and this route cannot be used for pre-planned holidays, etc.

Where reasonable and appropriate to do so the University will seek to support requests for deferrals based on sporting activities, in accordance with the processes detailed in the CoP on Assessment of Taught Programmes and Module Assessment and Feedback, for those students who are current members of EDCAP.

Where reasonable and appropriate to do so the University will also seek to support requests for deferrals based on sporting activities, in accordance with the processes detailed in the CoP on Assessment of Taught Programmes and Module Assessment and Feedback, for those students involved in elite sport. Elite sporting commitment may include those students competing at international level, attending an international level selection event or National Governing Board training camp.



Example 5: ECs linked to Group Work

Student E is a full-time student. During a group work assignment, Student E is taken ill and cannot complete the assignment. The group work will produce one mark for all students within the group. Should the student's claim be submitted with adequate ECs, the claim should be **accepted**, with consideration given to the remaining members of the group.

Depending on how the remainder of the group can continue with the assignment with a member absent, the ECs Panel may wish to extend the ECs to the rest of the group. If ECs are extended, it should be made clear to the group that the mark they received for the assignment was as a reflection of there being one less member and the work has been marked as a result of what *had* been completed, rather than what *should* have been completed. Student E will need to reattempt the work, in line with the usual outcomes of an EC claim.

Example 6: **ECs relating to Covid-19** – not sufficiently explained or evidenced

Student G requests ECs on the basis that they have been affected by the impact of Covid 19 in recent weeks. They provide no explanation of the precise circumstances or the impact upon their academic performance, and they provide no supporting evidence.

The student's claim should be **rejected** as they have not demonstrated sufficient grounds for their request. They have provided no evidence, nor any explanation of why this is the case. As noted in the student guidance, it is accepted that students may not be able to provide evidence this year, but they need to provide clear reasons for this lack of evidence. Also, as in any other year, they need to provide details of their circumstances and the impact it had on their study/assessment.

Example 7: **ECs**– submission rejected

Student H requests ECs on the basis that they have been experiencing financial difficulties due to a relationship breakdown. They say that they can provide evidence in the form of online bank statements and email correspondence with Citizens Advice. However, they do not reply when asked to provide the evidence they mention, or to explain why they have been unable to provide it.

The student's claim should be **rejected**. They have not provided the evidence they say they have despite being chased for it, nor have they explained why they are now unable to provide the evidence. They need to provide clear reasons for the lack of evidence, which they have not done in this case.

Example 8: **ECs relating to Covid-19** – explained but minimal evidence

Student J requests ECs on the basis that their parent has been ill with Covid-19 over the Christmas period. Due to worrying about them and looking after them while at home, the student claims that their revision was disrupted and they have therefore not performed well in their January assessments. The student provides a copy of an email confirming their parent's diagnosis, but it is not possible to ascertain from this what the impact has been upon the student. The student indicates that they cannot provide any additional evidence because their GP's surgery is experiencing delays in offering appointments and medical notes in non-urgent cases, which applies both to the student and to their parent.

The student's claim should be **accepted**. Although the evidence is not particularly strong, the fact that they have a copy of a diagnosis email indicates that it is likely this was sent to someone close to them, and it is likely that they have experienced delays in GP services. It should be noted that appropriate prescriptions should be accepted as medical evidence.



ECs Claim should be Accepted	ECs Claim should be Rejected
Student is not on campus, for any reason, and as result has an unfavourable working environment/poor access to technology or WiFi	Student makes a request and only cites being in a pandemic, without any additional information
Unforeseen caring for small children and or home schooling – regardless of relationship to child.	Student cites issues with 'bottlenecks' in deadlines
Caring for family members or similar, for any reason;	Student cites academic demands of the programme/modules
Isolation as a result of COVID-19 which results in lack of access to resources/technology.	Student cites travel issues or requirements (where there is no additional reason for travel at that time)
Student has had to take on additional part time work/placement hours where there are additional mitigating reasons for doing so, this has impacted time to study and the increased workload is evidenced by the employer	Being in isolation for COVID where there are no additional circumstances.

12. Registry Contacts:

Should you have any queries relating to this guidance, please contact:-

Simon Ells, Head of Student Conduct (s.d.ells@bham.ac.uk), or Dr Stephen Gower (s.j.l.gower@bham.ac.uk) Complaints and Appeals (SCCA)

Online Extenuating Circumstances Guidance can be found [here](#).

Appendix: Assessment Adjustments flowchart

Engaging with the Extenuating Circumstances process is not the only way for a student to have a situation which has affected their assessment taken into account. The below flowchart provides some information about the different types of scenario that can impact on assessment and provides guidance about the most helpful and appropriate process in each case.

