

PA4. Policy and Procedure for Exceptional Circumstances Affecting Assessment Policy

1. Preface and Principles

1.1 Principles for making assessment adjustments

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

1.2 Scope of this policy

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

Adjustments are **not** intended to apply to the following situations:

- *The impact of events or circumstances on non-assessed learning activities:* To the extent that a claim is for the impact on learning during the year outside of assessment activities, a student should seek support from their school/department in relation to the difficulties in engaging with the programme of study and may consider Leave of Absence for any long- term impacts on their ability to study in any given academic year.
- *Conditions or circumstances of a lasting nature that may be provided for under a Student Support Plan determined by the Department:* Where a student has a lasting condition or circumstances¹, these may be addressed using a Student Support Plan rather than as adjustments under this policy.
- *Events or circumstances that are predictable, recurrent and/or could have been reasonably anticipated and accommodated within the student's planning of the completion of the assessment:* Except where particular provided for under this policy, adjustments are not available for scheduled assessment activities based on work commitments, social and family events, extra-curricular activities, etc that a student

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

undertakes except where such events or circumstances have an impact on the completion of assessments in ways that are beyond a student's reasonable control and are provided for in this policy.

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

1.3 Exceptional Circumstances Policy and Equality

This Policy should be applied and interpreted in accordance with the CITY ULE's equality policies, which are located at:

<https://www.york.ac.uk/about/equality/policy-guidance/policies/equality-diversity-students/>

1.4 Exceptional Circumstances and Academic Misconduct

Circumstances which might be acceptable as exceptional under this policy will not necessarily be acceptable as a defence in relation to cases brought under the Unfair Means Policy.

Where events or circumstances impact on the ability of a student to complete an assessment appropriately, the student is expected to use the provisions under this policy to seek adjustments so that the student can complete the assessment in an appropriate manner without resorting to academic misconduct.

1.5 Confidentiality

Information and documents provided by students under this policy will be treated confidentially in line with the Data Protection – General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) for applicants.

2. Outcomes available in response to an Exceptional Circumstances claim

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

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

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

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

2.1 Reassessment 'as if for the first time'

A student may be given the opportunity to take or submit the same type of assessment 'as if for the first time' at another appropriate time. If the exceptional circumstances apply to a student's resit of a failed assessment, the student will instead be entitled to resit that assessment 'as if for the first time'.

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

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

2.1.2 Timing of 'sit as if for the first time' assessments

An 'as for the first time' reassessment opportunity should ordinarily take place within the standard reassessment period for the programme of study but other deadlines or times may be specified if in the students' overall interest and if appropriate support can be offered to the student in dealing with the challenges of coping with such an assessment alongside other learning activities.

Unlike resit attempts, students granted 'as if for the first time' assessment opportunities need not be given a set notice period but given a reasonable amount of time to prepare for or complete the reassessment.

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

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

2.1.4 Revision of work already submitted

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

2.1.5 Information for students about 'as if for the first time' reassessments

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

2.2 Extensions

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

2.2.1 Duration of, and limits on, extensions

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

Any decision to offer an extension should take into account the impact of that particular extension on the student's ability to complete other pending assessments to a suitable standard as well as the impact on the student's welfare of extending deadlines.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.2.3 Information for students when an extension is granted

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

2.3 An alternative form of assessment

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

2.4 Additional assessment opportunities

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

2.5 Waiver of assessment components

If a single module mark is created from a number of marks from assessments testing the same learning outcomes, assessments amounting to no more than 20% of the overall module mark may be waived. This is permitted only where the learning outcomes for the module have been measured by the remaining assessments for that module. Where the various elements of a module are intended to test different learning outcomes, such waiving of marks is not permissible. This procedure may be followed for up to a maximum of 60 credits per academic year and only in relation to modules all taken in the same semester, provided that the learning outcomes for the module(s) have been achieved.

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

3. Determining 'exceptional circumstances'

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

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

- Temporary and relatively short-term in their impact;
- Sufficiently significant in their impact on the student's ability to complete the affected assessment to their usual standard; and
- Of a nature that the student could not reasonably have anticipated or taken reasonable steps to factor into planning how to complete the assessment to their usual standard.

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

Whether a particular situation fits within the policy must be decided by the relevant decision

maker using the student's application and the evidence provided to determine whether the case fits within one of the following circumstances:

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

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

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

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

In most cases, the circumstances should be unusual or unpredictable (i.e. exceptional). Matters that are ordinary parts of life are not likely to be exceptional. This includes minor illnesses, the general stress of completing assessment activities, balancing assessments with other daily commitments, etc. Students may also be expected usually to prioritise their learning and assessment activities over voluntary activities and paid employment and may generally be expected to organise their time around any other commitments or obligations.

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

3.2 Requirements for evidence

3.2.1 General principles and evidential requirements

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

3.2.2.1 Proportionality

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

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

3.2.2.2 Sufficiency of evidence

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

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

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

3.2.2.3 Sufficiency, proportionality and professional or non-professional evidence

Evidence does not necessarily need to be produced by a professional or expert so long as the evidence is reasonably contemporary, independent and objective. The more serious the claim and adjustment sought, the more appropriate it may be to expect professional or expert diagnosis to be produced as evidence. In other situations, evidence from staff within the CITY

ULE (student wellbeing officers, the student's CITY ULE, supervisor, etc) may be enough to justify relatively minor adjustments.

3.2.2 Claims without evidence

Claims can be submitted in advance of evidence becoming available. If a student is unable to provide evidence at the time of the claim, they should submit the claim and identify any evidence they hope to produce and, if possible, by when they hope to obtain it. Evidence must be submitted as soon as possible.

3.2.3 Translations of evidence

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

3.3 Further guidance on types of claims

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

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

Evidence to support such a claim may come from health professionals but may also consist, particularly in minor cases, of evidence of attempts to secure appointments or access support for distinct ailments that are claimed by the student.

Claims in relation to mental health may be supported by evidence from mental health professionals (including the Open Door team) but it may be appropriate to accept relatively minor claims (e.g. under one week of extension) on the basis of CITY ULE staff whose role it is to support students (Student Welfare Officers, members of CITY ULEs, personal academic supervisors, etc). Care should be taken, however, when making adjustments in relation to mental health to ensure that the student is properly supported and that exceptional circumstances adjustments do not exacerbate the student's situation.

Repeated uses of minor extensions by a student is unlikely to be either fair or appropriate from an assessment perspective nor supportive of the particular student's needs.

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

3.3.2 Bereavement

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

Particular consideration should be given to the proportionality of requests for evidence of bereavement given the potential difficulties in establishing both the fact of death and closeness of relationship. Evidence does not necessarily need to be in the form of a death certificate or evidence of a funeral service: other evidence which may reasonably prove the fact of bereavement may also be accepted. Further, although there is no limit to the period of time that a student may claim for adjustments on the grounds of bereavement, consideration should be given to whether relatively short adjustments might be made on the basis of less cogent initial evidence with the possibility of a later review in the light of evidence produced subsequently (which may include different impacts such as those on mental health or relating to the practical impacts on the student of dealing with the consequences of the death).

3.3.3 Crimes, criminal matters and legal proceedings

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

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

3.3.4 Disruptions to transport or travel

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

news items, or any direct communications with the student about the disrupted travel.

3.3.5 IT difficulties beyond the student's control

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

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

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

3.3.6 Unavoidable commitments and obligations

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

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

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

reasonably fair to the student and to other students taking the same assessment.

4. Exceptional Circumstances procedures

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

4.1 Who makes an exceptional circumstances decision for a student

Exceptional Circumstances decisions and processes in any Department and in relation to each student are the responsibility of an Exceptional Circumstances (EC) Committee.

4.1.1 Exceptional Circumstances Committees

The Exceptional Circumstances (EC) Committee is responsible for the application of the exceptional circumstances policy for students on programmes offered by the Department.

4.2 The exceptional circumstances process

4.2.1 Deadlines for making claims

Claims should be received earlier than the deadline or time of the assessment, Departments should be contacted about this issue, unless there are good reasons for making a later claim. If the student cannot establish a good reason for submitting a claim late, the claim may be rejected.

A claim submitted after assessment marks have been decided and announced by the examination Board cannot be considered by an Committee. Such claims must be considered as formal CITY ULE appeals.

4.2.2 Timely and regular decisions

decisions must be made in a sufficiently timely manner to give students a clear idea of whether their applications have been accepted, what adjustments have been made and what further actions they may need to take to resolve their applications. As general principles, decisions should be made within two weeks of receipt of a claim depending on the type of the assessment and the assessment deadline, and claims relating to the nearest deadlines should take priority over claims for later assessments.

4.2.3 Informing the student of the outcome

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

4.2.4 Records of the decision

When the procedure has been completed, the relevant claim form and supporting evidence

should be retained in the departmental files in a way that respects the confidentiality of the students information.

5. Students with Disabilities

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

6. Confidentiality, data protection and safeguarding

- 6.1 Personal information may be obtained directly from students by those responsible for administering or marking Exceptional Circumstances decisions when they submit a claim form and subsequently in the course of determining such an application for the purposes of making appropriate decisions under this policy.
- 6.2 Students' personal information is used to prepare and process claims; to inform claim outcomes (i.e. to establish whether the student's claim has grounds); to process claim outcomes (e.g. to ensure students are able to submit to a new submission point); and to establish whether they may benefit from additional support or signposting to other CITY ULE services.
- 6.3 Personal information will be available to members of a school/department responsible for making an exceptional circumstances decision and may be discussed within the team responsible for doing so only to the extent necessary for the appropriate determination of the claim. Evidence provided in relation to one claim may be used in considering another a claim insofar as this will assist in reaching an appropriate outcome.
- 6.4 Where a person dealing with an exceptional circumstances application believes a student may benefit from, or requires, additional information or support, personal information will be shared within the school/department in order to facilitate the provision of appropriate support (e.g. advising a student to submit a Leave of Absence application or checking in on a student's welfare).
- 6.5 Outcomes from claims made under this policy may be shared with a student's academic supervisor to enable them to provide advice about progress and trajectory through the programme. Details of the claim itself (i.e. the reason for it and evidence submitted) will not be shared.
- 6.6 Personal information may be shared with the Chair of the Department's Exceptional Circumstances Committee, or their deputy, if a claim requires consultation. Claims may also need to be shared with the Chair of Board of Studies where a recommendation needs to be made to Special Cases. In rare cases, an anonymised summary of the claim may be shared with the Chair of the Standing Committee on Assessment or support staff acting on the Chair's behalf, or with members of staff working in Special Cases for advice on the application of this policy and to inform outcomes.

- 6.7 In the event that an appeal is submitted regarding an exceptional circumstances application or outcome, personal information may be shared with members processing and determining the appeal; the Chair of the Board of Studies who will approve recommendations about the appeal; and occasionally members of the Standing Committee on Assessment, in order to respond to an appeal. To investigate an appeal, the members responsible for exceptional circumstances cases within a school or department may need to request relevant information from module tutors and/or academic supervisors; in such cases, the tutors or supervisors will be aware that an appeal has been submitted but will not be provided with personal information.
- 6.8 In the event that a student submits a complaint about their experience of this policy, the claim form, evidence and outcome will be reviewed as needed by the Chair of the Board of Studies in order to investigate the complaint and provide a response.
- 6.9 Where members of staff responsible for dealing with an exceptional circumstances claim in a school or department have a concern regarding the welfare of a student they may seek advice from the Open Door Team or Disability Services, and may share personal information where it is deemed necessary. Where students have a Student Support Plan in place, personal information may also be shared with the school/department's disability contact to ensure that the Student Support Plan is supporting the student adequately.

The Policy is based on the University of York's Exceptional Circumstances affecting Assessment Policy.