

## Exceptional Circumstances Code of Practice

### 1. INTRODUCTION

**1.1** This Code of Practice sets out the University's approach to providing an exceptional circumstances process to support students who are affected by circumstances beyond their control, which impact negatively on their ability to complete assessed work.

#### **Purpose**

**1.2** The purpose of the Code of Practice is to set out the University's approach to providing an Exceptional Circumstances (EC) process and to provide staff and students with guidance to help inform when a student should apply for an EC. Section 2.1.3 outlines the definition of an EC.

**1.3** Staff and students should follow this Code of Practice when dealing with circumstances impacting assessment performance. The Code of Practice is designed to:

- i. Ensure that students are appropriately supported when ECs are brought to the attention of staff in a timely manner;
- ii. Ensure that all students are treated fairly and equitably in the light of exceptional circumstances;
- iii. Ensure students have a fair opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of relevant learning outcomes;
- iv. Ensure students' achievement is recognised fairly;
- v. Outline the responsibilities of students in informing the University of circumstances which are affecting their performance;

#### **1.4 Scope**

**1.4.1** This Code of Practice applies to students undertaking Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught programmes, including apprenticeships, Keele University International College programmes, Foundation Year, online-only courses, on Keele programmes taught at international partner institutions and on taught modules for Doctoral Research programmes.

**1.4.2** Where the relevant professional body has specific requirements, these take precedence over this code of practice. Students should refer to their programme handbook and seek advice from the appropriate Programme Director if required.

**1.4.3** Postgraduate Research Students (PGR) who are affected by exceptional circumstances relating to anything other than a taught module should refer to the [PGR Code of Practice](#) which sets out the procedures for extension requests or leave of

absence they should follow.

- 1.4.4 Student specific guidance is also available via [www.keele.ac.uk/ec](http://www.keele.ac.uk/ec). User guides on the e-Vision system can also be accessed via this link.
- 1.4.5 The EC process is designed to deal with acute, short-term circumstances that impact on a student's performance or ability to study for a short period. If a student's circumstances have had (or are likely to have) a longer-term impact, then the EC process may not be appropriate and students should speak to their Academic Mentor or Student Experience and Support Officer to discuss other appropriate processes, such as Support to Study and Leave of Absence processes.
- 1.4.6 Students who have Reasonable Adjustments in place for a Disability, Specific Learning Difficulty, Long Term Health Condition, or Mental Health conditions, are not required to access their adjustments via the Exceptional Circumstances process but are eligible to access EC's if their circumstances fit eligibility criteria, including the worsening of an ongoing illness, disability or mental health condition. Advice can be sought from Disability Support and Student Experience and Support regarding Reasonable Adjustments and EC's.

## **2. APPROACH**

### **2.1 What is an Exceptional Circumstance?**

- 2.1.1 Exceptional Circumstances are defined as a circumstance outside the control of the student, which negatively affects their academic performance. In most cases we would also expect the circumstances to be unforeseen or unexpected, however, some situations may be foreseen, such as a family bereavement following a long-term illness.
- 2.1.2 University [Regulation B3](#) explains how exceptional circumstances are dealt with. Students who wish to have their exceptional circumstances considered must follow the rules set out in the Regulation.
- 2.1.3 An accepted exceptional circumstances claim allows a student the opportunity to take another assessment opportunity at a different point in the academic year, usually at the next scheduled assessment opportunity. If your programme does not have a standardised next assessment opportunity, for example apprenticeship or distance learning course, staff on your programme will advise of when you are required to take the reassessment. This is not an extension. The University also offers all students the option to take a 7 calendar day extension, this is explained in Annex A.
- 2.1.4 To be valid, a claim for Exceptional Circumstances needs to relate to a time period relevant to the assessment in question and to demonstrate that circumstances outside the control of the student have an impact on the student's preparation for, or completion of, the assessment. The circumstances being described would be expected to relate to a situation occurring either:

- i. Close to the date the assessment is due to be undertaken or submitted.  
Or
- ii. During the period when the student would reasonably be expected to be preparing for the assessment.

The circumstances should also be likely to:

- iii. Prevent the student from completing an assessment at the specified time.  
And / Or
- iv. Have a significant negative effect on the performance of the student on the date an assessment is due to be undertaken.

## 2.2 Grounds for Exceptional Circumstance

2.2.1 Examples of circumstances likely to be accepted and unlikely to be accepted are illustrated in Table 1 below.

### 2.2.2 Table 1

Examples of circumstances likely to be accepted	Examples of circumstances unlikely to be accepted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serious, short-term illness or injury</li> <li>• Worsening of an ongoing illness or disability, including mental health conditions</li> <li>• Symptoms of an infectious disease that could be harmful if passed on to others</li> <li>• Death or significant illness of a close family or friend</li> <li>• Unexpected caring responsibilities for a family member or dependant</li> <li>• Significant personal or family crisis leading to acute stress</li> <li>• Witnessing or experiencing a traumatic incident</li> <li>• A crime which has a substantial impact on the student</li> <li>• Accommodation crisis such as eviction or the home becoming uninhabitable</li> <li>• An emergency or crisis that prevents the student from attending an exam or accessing an online assessment</li> <li>• A technical problem outside the student’s control that prevents the</li> </ul>	<p>(For the circumstances listed below which are not likely to be accepted, a student may still use the 7-calendar day extension to allow them additional time to complete their work, see Annex A)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holidays, house moves or other events that were planned or could reasonably have been expected</li> <li>• Minor illness such as common colds or hay fever, unless the symptoms are particularly severe</li> <li>• Assessments that are scheduled close together</li> <li>• Misreading the exam timetable</li> <li>• Poor time management</li> <li>• Minor transport disruption</li> <li>• Computer or printer failure where the student should have backed-up their work</li> <li>• Normal exam stress</li> <li>• Minor life events, unless the circumstances have had a disproportionate impact</li> <li>• Part time employment or paid work (unless a student who is studying on an apprenticeship or distance learning)</li> </ul>

<p>student from accessing online teaching or assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issues relating to a safeguarding concern</li> <li>• Undertaking public duties (such as jury service) or by competing in national or international sporting events or other similarly high-profile activities</li> </ul>	<p>programme where it is expected that a student would be in paid employment experiences an unexpected additional workload).</p>
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2.2.3 Occasionally, there may be circumstances that have a wider impact and that affect most or all students. For instance, students' studies may be impacted by staff taking industrial action or by public health emergencies such as outbreaks of an epidemic disease. Events such as these and those arising as a result of failure of University systems or facilities, affecting a large number of students, close to the date of a scheduled assessment, may in some cases be considered as an exceptional circumstance.

2.2.4 If the event affects a significant number of students, then the University may decide to take action without the need for students to make individual EC claims. If the University decides to take this type of action, appropriate communications will be issued to students explaining what will happen and what they need to do. Students should seek advice from their School or from Student Services if they believe they have been affected by this type of situation and are not sure what action to take.

## 2.3 Evidence Requirements

2.3.1 This section relates to Exceptional Circumstances claims for **Another Assessment Opportunity only**. Where students are notifying the University that they wish to use the automatic 7 calendar day extension (see Annex A), no evidence is required.

2.3.2 Claims for Another Assessment Opportunity on the basis of exceptional circumstances must be supported by evidence. The student statement made as part of the EC claim is a form of evidence, however, depending on the circumstances, the University will normally require additional information to verify the claim. Details of what this might be and how it is handled as part of the claim are provided in this section.

2.3.3 The type of evidence required is determined by the nature of the claim. For example, a request for another assessment opportunity in one assessment may not require the same evidence as a claim for more than one assessment. Examples of evidence types are provided in table 2 below. Students should contact Student Experience and Support to discuss evidence requirements if advice is required.

2.3.4 Evidence to support an EC claim should be submitted at the time the EC is submitted.

2.3.5 Students are responsible for providing evidence and the University cannot source evidence on the student's behalf. However, where evidence such as confirmation of counselling appointments is being provided from within the University, how it will be

provided can be discussed with Student Experience and Support to avoid unnecessary administrative processes.

### 2.3.6 Table 2

	Evidence	Notes
i	<p><b>Medical Evidence About the Student Only.</b> This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical Certificate or 'Fit Note' signed by the medical practitioner whilst the illness or incident was affecting the student</li> <li>• Other medical evidence such as certificates of attendance at surgery or hospital</li> <li>• A doctor's written opinion given after receiving the student's permission to release information</li> </ul> <p><b>NB – Not required for short illnesses of 7 calendar days or less – see Automatic 7 calendar day extension (see Annex A)</b></p>	<p>The evidence should relate to the student and be provided by a medical practitioner, registered with a recognised professional body.</p> <p>Medical evidence should include the following information – it may be advisable to share these points with the practitioner to ensure that they provide the relevant information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brief statement of the circumstances or incident in question</li> <li>• Dates and outcomes of any consultations</li> <li>• Dates of the affected period – which should cover the dates of the affected assessments</li> <li>• Information on expected recovery time, if applicable</li> <li>• If difficulties are chronic or likely to be persistent, information on the likelihood of future serious episodes</li> </ul> <p>The University may place less weight on evidence that consists, for example, of a GP confirming what the student told them about their state of health several weeks previously, when the student did not consult with the GP when they were ill.</p> <p>Consideration of each case will be made on its individual facts, for example where the student may have found it difficult to arrange an appointment with their GP, or they may have struggled, for good reason, to get supporting evidence at the time the circumstances occurred.</p> <p>If the exceptional circumstances are to do with the illness of another person, medical information about them <b>should not</b> be submitted to the University as part of the EC process. Evidence for the EC claim should relate to <b>the impact on the student</b>. For example, they may have seen their GP or a counsellor or may have discussed their circumstances with Student Experience and Support. They could also have provided practical assistance to the other person such as accompanying them to medical appointments practical evidence.</p>
iii	<p><b>Documentary Evidence</b></p>	<p>This refers to evidence that may reasonably be expected to be available in light of the circumstances of the claim, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information from the police (if the claim relates to a crime)</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information from the court or another professional body (if the claim relates to legal proceedings or another official process)</li> <li>• Evidence from a service provider (for example transport / internet) about any outage/service failure or disruption which may have affected the student</li> <li>• Information from the student that outlines a student's additional work pressures) for apprenticeship and distance learning students only)</li> </ul>
iv	<b>Letter of Corroboration from a Professional Person</b>	<p>This evidence may arise as a result of an official process, as with the evidence listed above.</p> <p>It may also refer to corroboration from a member of University staff if the circumstances claimed involve an issue related to a University process, for example, an administrative issue.</p> <p>The letter must be from an independent person who does not have a personal relationship with the student and should be provided on an official letterhead or, if provided by email, from a business email address.</p> <p>Letters of support for the claim from family and/or friends will not be taken into consideration.</p>
v	<b>Other appropriate evidence to corroborate the claim</b>	<p>It is acknowledged that in cases of claims in the category of 'Other' the relevant evidence may not meet the categories listed above. In these cases, students are urged to seek advice from Student Experience and Support on what evidence may be acceptable. The general principles that evidence should be independent and auditable still apply and the final decision as to whether or not the evidence is acceptable sits with the Student Experience and Support Officer.</p>
vi	<b>Evidence of bereavement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An order of service or obituary</li> <li>• A Death Certificate (if the claim relates to a close family member or friend?)</li> <li>• At the discretion of the Student Experience and support Officer, other evidence may be accepted, for example a news article.</li> </ul>

2.3.7 The examples in Table 2 are provided for guidance only. Each claim is considered on its own merits and in cases where there is difficulty obtaining evidence, the Student Experience and Support team may exercise discretion, based on the circumstances of the student. Evidence should normally date from the time the circumstances occurred.

2.3.8 Students should upload their evidence to the EC system electronically. However, original copies of evidence should be retained for students' own records as these must be made available to the University if requested. If the student does not wish the

evidence to be digitised for reasons of confidentiality, where there is a valid reason to accept the request, a Student Experience and Support Officer may verify the evidence and make a record on the claim that they have done this. Evidence must confirm the severity of the circumstances and how studies have been affected.

2.3.9 If the evidence is not in English, students should provide an authenticated translation (i.e., displaying the credentials of the translator for verification) of the documentation. Untranslated evidence cannot be accepted, and the University cannot arrange translation. However, in these circumstances, the student should seek advice from the Student Experience and Support team as it may be possible for the claim to be evidenced in another way, rather than needing to source a translation.

#### 2.3.10 **Late Evidence**

If evidence is not available at the time of submission of the claim, the student is responsible for contacting the Student Experience and Support team to indicate whether they are in the process of sourcing appropriate evidence and the expected timeline. Alternatively, they could have a discussion with a Student Experience and Support Officer who can advise on alternative evidence or whether evidence can be accepted late. If the evidence is accepted the claim should proceed as usual.

2.3.11 Whether late evidence can be accepted is decided by Student Experience and Support. If the student misses the evidence submission deadline, the claim will be rejected. Students who are affected by exceptional circumstances close to the end of the semester should be mindful that the timescales for them to obtain their evidence may be very short and it is important that students ensure they are aware of the relevant deadlines. Exceptionally, if evidence becomes available at a later date, the student could consider submitting an appeal for it still to be taken into account.

2.3.12 The University may take action to verify the evidence provided in support of an EC claim. Any concerns regarding authenticity of evidence will be investigated in accordance with the provisions of [Regulation D4](#) and the [Academic Misconduct Code of Practice](#), if the offence is proven the standard penalty applies which is termination of studies.

2.3.13 The University recognises that in some cases, the student may not have been aware that their circumstances were having an impact on their performance until sometime later. The University will consider claims like this carefully to understand the reasons why evidence was not available earlier through the appeals process. When assessing the claim, the Student Experience and Support team will work with the student and Disability Support to ensure that appropriate Reasonable Adjustments are considered and in place going forward.

2.3.14 Being assessed for a specific learning disability is not normally a valid reason to submit ECs, unless the delay in the diagnosis process affected a specific assessment, however, the Disability Support Team will be able to provide evidence that the student is currently registered with them and is awaiting evidence. It is not normally possible to ask retrospectively for marks to be reconsidered or for further assessment

opportunities to be allowed once a diagnosis is received.

2.3.15 It should be noted that the student's marks in themselves will not be accepted as evidence for a claim, for example if the student believes them to be out of alignment with previous marks they have achieved. All claims must still be accompanied by a broader explanation of the situation and appropriate corroborating evidence.

## 2.4 Exceptional Circumstances Claim Deadlines and Regulations

2.4.1 EC claims for another assessment opportunity should be submitted either before or within 7 calendar days of the **original assessment deadline**. For example:

- i. If a piece of coursework was due to be submitted on 1<sup>st</sup> October at 1pm, the EC deadline for the work is 1pm on 8<sup>th</sup> October.
- ii. If a piece of coursework was due to be submitted on 1<sup>st</sup> October at 1pm, the student could access an extra 7 calendar days to submit the work (see Annex A 7 calendar day extensions). If the student's circumstances then required them to submit an EC claim, this **should still be submitted up until 1pm on 8<sup>th</sup> October**.

2.4.2 Evidence to support an EC claim should be submitted at the same time as the claim. If the evidence is not available at the time of submission, then it must be received no later than 14 calendar days after the EC claim being submitted. For example, the final opportunity to submit evidence for a claim submitted on 8<sup>th</sup> October, would be 22<sup>nd</sup> October.

2.4.3 If a student does not submit their claim and evidence by the deadlines outlined in 2.5.1 and 2.5.2, then the claim will be rejected. The University may exercise discretion in cases where there is a substantial, valid reason as to why the student was unable to submit their claim by the relevant deadline for example, hospitalisation or other lack of capacity.

2.4.4 Regulation B8 'Termination of Studies by the University' may be invoked by the University if a student obtains a mark of 10 or below in 50% or more modules in the most recent semester (Regulation B8, 1.2.1). Where a student has an approved an EC, this will be taken into consideration before termination of study is confirmed.

2.4.5 Under Regulation D1 'Assessment', 12.1.2 the only circumstances under which students will be permitted a further assessment attempt of a failed assessment component, where the module overall is passed; is via an approved EC claim. However, if there has been a procedural irregularity or valid reasons why an EC claim was not submitted by the deadline, students will have the opportunity to appeal their results and bring forward new evidence to support their appeal.

## 2.5 Process of an EC Claim

2.5.1 EC claims are reviewed by a panel of Student Experience and Support Officers, Chaired by either the Director of Student Services or Head of Student Wellbeing. The claim is



reviewed against the criteria in this Code of Practice to establish whether the circumstances meet the definition of an EC as described in section 2.2.

2.5.2 If evidence is required, this is reviewed against the criteria described in section 2.4.

2.5.3 A general consideration of the circumstances takes place to ensure that EC's are the best course of action in the situation and if not, to signpost the student to the more appropriate process (see section 1.4.5)

2.5.4 A flow chart detailing the whole EC process can be found at Annex B.

## **2.6 Outcome of an EC Claim**

2.6.1 An EC claim will be reviewed by the Student Experience and Support Officer EC Panel and a decision will be made to accept or decline the claim. If an EC Claim is accepted, then the student will be provided with Another Assessment Opportunity. This is an assessment undertaken at another point in the academic year, normally within the designated re-assessment periods in June (Semester One) or August (Semester Two). Apprenticeship and distance learning programmes usually offer reassessments outside of these main periods, students should speak to programme staff for clarification on when this will take place. This is normally a new piece of work and not a resubmission of the original work. Students requiring a short-term extension should refer to the 7-calendar day extension process (see Annex A).

2.6.2 If an EC Claim is rejected, the reason for the rejection will be recorded and communicated to the student.

2.6.3 If a student submits a number of EC claims, or a claim that highlights a particularly serious issue, then the student may be referred to another more appropriate process to ensure they are fully supported, as in some cases, it may be detrimental to the student to submit EC claims. For example, if a student has suffered a traumatic experience and submits claims for all work in one semester, it is likely to result in 'bunching' of all their assessments to the next assessment period, with the risk of impacting their performance in the re-assessments and other assessments scheduled for that time. In this case it may be more appropriate to suggest a Leave of Absence or the Support to Study process.

2.6.4 The student will receive an email to inform them of the outcome of their EC claim. This will indicate if:

- The claim has been accepted or, rejected. If rejected, the reason for the rejection will be recorded and communicated to the student.
- Further evidence is required
- If a meeting with the Student Experience and Support Officer is required
- If another process is more appropriate to support their needs.

2.6.5 The Professional Services team within the relevant Academic School will then ensure that the relevant Exam Board is aware of which students have an accepted EC claim to enable the board to make a decision about the most appropriate reassessment for the student.

## **2.7 Implications of being awarded Another Assessment Opportunity**

- 2.7.1 Where an EC claim for Another Assessment Opportunity is approved, this is usually undertaken at the next assessment opportunity. For semester two modules, where re-assessment takes place in August, this will delay completion of the programme for final year students meaning that they will not attend July graduation with their cohort and for students not in their final year may mean they are unable to progress to the next level of study. For apprenticeship students, another assessment opportunity may affect their programme end date.
- 2.7.2 If it is deemed that doing this may be detrimental to the student, then the Student Experience and Support team may consider other processes to support the student, for example Support to Study.

## **2.8 Safeguarding and Support**

- 2.8.1 EC claims are reviewed by the University's Student Experience and Support Team EC Panel. The team receive appropriate support and training to be able to support students with advice and guidance. Student Experience and Support Officers will follow up on EC claims where students indicate they would like to access ongoing support.
- 2.8.2 In some cases, it may be appropriate for the Student Experience and Support team EC Panel to refer students to other processes. This could be the process to ensure Reasonable Adjustments are in place for disabilities, Specific Learning Difficulties and long-term health conditions (including mental health), referral to the Leave of Absence, Fitness to Study, or Support to Study processes.
- 2.8.3 The Student Experience and Support team are trained to recognise and respond to cases where students may be considered a risk to themselves or others, or when there are safeguarding concerns regarding themselves or someone else. In these cases, the Student Experience and Support team will work with other areas of Student Services to ensure that these risks are managed and that the appropriate action is taken.

## **2.9 Information available to staff and confidentiality**

- 2.9.1 All University staff should make themselves familiar with Keele's [Privacy Notice](#) and ensure that [mandatory training](#), including Information Security Certification, is kept up to date.
- 2.9.2 Staff who are responsible for making decisions on EC claims should ensure they have read the University's [Safeguarding Policy](#) and receive the appropriate training.
- 2.9.3 When considering EC cases, staff will be made aware of personal and sensitive situations. It should be made clear when staff are discussing sensitive issues that limitations exist in relation to confidentiality. For example, whilst students and staff have the right to receive a confidential service, appropriate information sharing is an essential part of the provision of safe and effective support. In order to support delivery of this, there may be a need to share confidential information which the University must balance against duties to protect and promote the health and welfare of students, staff and members of the public.

## **2.10 Internal Oversight and Reporting**

2.10.1 The University undertakes scrutiny of the operation of the Exceptional Circumstances process for the following purposes:

- i. To monitor decision making to ensure consistency and fairness.
- ii. To identify and consider trends or emerging issues at an institutional level or related to specific courses or cohorts.
- iii. To identify the overall usage of the process to inform the updating and development of guidance for students and staff.
- iv. To monitor the effectiveness of the process and to make recommendations for further developments if required.
- v. Review of this Code of Practice

2.10.2 The scrutiny of the process is undertaken by the Exceptional Circumstances Oversight Committee, a sub-committee of Education Committee. The Committee meets three times per year, following Semester One and Two assessments and following the summer re-assessment period.

2.10.3 Committee membership is made up of:

- Director of Student Services and Success/Head of Student Wellbeing (Chair)
- Head of Academic Quality and Student Conduct
- Student Experience and Support Managers
- Directors of Education (Rotational Attendance)
- Heads of Faculty Operations
- KeeleSU Education Officer
- KeeleSU Welfare and Diversity Officer
- Keele Postgraduate Association Vice President

2.10.4 Terms of Reference can be found at Annex C.

### 3 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

	<b>Role</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
i.	Student	Be aware of deadlines for submitting assessed work and submit an EC claim and evidence within the given timeframe.  Liaise with the Student Experience and Support team as required.

ii.	Student Experience and Support Officer	<p>Receive EC claims and evidence and approve/reject/seek further information.</p> <p>Contact students who require support.</p> <p>Ensure students are provided with advice and guidance on appropriate processes and policies based on their circumstances (e.g. EC's leave of absence, Support to Study).</p> <p>Liaise with School based Professional Services staff as appropriate.</p> <p>Liaise with Academic Mentors regarding specific students when appropriate</p> <p>Refer students to other specialist services when appropriate e.g., Disability Support, Financial Support, Counselling and Mental Health</p>
iii.	Student Experience and Support Manager	<p>Work with the Heads of Faculty Operations to oversee the EC process for the relevant Faculty.</p> <p>Work with SESO's regarding any students of concern/escalated concerns.</p>
iv.	Head of Student Wellbeing	Work with Heads of Schools and Heads of Faculty Operations to ensure any issues related to processes within their areas are resolved.
v.	Heads of Schools	Work with the Head of Student Wellbeing, Student Experience and Support Managers and colleagues across the School to ensure processes are engaged with and followed appropriately by academic colleagues.
vi.	Academic Mentors	Advise students appropriately on sources of support and where to find information regarding EC claims.
v.	Programme/Module Leads	Advise students appropriately on sources of support and where to find information regarding EC claims.
vi.	Head of Faculty Operations	Oversee the Academic School/Faculty process to ensure EC outcomes are managed appropriately.
vii.	Faculty Operations Managers	<p>Oversee the Academic School/Faculty process to ensure relevant staff have access to the appropriate information.</p> <p>Ensure appropriate information is shared with Exam Boards in a timely manner.</p>
viii.	School based Operations Administrators	Access EC data to ensure it is shared in a timely and appropriate way with colleagues within Academic Schools for the purpose of marking and Exam Boards.
ix.	Other academic and professional Services staff	Advise students appropriately on sources of support.
x.	Exam Board members	Ensure EC claims with Another Assessment Opportunity as an outcome are appropriately dealt with at the exam board.

## 4 DEFINITIONS

i.	Exceptional Circumstances	A circumstance outside the control of the student, which negatively affects their academic performance and is usually unforeseen.
ii.	KLE	The electronic platform used for submission and management of EC claims.
iii.	Assessment/Assessed Work	Work undertaken by students to complete modules leading to University awards
iv.	Assessment Deadlines	The date by which students are required to submit assessed work.
v.	Another Assessment Opportunity	An opportunity to delay or re-submit assessed work in an alternative assessment period, permitted by an EC claim. This is normally a new piece of work and not a resubmission of the original work
vi.	Assessment Period	The period during the academic year when students are required to complete and submit assessments.
vii.	Safeguarding	This University Policy that sets out the approach to preventing and reducing the risk of harm to children and adults at risk.
viii.	Termination of Studies	A decision taken by the University to end a student's studies and registration. This action is permitted in specific circumstances, set out in <a href="#">Regulation B8</a> .
ix.	Regulations	These regulations and policies apply to all members of the University, including students. The regulations govern the academic functions of the University and form the framework for learning, teaching and assessment and other aspects of the student experience. More information can be found on the University <a href="#">website</a> .
x.	EC Claim Deadline	This is the date by which a student must submit their EC claim. The date is always 7 days after the original assessment deadline.
xi.	Evidence Deadline	This is the date by which evidence must be submitted, this may be later than the EC Claim deadline if agreed by Student Services.
xii.	Reasonable Adjustments	Changes that the University has to make for students with a disability, to remove disadvantage.
xiii.	Support to Study	A University process to provide a positive and supportive approach to the management of students physical and/or mental health.
xiv.	Leave of Absence	Time out of student studies, where they stop participating in scheduled learning and teaching activities, attending classes and are not required to take assignments.

## 5 RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

5.0 This Code of Practice relates to several other policies and procedures, as noted in the text at the relevant sections. These are also referred to in the document control information.

## 6 REVIEW APPROVAL & PUBLICATION

- 6.1 This code of practice will be reviewed a minimum of every three years, though may be updated more frequently to reflect developments in University policy, assessment practices or if deemed necessary by the EC Oversight Committee.
- 6.2 In accordance with the University Policy Framework, Codes of Practice are approved by UEC, this document should be recommended for approval by Education Committee and any updates reported to Senate.

## 7 ANNEXES

**Annex A – 7 Calendar Day Extension**

**Annex B – EC Claim Flow Chart**

**Annex C – EC Oversight Committee Terms of Reference**

## 8 DOCUMENT CONTROL INFORMATION

<b>Document Name</b>	Exceptional Circumstances Code of Practice
<b>Owner</b>	Director of Student Services and Success
<b>Version Number</b>	Version 2.2
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<b>Related University Policy Documents</b>	Safeguarding, Support to Study, Leave of Absence, Fitness to Study, Reasonable Adjustments, Regulation B8 'Termination of Studies by the University', Regulation D1 'Assessment', PGR Code of Practice

## 7 Calendar Day Extension

### 1 Purpose

- 2.7** The purpose of the 7-calendar day extension is to allow flexibility for students to ensure that they can prioritise their academic work, personal life and other commitments appropriately.

### 2 Scope

- 2.1** 7 calendar day extensions are available to students undertaking all Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught programmes, including apprenticeships, Keele University International College programmes, Foundation Year, online-only courses, on Keele programmes taught at international partner institutions and on taught modules for Doctoral Research programmes.
- 2.2** For 60 credit modules, the extension available increases to 14 calendar days. Students should note that if they use the full 14 day extension, in some cases, this will delay completion of their programme.
- 2.3** Students are permitted a 7 calendar day extension on up to 3 assessments per semester. Where students are studying on a programme with modules across the whole calendar year rather than an academic year, such as apprenticeship or HEP students, the Student Experience and Support Officer can approve additional 7 calendar day extensions on a pro-rata basis.
- 2.3** Where the relevant professional body has specific requirements, these take precedence over this code of practice. Students should seek advice from their School on whether there are different rules for their programme.
- 2.4** The 7 Calendar Day extension is distinct from the EC process as evidence is not required and approval of up to three requests per semester is automatic.
- 2.5** Where a 7 calendar day extension is not sufficient to enable a student to submit their work, they should refer to the Exceptional Circumstances process.

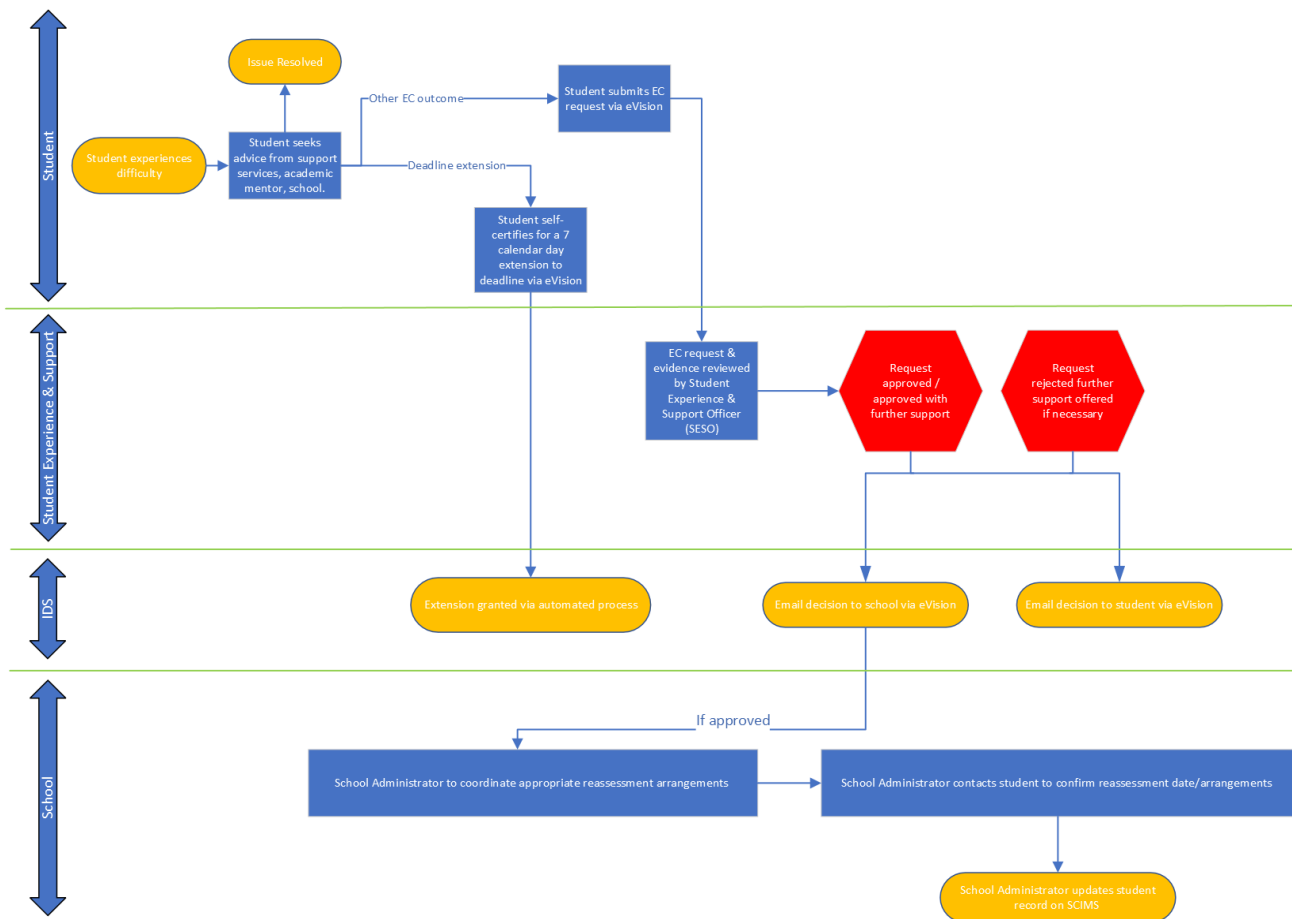
### 3 Approach

- 3.1** The 7 Calendar Day extension is not available for all types of assessment. A student will know if the assessment is eligible as they will have the option to select the 7 day extension in the EC system. If the option is not there, they may still submit and EC Claim.

- 3.2 If a student is having difficulties meeting an assessment deadline and the assessment is not eligible for the 7 Calendar Day extension, they should refer to the Exceptional Circumstances Code of Practice.
- 3.3 A student wishing to use the 7 Calendar Day extension should notify the University via the EC System. Approval is automatic and the use of the system is for recording and reporting purposes only.
- 3.4 There is no requirement for students to provide a reason or submit evidence to access these extensions, but students can self-select an option for the Student Experience and Support Team to make contact with them if they would like to discuss or access support.
- 3.5 If a student accesses a 7 calendar day extension, their deadline will be 1pm 7 days later than the original deadline. **This is also the deadline for them to make an EC claim if the 7 calendar day extension was not sufficient.**
- 3.6 If a student has Reasonable Adjustments in place for a Disability, Health Condition or Specific Learning difficulty, the 7 day extension will be available in addition to any adjustment.
- 3.7 Final Year students should note that using the 7 calendar day extension for assessment deadlines that fall late in semester two, may impact on their ability to attend the summer graduation ceremony.
- 3.8 To ensure use of the extension process does not result in 'bunching' of assessments, students can access a maximum of 3 extension opportunities per each Semester. This limit applies to 7 day extensions only, if three occasions have been used and the student requires further support, they should refer to the EC Code of Practice or seek advice from Student Experience and Support.



### EC Claim Flow Chart



## EC Oversight Committee

### Terms of Reference

#### Scope:

To oversee the Exceptional Circumstances (EC) and 7 Calendar Day Extension processes across the University for students on programmes subject to the EC Code of Practice. The EC Oversight Committee is a sub-committee of Education Committee and will formally report into Education Committee three times a year (following a committee meeting).

#### Purpose:

To scrutinise the Exceptional Circumstances and 7 Calendar Day Extension processes:

- i) To monitor decision making to ensure consistency and fairness.
- ii) To identify and consider trends or emerging issues at an institutional level or related to specific courses or cohorts.
- iii) To identify the overall usage of the process to inform the updating and development of guidance for students and staff.
- iv) To monitor the effectiveness of the process and to make recommendations for further developments if required.
- v) To ensure Academic Schools receive the appropriate information regarding the above to inform the academic planning/module development process
- vi) To make recommendations to Education Committee regarding improvements, developments or issues regarding academic matters and processes outside of the EC process but that arise through the scrutiny of EC process.
- vii) Review of the Exceptional Circumstances Code of Practice
- viii) To provide high level data regarding trends to the Students' Union Advice and Support at Keele Service

#### Information Requirements:

- i) Reports from EC system including (but not limited to):
  - a. University level information regarding EC's and 7 calendar day extensions, also broken down into Faculty and School level;
  - b. Reasons for EC claims
  - c. Rejected EC claims

- ii) Feedback from Schools/Faculties and Student Representatives
- iii) Any sector-based reports or recommendations OIA etc

**Membership:**

Director of Student Services and Success/Head of Student Wellbeing (Chair)

Head of Academic Quality and Student Conduct

Student Experience and Support Managers

Directors of Education (Rotational Attendance)

Heads of Faculty Operations

KeeleSU Education Officer

KeeleSU Welfare and Diversity Officer

Keele Postgraduate Association Vice President

**Committee Meetings:**

The Committee meets three times per year, in February, July and September following completion of assessment periods.