

Quick guide to Exceptional Circumstances

Introduction

We recognise that unplanned events, including ill health, may occur during your time at BU which could adversely impact your ability to study and complete an assessment. This guide has been designed to give you a quick overview of what you need to do and when as well as what evidence you need to provide.

What are exceptional circumstances?

An 'Exceptional Circumstance' is an event that has had a negative impact on your ability to study or complete your assessment. It is something which you could not have foreseen and over which you have no control. BU defines **Exceptional Circumstances** as:

- Short-term, sudden and/or unforeseen events or circumstances which can be proved to have significantly and adversely impacted a student's ability to study or to complete one or more assessment;
- beyond the control of the student;
- are **not** already registered with BU's Additional Learning Support service.

For specific examples please take a look at the table below.

What you need to read

As well as reading this quick guide, make sure that you also read your programme handbook for more guidance and 6J - Exceptional Circumstances (including Extensions): Policy and Procedure which you can access by going to the student website here: <https://www1.bournemouth.ac.uk/students/help-advice/looking-support/exceptional-circumstances>

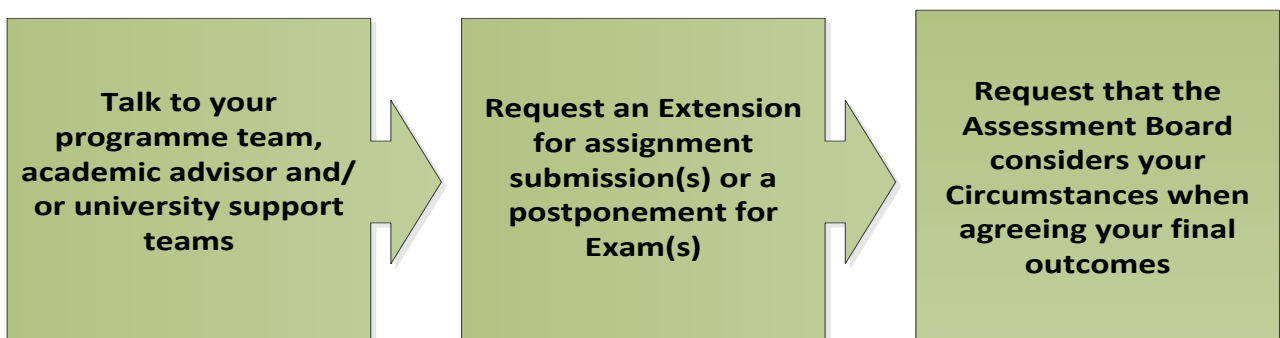
If you have ongoing issues, you may also want to look at other policies that can support you such as: 11J- Health, Wellbeing and Fitness to Study: Policy and Procedure and 3U-Interruption of Studies: Procedure which are available here: <https://www1.bournemouth.ac.uk/students/help-advice/important-information>

Why it is important to let us know about any exceptional circumstances as early as possible

It's important that you let us know about any issues you may be experiencing as soon as possible so that we can assist you in finding the right support. Waiting until the end of the year before telling anyone will limit the options available to you.

Who to talk to

If you feel that circumstances are impacting on your ability to complete your assessments thus impacting on your results, you should talk to your Academic Advisor, Programme Leader (PL) or Programme Support Officer (PSO). Don't forget to use other University support teams such as the BU Wellbeing Service or SUBU. You can find their details on the FMC Who's Who guide that you will have received. All of these people will be able to offer advice on how best to manage.



What happens next?

When you have discussed your situation, it may be advised that you need to submit a request for a coursework extension or have your exam(s) postponed. Following this, in some cases you will be advised to ask that the Assessment Board take your circumstances into consideration when they are assessing your work.

How do I submit an Exceptional Circumstances form and what will happen after I have completed it?

There are two exceptional circumstances forms that relate to the different requests. These are listed below.

[Request for Extension or Postponement Form](#)

To submit a claim for an extension request/exam postponement, you must complete the Exceptional Circumstances Form for an *Assignment Extension/Exam Postponement* and submit the signed form before the assignment /exam date to the Programme Support Officer either in person or via post/email with the appropriate supporting evidence.

The completed form and supporting evidence will be sent to your programme leader for consideration. You will normally be advised if this has been authorised within 7 calendar days (5 working days) of submitting the form. If approved, for coursework, you will be given a new deadline. For an exam, it will normally be sat in the next available resit exam period.

[Request for the Assessment Board to Consider Your Exceptional Circumstances Form](#)

This form is used if you are reporting circumstances after the hand-in date or examination date and should be used if:

- You were unable to submit an assignment extension or exam postponement request before the assignment/exam deadline (and have provided a valid reason for the delay).
- Your circumstances have continued to impact on your performance in assessments beyond the assignment extension/exam postponement that has been granted.
- You have completed your assessment before becoming fully aware of the impact of the circumstances.

You will need to send this to the Programme Support Officer either in person or via post/email with the appropriate supporting evidence by the deadlines provided to you. Requests made after the deadline are not usually accepted.

The Exceptional Circumstances Board will decide whether the circumstances should be taken into consideration. The Assessment Board will decide upon the assessment outcome for the student. The Assessment Board will not raise the marks received even if they agree that the circumstances are valid. The Assessment Board may recommend that a student who has failed an assessment be permitted to be re-assessed as outlined in the Assessment Regulations 6A.

Form completion support

If you need help completing these forms you can contact:

- Your Programme Leader or Programme Support Team
- SUBU Advice on studentadvice@bournemouth.ac.uk or call 01202 965779
- askBU on askBU@bournemouth.ac.uk or call 01202 969696

Examples and Evidence supporting your forms

It is important that when you complete the relevant form that you submit evidence. Below is a list of supporting evidence we would generally expect you to provide for a range of exceptional circumstances.

Self-certification of Short -Term Sickness Form (up to 5 days in duration)

We recognise that there are some instances where it is not possible or appropriate to obtain a doctor's note/medical evidence. Therefore, if the circumstances arise on the actual day of the assignment hand in or exam you must contact your Programme Support Officer before the submission deadline/start of the exam. They will complete a *Self-certification of Short-term Sickness* on your behalf. It is important to note that Short-term Sickness Notification is not permitted retrospectively and is required in addition to the two forms described above.

Exceptional Circumstance	Supporting Evidence
An illness (including mental health) that impacted your ability to attend an exam or meet an assessment deadline or adversely affected your performance in an assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Illness of up to 5 days self-certification form;• For longer periods or a long term condition, a letter from GP who has been actively supporting you• Medical certificate• Hospital appointment letter• Copy of prescription/medicine labelling• A letter from BU/external support services who have been actively supporting you
Family illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A letter from GP who has been actively supporting your family;• Medical certificate• Hospital appointment letter• A letter from BU/external support services who have been actively supporting you
Pregnancy-related illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medical certificate or GP note explaining requirement for illness or hospitalisation in case of unforeseen complications in pregnancy
Bereavement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Death certificate• Order of service• Letter normally from independent person with contact details
Unforeseen travel disruption normally causing delays of over an hour, for example industrial action or road traffic accident	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Letter from travel company
Acute personal difficulties/Domestic Disruption	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A letter from GP who has been actively supporting your family;• A letter from BU/external support services who have been actively supporting you• A letter from independent authority supporting you (e.g. social worker, counsellor, domestic abuse charity);• Police report and crime reference number;• Legal advisor
Jury Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A letter from the Court.

Please be aware, the following are **not** normally considered valid Exceptional Circumstances:

Computer IT/failure	It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all work is electronically stored and/or submitted and the correct piece of work is submitted. Enough time should be allowed to submit the work to meet the deadline.
Transport problems	Routine delays to buses and trains will not be accepted.
Misreading assessment dates and times	It is the student's responsibility to ensure an accurate understanding of the assessment location, time and duration.
Holidays or expeditions	All holidays and vacations should take place at a time that does not impact your availability to study or prepare for or undertake an assessment.
Inadequate planning, organisation or time management	Students are expected to plan their time to manage their assessments schedules and the study time required to support their own learning.
Timetabling of coursework/examinations	Deadlines of exams being too close together will not be accepted as valid Exceptional Circumstances claim.
Paid employment or voluntary work	Students are responsible for managing other commitments so that they do not adversely interfere with their studies. If students are experiencing acute personal difficulties that require them to undertake unexpected levels of paid work these might be come under the definition of Exceptional Circumstances.
Not disclosing circumstances	The University can only consider Exceptional Circumstances claims if they are disclosed in accordance with regulations. If a student has a valid reason for not disclosing circumstances by the published deadlines they should speak to their Academic Advisor or SUBU.