



## Exceptional Circumstances

The University considers exceptional circumstances to be a circumstance outside of your control, which has negatively impacted your academic performance. Students are required to describe the impact which their circumstances have had on their studies.

The University of Reading has created a comprehensive guide on exceptional circumstances which we would recommend reading. Find out more [here](#).

### What are considered Exceptional Circumstances?

- The death or serious illness of a close family member or friend
- Significant personal or family crisis
- Serious short-term illness or injury that is impacting a student's ability to study
- Worsening of an ongoing illness, or a worsening of a disability--including mental health conditions--beyond the fluctuation of the condition recognized by DAS and accommodated within the agreed reasonable adjustments
- Diagnosis of disability during a student's programme of study
- Pregnancy, where there is morning sickness or where there are complications relating to the pregnancy which medical evidence can substantiate or a period of three weeks immediately preceding the due date;
- Statutory parental leave (more information can be found in the Students with Parental Responsibilities Policy);
- Witnessing or involvement in a traumatic incident;
- Severe financial difficulties impacting a student's ability to study;
- Unforeseen problems with network facilities, personal computers or printers. Faults associated with Turnitin or University maintained network facilities
- Competing in sport, or participation in other activity, at national or international level;
- Job interviews related to the student's career (only in respect of examinations, in-class tests, presentations and other assessments which take place at a specified time).

*This list is not exhaustive and other circumstances are considered appropriate so long as the circumstances meet the definition above.*

### What are NOT considered Exceptional Circumstances?

- Any circumstances for which appropriate adjustments have already been made by the University
- Assessment-related stress which is not diagnosed as an illness
- An illness occurring after an examination/in-class test or the deadline for submission
- A minor illness such as a cough or cold
- Pregnancy in the absence of complications
- Assessments and examinations scheduled within a short period
- Poor working practice (failure to back up electronic documents, poor time management)





- Problems with network facilities, personal computers or printers, except in cases where the student is unable to access campus
- Where students are studying on a full-time basis, issues relating to paid employment except in cases of work placements which contribute to the programme of study
- House moves, renovations or other routine accommodation difficulties
- Holidays, including attendance at marriages, festivals and like events including religious festivals
- Circumstances claimed to be unforeseen which a reasonable person would view as foreseeable or preventable

## When to submit an Exceptional Circumstances form?

### In Module Assessments (assignments, in class tests)

For module assessments, you should submit an Exceptional Circumstances (EC) form in advance of the submission date/date of test. Failing that, within five days of the due submission date.

### Examinations

If you know in advance that you will not be able to sit your January, Summer Term, July or re-sit period examinations which are centrally organized, you should discuss your concern with your Academic Tutor and submit an Exceptional Circumstances form as soon as possible.

If you believe that your exceptional circumstance has affected your performance in a centrally organized exam, you can submit a Post Result Exception Circumstances (PREC) request within five working days of the publication of your results.

## How do you notify the University of Exceptional Circumstances?

- You will need to log into your RISIS account and click on the “actions” tab along the top. From there, you should be able to click on the Exceptional Circumstances Form.
- There is a video on how to do this here: <https://www.screencast.com/t/NYYGBtuQ>.
- You will also be issued your outcome through the RISIS portal so it is important to check your account regularly after submitting your request.

## What evidence do you need to submit with the Exceptional Circumstances?

- Evidence is normally required to support an exceptional circumstances request. This evidence needs to outline your situation and provide the specific dates you have been impacted. Supporting evidence might include:
  - a) Letter from medical professional (GP, Counsellor, social worker etc.)
  - b) Death certificate/announcement
  - c) Accident report provided by Police
  - d) Letter from sporting organisation
- Late submission of Exceptional Circumstances forms submitted after the relevant deadline will not normally be considered. If, however, you were not able to submit the form due to physical or mental incapacity, hospitalization or equivalent serious circumstances out with your control, then a statement which details the reason for the lateness must be submitted in the Exceptional Circumstances form. Statements must be substantiated with evidence and will follow the normal requirements for relevant evidence.

*Please note, any evidence that is not in the English language will need to be submitted alongside a professional English translation. Fees are usually associated with getting your documents translated, which you will be responsible for paying.*





## What outcome is possible?

There are a range of different outcomes possible from an EC request. The most common outcomes include:

- a) DNS (deemed not to have sat) – this outcome would give you the chance to sit any affected exams or assignments again as if for the first time (i.e. they would not be counted as re-sit attempts and therefore would not be capped at the pass mark).
- b) An extension- if the period of an extension goes beyond the point at which feedback will be given to other students, an alternative assignment may be set.
- c) Removal of late penalty
- d) Re-arrange a class test
- e) Alternative form of assessment
- f) Repeat year
- g) Vary the weighting of different modules
- h) Award of an Aegrotat degree or other Aegrotat award- this is d when a student is unable to complete the assessment for a programme due to illness or other exceptional circumstances, but where there is sufficient evidence, based on assessments completed and their performance, to provide a high level of assurance that they would otherwise have achieved a degree.

## Self-certification

You are permitted on two occasions in the course of an academic year to submit an EC request, without providing evidence. This would allow you a two-day extension for coursework.

You need to specify your exceptional circumstances and their impact on your academic work. Self-certified extensions will be granted only on the basis of allowable exceptional circumstances.

It is not permitted:

- to use a self-certified exceptional circumstance request to seek a further extension on top of an extension already granted through the standard non-self-certification exceptional circumstances route
- to use two self-certified exceptional circumstances requests consecutively for the same piece(s) of work (i.e. seeking a four-day extension in total).

In order to submit a self-certified EC request, complete the self-certification Exceptional Circumstances form on the RISIS portal. You must normally submit the self-certification Exceptional Circumstances form online before the deadline for submission of the coursework, but forms will be accepted up to two days after the deadline.





## Appealing

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your ECF, you can appeal the decision. If you do choose to submit an appeal, a RUSU Academic Adviser can offer support and guidance throughout the process.

- To appeal a decision made at School-level by a **Senior Tutor** you will need to submit a completed 'Appeal of an exceptional circumstances decision' form to the Student Appeals and Academic Misconduct Officer ([ecfappeals@reading.ac.uk](mailto:ecfappeals@reading.ac.uk)) **within five working days** of receiving the Senior Tutor's decision in writing (this is usually accessible on your RISIS account). Your appeal will then be considered by the Exceptional Circumstances Appeals Board (ECAB).
- To appeal a decision made by the **University Standing Committee on Special Cases (USCSC)**, you will need to submit a completed 'Appeal of an exceptional circumstances decision' form to the Student Appeals and Academic Misconduct Officer ([ecfappeals@reading.ac.uk](mailto:ecfappeals@reading.ac.uk)) **within five working days** of receiving the USCSC's decision in writing (this is usually sent by email), **or in the case of USCSC decisions notified in the Summer Term, the day following the final day of the relevant exam period**. Your appeal will then be considered by the Extenuating Circumstances Appeals Board (ECAB).
- In order to submit an appeal, you will need to demonstrate one or more of the following grounds:
  - There was a procedural irregularity;
  - The outcome was not fair and reasonable given all the circumstances;
  - You have new evidence which you were unable to provide earlier in the process for a valid reason and the new evidence is relevant to your ECF outcome.

You will need to provide a clear and detailed account of why you are appealing your ECF outcome and provide any supporting documentation (if possible) regarding the ground(s) on which you are appealing.

## Exceptional Circumstances Policy

You can access the Exceptional Circumstances Policy using [this link](#)

## Support

You may wish to seek support in relation to your Exceptional Circumstances request from your Academic Tutor or [Student Support Centre](#).

## RUSU Advice

If you have further questions or would like specific advice, please get in touch with the RUSU Advice Service. The specialist Advisers offer a confidential service, independent from the University so they can discuss your case with you in private.

Contact us by email at [advice@rusu.co.uk](mailto:advice@rusu.co.uk) or complete an online client form at [www.rusu.co.uk/getadvice](http://www.rusu.co.uk/getadvice).

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