

EXTENSIONS AND EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Introduction

1. During your studies, you might face personal, medical, or family situations which impact negatively on your academic performance. Such situations are called Exceptional Circumstances. See Appendix One for instructions on how to:
 - (i) request an extension or
 - (ii) request consideration of your exceptional circumstances.
2. If you are worried about your ability to attend lectures and continue with your studies, please refer to the [Break in Study Policy and Procedure](#).

Extensions

3. An extension gives you an extra 5 working days¹ (or 10 working days if you have a Learning Contract) past the first submission date to complete your work. You are normally permitted extensions on a maximum of four assessment tasks in any one academic year. You do not need to provide any evidence and if you have not exceeded four extensions, the request will be granted automatically.

Exceptional Circumstances

4. Where your performance or ability to work on your assessments has been negatively affected by situations beyond your control, you can ask for an additional chance to complete your assessment due to your 'exceptional circumstances'. You can make a request for consideration of your Exceptional Circumstances for all first and reassessment attempts.
5. An approved request means that you will be given another opportunity at the assessment. If it is a first attempt, the mark will not be capped. If it is a reassessment, the mark will still be capped. This piece of work will be submitted at the next published point of assessment. This could be towards the end of the academic year.
6. It is not possible to make a request for ECs for In-Module Retrieval attempts.
7. Examples of Exceptional Circumstances include but are not limited to the following and each case will be considered on its own merit:
 - Significant short-term physical illness or injury.
 - Significant short-term mental ill-health.
 - A long-term or chronic physical or mental health condition, which has recently worsened temporarily or permanently.
 - Death or serious illness of a person with whom you have a close relationship.

¹ we define working days as all days other than weekends, public holidays, and University closure periods.

- A long-term relationship breakdown, such as a marriage or other partnership.
 - Exceptional (i.e., non-routine) caring responsibilities.
 - Experience of any type of harassment or assault.
 - Victim of a crime which is likely to have significant emotional impact.
 - Military conflict, natural disaster, or extreme weather conditions.
 - Severe financial difficulties.
 - Exposure to a difficult/challenging home environment.
8. Examples of situations that are not Exceptional Circumstances:
- A long-term or chronic health condition (which is supported by your Learning Contract as appropriate).
 - Circumstances which were foreseeable or preventable.
 - Holidays.
 - Pressure of academic work (unless this contributes to ill-health).
 - Poor time-management.
 - Lack of awareness of dates or times of assessment submission or examination.
 - Failures of equipment, including IT systems and computer viruses. These will only be accepted when they occur site-wide, nationally, or internationally and can be verified by an independent source.
 - Attending an interview for a job or placement (Where an interview for employment or a work placement clash with a scheduled assessment, a student is expected to rearrange the interview for a more appropriate time, if the employer has flexibility to do that).
 - Requests relating to group assessment, particularly in relation to the planning and preparation (e.g., intra-group conflict or absence/non-cooperation of one or more group members). Instead, these should be reported directly to the Module Leader at the earliest opportunity.

Long Term or Chronic Health Conditions

9. It is not necessary for you to follow the procedures in this document if your reasons for requesting additional time relate to a condition already covered by a Learning Contract. You should refer to the Assessment Support for Students with Learning Contracts.

Evidence

10. When you request consideration for Exceptional Circumstances, you will need to provide evidence which supports your request. Requests without evidence will not normally be approved.
11. All evidence should be in English and should contain your name and confirm the circumstances that have affected you, confirm the dates when you were affected and be from an independent and authoritative third party. Independent means that they are not personally connected with you. Authoritative means that they are a recognised expert for the evidence that they are providing.
12. Examples of suitable evidence include but are not limited to the examples indicated below.

Exceptional Circumstances	Examples of suitable evidence
Illness	Letter from a medical practitioner e.g., General Practitioner (GP), specialist, or registered professional in a medical practice
Hospital admission	Appointment or discharge letter from the hospital, outpatient appointment or Accident and Emergency (A&E) attendance.

Bereavement of a family member/friend	Death certificate, order of funeral service, medical practitioner note, obituary notice, newspaper announcement, or any other relevant similar document
Significant adverse personal or family circumstances	Letter from one of the following: a medical practitioner, a social worker, a registered psychological or psychiatric therapist, an officer of the law, a teacher outside of the University, a religious authority.
Serious personal disruption (e.g., victim of crime, court attendance, breakdown of a long-term relationship)	Letter of confirmation from a relevant organisation, solicitors' letter, counsellor, victim support, social worker etc.
Evidence of a requirement for reasonable adjustments provided too late to be considered in the delivery or assessment of a module.	Statement from a SHU Disability or Wellbeing Advisor.
Work commitments	Letter from employer on company headed paper.

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Appendix One – Procedures

1. Procedure to request an Extension

- 1.1 Each summative assessment will have a set submission deadline. It is important that you familiarise yourself with all your deadline dates to be able to apply for an extension in a timely manner. Your assessment statement is published on My Student Record and shows the deadlines for all your assessments in the academic year. You are not able to have an extension for a timebound assessment (e.g., examinations) - please see the information about Self-Certification below.
- 1.2 If you wish to request an extension you should submit a request through your [My Student Record](#) account. You must request an extension before the submission deadline. You do not need to provide any evidence and if you have not exceeded the 4 extensions in an academic year, the request will be automatically granted. This means that you will have an extra **5 working days** to submit your work. If you have exceeded the maximum number of extensions, you can request another extension, but you must provide evidence to support your circumstances. Alternatively, you can request consideration of Exceptional Circumstances. If you have a Learning Contract, please see the [Assessment Support for Students with Learning Contracts](#). If you are registered as a student carer or meet the criteria as an elite/talented athlete, please refer to [Assessment Support for Student Carers](#) / [Assessment Support for Elite and Talented Athletes](#).

2. Procedure to apply for Exceptional Circumstances (ECs)

- 2.1 Before you apply for ECs, think carefully about the consequences. Generally, the best time to do the assessment is at the point that it is initially set within the teaching of the module and with the rest of your cohort. If your ECs are approved, this could mean that you have to return to university in the summer to complete work or sit an examination. You might also have to complete a different assignment to the one initially set. If you have ECs in several tasks, this could mean that you have a large workload to manage in short space of time. If you do not pass all your assessment tasks by the end of the academic year, this could prevent you from progressing to the next level of study in the following year and this would extend the time taken to complete your course.
- 2.2 Once you have decided that it is in your best interest to request an EC, you should complete the online request on [My Student Record](#).
- 2.3 You must put this request in yourself. If you are struggling to do this for any reason, please contact [Hallam Help](#) or speak to your Student Support Advisor.

3. Timescales

- 3.1 All requests must normally be submitted within 5 working days of the deadline/date to which they refer. You can submit your request without evidence if you do not have it yet. You can submit your evidence up to 10 working days after you have submitted your request form.
- 3.2 EC requests submitted late (outside of the 5 working days indicated above) will normally be automatically refused on the grounds of lateness. The exception to this would be if you can provide a satisfactory explanation of why the request was not submitted within the required timescale. Such an explanation should be based on independent medical evidence that you were physically or mentally unfit when a request should have been made.
- 3.3 Requests which are submitted after publication of provisional and confirmed results will normally result in an automatic refusal.
- 3.4 You will receive an email confirmation that the university has received your request. Your ECs will be considered by a panel of senior members of university staff who have no prior knowledge of the circumstances being claimed for. The EC Panel will only be able to consider your request from the information you have provided on your form so please make sure you provide full details of your circumstances and the impact that they are having on you.

4. Outcome of your Exceptional Circumstances request

- 4.1 The EC Panel meets regularly and aim to provide outcomes as soon as possible and normally within two working weeks of the submission of the request (although incomplete requests will take longer to resolve).
- 4.2 The Panel decision will be emailed to both your SHU student email address and your personal email address if you have provided it to the university. Please make sure you check these regularly.
- 4.3 If the EC Panel approves your request, and you do not pass the module concerned, you will be given another attempt at the particular task.
- 4.4 If you pass the module, you are not normally permitted another attempt. If you are a final year Undergraduate or a Master's student and you believe that being permitted to retake the assessment you have already passed would enable you to improve your degree classification, please contact your Student Support Adviser for advice.
- 4.5 If your EC request is declined, it is normally for one or more of the following reasons:
 - It has been submitted late without a valid reason.
 - You have not provided evidence to support your circumstances.
 - Your application is not considered to relate to Exceptional Circumstances.
- 4.6 The [Appeals Policy and Procedure](#) provides information on the grounds on which you may appeal any EC Panel decision.

5. Self-Certification

- 5.1 Requests for extensions should not be used for situations where you are unable to attend a timebound assessment (such as an examination) due to short-term illness. In these circumstances you should submit a [Self-Certification Form](#). You can use this form to report a short period of illness between 1 and 5 consecutive days.

6. Student Support Advisers

- 6.1 You will have been allocated a [Student Support Adviser](#) when you first arrived at Sheffield Hallam. They are here to listen and advise you on a range of issues and can signpost you to other specialist services across the university. If you need any guidance about your EC or extensions, you can contact [Hallam Help](#) who will signpost you to a Student Support Adviser as appropriate.
- 6.2 We recognise that a lot of situations which lead of applications for ECs often involve very personal and/or distressing information which can be difficult to have to keep repeating. If you indicate on the form that you wish to ask for comments from your Student Support Adviser, they will have the opportunity to endorse the circumstances you are reporting.

7. Student Union

- 7.1 Your [Student Union Advice Centre](#) can also offer you confidential and independent advice. Their friendly, trained professional advisers can help with a range of issues. There is also plenty of useful information and links on their website.

8. ECs for International Students and impact on reassessment dates

- 8.1 If you are an international student who is in the UK on a student visa, there are additional factors to consider before applying for ECs, and it is essential that you seek advice from the International Experience Team (IET) before deciding.
- 8.2 This is because, a successful application for ECs means you will be granted a further attempt at your assessment(s) in the next period of assessment. This may mean that you would not be able

to receive your confirmed results prior to the expiry date of your visa, which could affect your future plans.

- 8.3 You must also be aware that there are legal restrictions on the entitlement to visa extensions, and colleagues in the IET will be able to provide you with advice about these according to our individual set of circumstances so please do not delay seeking advice.

9. ECs for Students undertaking a placement

- 9.1 If you are unable to attend your placement due to unexpected circumstances, you should apply for ECs as soon as possible as indicated above.
- 9.2 The complexity of placements means that your request may take longer to process, but you will receive the outcome as soon as possible.
- 9.3 If your request is successful, your placement will be deferred, and you will be advised by email and a meeting will be set up with the relevant member of academic staff and your Student Support Adviser to discuss and agree the arrangements for your deferred placement and any other changes to your assessment deadlines. Please check your Assessment Statement carefully to make sure you are familiar with the changes so you can plan your work accordingly.
- 9.4 If your request is unsuccessful, you will be advised by email and encouraged to contact your Student Support Adviser to discuss your options. You will be advised about the right to appeal the refusal, but you must continue to attend your placement if possible, pending the outcome of any appeal.