

Processing EC requests: guidance for Support Centres and Schools

For the period to 9 January 2022 (inclusive), the University has relaxed the requirement for evidence in support of Exceptional Circumstances where it cannot be obtained. Please refer to the EC Policy para 12A-D.

In-module ECs

Students submitting requests under the self-certification provisions will be directed in RISIS to a simplified form which will be processed through a fast-track procedure. The processing of a self-certified EC request is outlined in sections 16-17 below.

References to the Support Centre should be understood to include the Henley School Office and ISLI, as appropriate.

1. On receipt of the *Exceptional Circumstances* form, the Support Centre reviews the form to check:
 - Whether it is appropriate to be considered at the present time under the In-module EC process; or
 - Whether the student should be advised to resubmit following publication of results under the Post-Results EC process (which applies to centrally timetabled January examinations, Summer Term examinations, July examinations, and examinations in the Resit Period included in your University examination timetable).
2. If the request should be considered under the Post-Results EC process, the Support Centre informs the student accordingly.
3. If the request can be considered under the In-module EC process, the Support Centre checks that the form is complete and that appropriate evidence, if required, has been provided. If the Support Centre has concerns over the evidence/ lack of evidence provided the student will be requested to provide further evidence by a deadline which will normally be 10 working days from the request. If the request is time-sensitive and delay would cause a change to the outcome, the form may be passed to the SDAT for a decision subject to receipt of satisfactory evidence.

The form and evidence is forwarded to the Director of Academic Tutoring of the School which owns the student's programme, with a note indicating *either* that the form is complete and appropriate evidence has been submitted *or* that further information or evidence is being requested.

4. When any further information or evidence has been provided, the Support Centre will forward the further information or evidence to the Director of Academic Tutoring of the School which owns the programme.
5. In the event that a case or evidence is submitted after specified deadlines, the Support Centre will refer the case to the Director of Academic Tutoring to consider whether there is good reason for late submission of the case or evidence.
6. The Director of Academic Tutoring will give the form and supporting evidence due consideration, and will proceed as follows:
 - i. make a substantive decision on the action to be taken provided the action lies within their powers, as indicated in Annex 2; or

- ii. if they believe that the appropriate action lies beyond their powers, refer the case to the USCSC with a recommendation on the action to be taken.
7. In addition, where appropriate, options should be discussed in relation to the needs which the student might have and any support that the University can provide. It may be appropriate to encourage the student to consult relevant support services, in particular the Counselling and Wellbeing Service, the Disability Advisory Service, the University Study Advisers and the Advice Service at RUSU. The student may also be encouraged to consult a medical practitioner.
8. Where a request is time-sensitive and the provision of evidence is unavoidably delayed, the Director of Academic Tutoring may agree a conditional outcome in the absence of evidence. A deadline will be set for the submission of the evidence (normally 10 days from the submission of the form). The Student Support Coordinator or the relevant Programme Administrator in HBS or ISLI will monitor the deadline; the student must alert the Student Support Coordinator or the relevant Programme Administrator in HBS or ISLI if they are unable to meet the deadline, and, where there is good reason, an extension to the deadline will be granted. If no evidence is submitted by the deadline the provisional outcome will be rescinded and any relevant penalties will be applied. The submitted evidence is assessed by the Director of Academic Tutoring and, if the evidence is deemed sufficient, the outcome will be confirmed; if the evidence is not deemed sufficient, the provisional outcome will be rescinded and any relevant penalties will be applied.
9. Where a School is responsible for a programme or subject area in a branch campus, the Director of Academic Tutoring in the School and Section Senior Tutor in the branch campus will liaise to ensure that decisions across campuses are consistent and equitable.
10. If a student asks for an exemption for one piece of coursework and an alternative assessment for another deadline or event assessment which together represent more than 20% of the module assessment, then the case should be considered at the USCSC, to which the Director of Academic Tutoring should provide a recommendation. Where the proposed variation is substantial or complex the Director of Academic Tutoring should consult the External Examiners of the programme before referral to USCSC.
11. Where a student presents an exceptional circumstances case based on chronic medical circumstances not previously known to the University or circumstances which have become more severe beyond the normal range of fluctuation in the condition, the Director of Academic Tutoring should advise the student to consult the Counselling and Wellbeing Service and/or the Disability Advisory Service, provide support, and, if appropriate, consider whether the student is fit to study. If appropriate, the possibility of suspension or the possibility of withdrawal from the University should be discussed with the student. The student should be informed of the relevant policies and procedures. For further details of the procedure relating to suspensions, please refer to the *Policy on and procedures for suspensions*. In these cases, it may be appropriate to refer the student through the [Academic Engagement and Fitness to Study procedure](#).
12. Having determined how to proceed in the case, the Director of Academic Tutoring specifies, as appropriate, on the exceptional circumstances form in RISIS:
 - a. The substantive decision on the action to be taken in the case; or
 - b. An instruction to refer the case to USCSC, together with a recommendation on an appropriate action. The subsequent consideration of these cases is described in sections 14-15 below.
13. Students will be available on the RISIS portal as soon as possible and normally within 10 working days from the date on which the complete application (form and supporting evidence) had originally been received, unless the request is subject to consultation with a Teaching and Learning Dean or External Examiner or has been referred for a University-level decision (in which case the student will be advised

of the process being followed and an indicative timeframe for a decision).

Decisions by USCSC when referred by Directors of Academic Tutoring

14. Where the SDAT refers an EC case to the USCSC, the USCSC should have due regard to the recommendation of the SDAT and determine an outcome from those available to it, as specified in Annex 2.
15. Students will be notified of the USCSC's decision as soon as possible, and normally not more than 10 working days, after the meeting at which the decision was taken.

Self-certification

16. Self-certified ECs will be processed through a fast-track procedure, which will identify whether the request is eligible for consideration under the self-certification procedure, including whether the application relates to an eligible coursework type (essays, problems, artefacts or other work for submission, and assessments where late submission for a mark is not permitted (i.e. where late submission automatically incurs a mark of 0—see 'Variant from standard penalty' in <http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/files/qualitysupport/penaltiesforlatesubmission.pdf>)), whether the grounds are eligible as an exceptional circumstances, whether the request exceeds the maximum number of occasions on which a student can self-certify in an academic year, and whether the request has been submitted within two days following the deadline for the piece of work.
17. If the request is eligible and approved, confirmation of the extension will be notified to the student through the RISIS portal. If the request is not eligible or not approved, the student will be informed through the RISIS portal and, if the maximum number of occasions has been exceeded, will be advised to submit a request through the standard, non-self-certification route.

Centrally organised January, Summer Term, July and Resit period examinations

EC requests in advance not to sit January, Summer Term, July or Resit period examinations

15. EC requests in advance not to sit one or more examinations will be considered by the SDAT in the first instance who will submit a recommendation to the USCSC.
16. The process will follow the process outline above for In-module assessment.

EC requests relating to examinations

17. Students will have the opportunity to submit ECs following the publication of their results, as follows:
 - a. Undergraduate finalists: publication of classification, where available; module marks and sub-modular marks, through RISIS after Programme Examiners' Meeting
 - b. Undergraduate non-finalists: publication of Part result, where available; module marks and sub-modular marks, through RISIS after meeting of the University Progression Board
 - c. Postgraduate taught programmes: publication of module marks and sub-modular marks,

through RISIS following the approval of examination marks; on occasion, the overall result may also be available.

In the case of part-time undergraduates, their results will comprise module and sub-modular marks for the relevant academic year, and will only include a Part result on their completion of a Part.

18. Exceptional Circumstances forms must be submitted within 5 days of publication of results and must submit evidence within 10 days of publication of results.
19. The Support Centre refers the case to the SDAT for comment and recommendation; on receipt of the SDAT's recommendation the case is referred to the USCSC.
20. Where evidence has not been submitted, the process will proceed and USCSC may make a decision subject to submission of satisfactory confirmatory evidence. The student will not normally be advised of a provisional outcome. When evidence is received, it is reviewed by the Chair of the USCSC or by the DAT.
21. Where a Finalist who has fulfilled the requirements for a Pass or classified Honours degree is considering requesting a DNS in the light of their results, they are strongly encouraged to seek advice from the Director of Academic Tutoring, School or Department Director of Teaching and Learning, School/Departmental Examination Officers or other named member of academic staff.
22. Students are notified of the outcome through the RISIS portal as soon as possible, and normally not later than 10 days, after the relevant USCSC meeting.