Exceptional Circumstances Policy

Contents

A. Introduction 1

B. Underlying Principles and Definitions 2

C. Criteria and Applying for Exceptional Circumstances 3

D. How applications are considered and possible outcomes 4

E. Late and incomplete submissions 6

Appendix 1: Process flow chart 8

Appendix 2: Grounds for requests and evidence 9

A. Introduction

1. ArtsEd is committed to supporting students to fulfil their potential in a fair and consistent way. We believe that your approach to training is an important factor in developing professional practice, which means you are expected to make your training a high priority. However, we recognise that you may experience unexpected circumstances that affect your ability to prepare for and/or participate in assessments. This policy should be used by students who believe their performance in an assessment may be impacted by personal circumstances.

2. City St George's, University of London (City St George's) validates higher education programmes offered at ArtsEd as leading to awards of the University. This policy outlines ArtsEd's approach to applying and meeting the requirements of our validating institution, City St George's, University of London's **Senate Regulation 19: Assessment Regulations**. The aim of this policy is to give all students a fair opportunity to show they can reach the required standards.

3. All students are encouraged to report concerns about their ability to complete an assessment to a member of staff at ArtsEd (such as a Personal Tutor, course leader, Head of Year or Registry staff) as soon as they can. The earlier a problem is reported, the more we can do to support students and help them to make an informed decision.

4. This process cannot be used to review or challenge the assessment or its marking, nor can any grades or marks be altered after publication. Please see the Academic Appeals procedure for details of appealing an assessment decision after it has been approved.

5. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following which can be found on the Policies page of our website:

    - Disability Policy
    - Attendance Policy
    - Academic Appeals Procedure
    - Assessment & Feedback Policy
    - Student Physical Injury Reporting and Recovery Procedure
    - Support for Study Policy

B. Underlying Principles and Definitions

6. **ArtsEd operates a 'fit to sit' principle. This means that it is your responsibility to ensure that you only take part in or submit assessments if you're fit to do so.** By taking part in or submitting an assessment (digital or physical), you are declaring that you are not aware of any circumstances that could adversely impact your performance.

7. ArtsEd adheres to the core principles of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE) Good Practice Framework: accessibility; clarity; proportionality; timeliness; fairness; independence; confidentiality; and improving the student experience.

8. Students are expected to take responsibility for planning their work to meet the assessment deadlines and proactively seek advice and support as soon as they experience something that may affect their training. Furthermore, it is normally expected that students self-manage minor illnesses such as coughs and colds, unless the symptoms are severe or will have a negative impact on the assessment e.g. vocal assessments.

9. Repeated applications relating to the same circumstances will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis but are not normally accepted because they are unlikely to be unexpected.

10. The term **assessment** refers to any process, performance, submission or test that is marked and contributes towards your award.

11. **Exceptional Circumstances** are unexpected and outside of your control, which can be shown to have had a direct and substantial impact on your academic results.

Inclusivity

12. We are committed to promoting diversity, equity and inclusion in all our services and processes and all applications will be considered based on its individual circumstances. Any decision reached about a student's circumstances will be made wherever possible

through an inclusive process involving the student and other individuals such as relevant academic staff, health care professionals and Student Support, as appropriate.

13. **Reasonable adjustments** for students with disabilities, SpLD and long-term conditions may be recommended to ensure students are able to fully demonstrate their abilities. This process is outlined in ArtsEd's Disability Policy.

14. In line with our fit to sit principle, completion/participation in the assessment will normally constitute the student accepting any relevant reasonable adjustments in place. Following an assessment, students can use this policy if they believe the adjustments were not sufficient or appropriate.

C. Criteria and Applying for Exceptional Circumstances

15. To enable ArtsEd to appropriately support you, we encourage you to tell us **as soon as possible** if you believe you are not 'fit to sit' or experience other circumstances that might impact your ability to submit or participate in an assessment. Your claim is generally easier to process if you tell us before the assessment if at all possible.

16. You can apply for Exceptional Circumstances from when the circumstances arise (which may be before the assessment) until **7 calendar days** after the deadline or date of the last performance that you believe may have been affected. The circumstances must be:
    i. Unexpected: that you didn't know or couldn't have known the circumstances were going to happen
    ii. Outside of your control: that you couldn't have made a different choice that would have not resulted in these circumstances
    iii. Shown to have a direct and substantial impact on your academic performance

17. If you attempted the assessment and therefore declared yourself 'fit to sit', you must explain why those circumstances were not declared before the assessment. This would normally apply where:

    i. you have sustained an injury, been taken ill or faced other circumstances on the day of or during an assessment and notified a member of staff who is present at the assessment, unless it is not reasonably possible to do so (this must be explained in the application)

    or

    ii. your judgment was impaired, and you were unable to make a rational decision about whether you were well and capable enough to participate in or prepare for the assessment.

18. To apply for Exceptional Circumstances, you must complete and submit the Exceptional Circumstances Application Form and include copies of any supporting documentation/evidence, if applicable (see below). The Registry team will acknowledge your application within 2 working days.

19. If the assessment feeds into another i.e. a reflection on an assessed performance, they can be considered through the same request, but you must make this clear in your statement.

20. You must not wait until grades or marks have been sent to you before applying for Exceptional Circumstances. Claims after the release of grades or marks can only be made in specific circumstances – please see the Academic Appeals Procedure for details.

Evidence

21. You can apply for Exceptional Circumstances without evidence if you are applying in advance of the assessment or the circumstances last no more than 7 calendar days with a clear impact on your ability to undertake or prepare for assessments during this time. In some circumstances, we may ask for additional evidence to support your application.

22. In all other circumstances, evidence should be submitted with your application that is relevant to your application and cover the affected period. Appendix 2 provides a list of examples of evidence.

23. We understand that you might come across delays obtaining relevant evidence within 7 days. We also understand that some circumstances will be difficult to evidence. Therefore, in some circumstances, requests can be submitted without evidence. You must provide a reasonable explanation as to why you were unable to provide the evidence and, if relevant, when you expect to be able to do so. Submit the form pending evidence if necessary.

24. For long-term conditions (e.g. ‘flare ups’) or repeated illnesses, you can submit evidence of an overarching diagnosis rather than separate documents for each instance.

D. How applications are considered and possible outcomes

25. The process and possible outcomes normally depend on when you have submitted your application.

i. Before the assessment date

26. Applications made before the assessment date enable ArtsEd to take a facilitative, proactive approach to supporting you.

27. A senior member of staff in your school, usually the Head of Department, Head of Year or Course Leader, will review your application and make a decision based on the criteria outlined in Section C.

28. You will normally be told the outcome no more than **3 working days** after your application was acknowledged by Registry staff. Where the application is made close to the assessment date, you may not receive an outcome in time and are advised to participate in or submit the assessment on time (even if it's incomplete), if possible. The normal penalties for late submission will be applied unless your application is accepted e.g. you participated/submitted the assessment within 48hrs of the original deadline and your EC application is declined, the 10% penalty will still apply.

29. If your request is accepted, the outcome will normally be:
    - A short extension of up to 5 working days, calculated from your original assessment date (e.g. written work, solo presentations)
    - Opportunity to complete the assessment at a different time, within the academic year, determined by the Head of Department (e.g. practical assessment)
    - To agree reasonable adjustments for disabled students, if they are not already in place or were inadequate

ii. On the day of or up to 7 calendar days after the assessment date

30. Applications made on the day of or within 7 calendar days of the assessment will be considered by an Exceptional Circumstances Panel.

31. The Panel will include three academic members of staff: the Course Leader or Head of Year will chair the meeting and two members of staff from the other school will make up the panel. Where required, the Registrar has discretion to nominate senior members of academic staff, from the membership pool of either School, as the Chair or member. A member of staff from the Registry Office will also be present to provide advice where necessary, and to act as Secretary to the Panel.

32. The panel will make recommendations to the relevant City St George's Assessment Board, who make the final decision on whether to accept your claim. They will also consider the recommendations when making decisions about resits, progression or awards. The Assessment Board will receive a summary of the panel's discussion and the recommendation but will not know the details of your application. More information about the role of an Assessment Board can be found in City St George's Senate Regulation 19.

33. We recognise that it might not always be appropriate to wait for a scheduled Assessment Board to take place before the final decision is made. In these circumstances, we may seek to use an appropriate alternative mechanism such as Chair's Action.

34. You will be informed of the Panel's recommendation and the Assessment Board's decision.

Outcomes

35. The recommendation of the Panel will be either:
    i. Not accepted because the criteria have not been met and/or supporting evidence is not relevant or significant to the case
    ii. Accepted because criteria have been met and appropriate supporting evidence was submitted (if required).

36. If your claim is accepted, you would usually be offered a further attempt at the assessment.

37. Where the application relates to the first attempt, you would be offered a further first attempt. This means that the mark awarded will reflect the standard of work (it will be uncapped) and there will be a resit attempt remaining should you fail. Where the application relates to a resit, you would be offered a further resit attempt. The marks for resit assessments are usually capped at the minimum pass mark, regardless of the standard of work demonstrated.

38. Sometimes, the recommendation will be to repeat part of the course, such as a module, with attendance at classes, to enable you to attempt the assessment again. This could have an impact on your progression or award; you will be told about any consequences.

39. An alternative assessment can be arranged if it is not practical or possible to replicate the original assessment environment. You will be informed of this to enable you to prepare appropriately. Alternative assessments must assess the same Learning Outcomes as the original.

40. Other recommendations may be made to the Assessment Board where these outcomes are unsuitable, including determining that the student has still met the learning outcomes of the assessment despite failing to meet some of its requirements, e.g. a student who was unable to meet the attendance requirements for an assessment or course because of exceptional circumstances.

E. Late and incomplete submissions

41. It is your responsibility to submit your work on time and ensure all the required elements are submitted. All non-authorised late submissions will incur a penalty.

42. **Late submission** is any work that has been submitted after the original or approved extended deadline has passed.

43. Work submitted up to 48 hours[1] after the deadline will incur a deduction of 10 percentage points (i.e. 64% becomes 54%) or awarded the lower alphabetical grade (i.e. B becomes a C). Only the penalty mark will be recorded as your final mark for the assessment.

[1] 48 hours includes weekends, bank holidays and closure days.

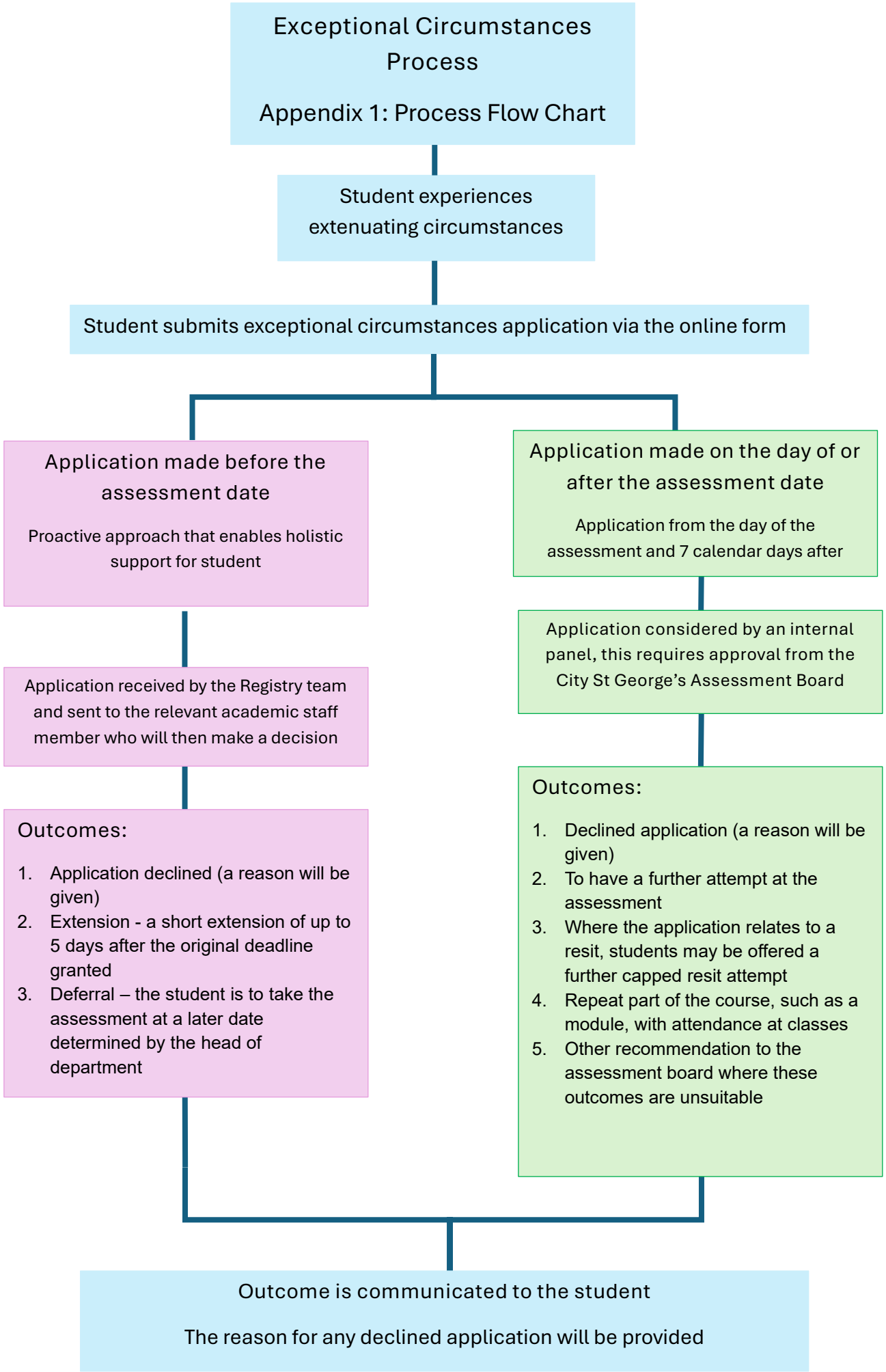
Deductions will only be applied down to the pass mark, e.g. a UG mark of 44% would be reduced to 40%.

44. Work submitted more than 48 hours after the deadline will receive a mark of zero.

45. An **incomplete submission** is any work in which a component required by the assessment brief is incomplete or missing. This includes appendices. The work submitted will be marked according to the assessment criteria which in some cases, may result in a fail.

46. Penalties for late and incomplete submissions will only normally be reconsidered based on a successful Exceptional Circumstance claim or academic appeal.

Appendix 1: Process flow chart



Appendix 2: Grounds for requests and evidence

The requirement and nature of the evidence you will need to submit depends on the nature of your request. The below list is indicative only and each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The following principles apply:

- Documentary evidence should be in English or translated by a certified professional.
- Avoid sending original physical documents, we will normally accept digital evidence but may ask to see the original

Circumstances	**Examples of acceptable evidence**
Illness or injury	• Medical certificate signed by a medical practitioner whilst the illness or incident was affecting you • A hospital discharge letter • A letter from external or ArtsEd support services who have been actively supporting you
Death and Bereavement	• Evidence of contact with ArtsEd stating how the impact prevented you from attending or preparing for an assessment • Order of Service or other funeral document
Unforeseen major transport issues	• Proof of disruption such as tickets, evidence from the transport provider or police • Insurance reference number
Victim of or witness to criminal activity	• Police report with crime reference number • Medical certificate signed by a medical practitioner whilst the illness or incident was affecting you • A letter from external or ArtsEd support services who have been actively supporting you
Caring and parents responsibilities (including illness of a family member)	• Medical certificate signed by a medical practitioner or social services • Letter from your child/minor's school.
Exceptional living circumstances, including housing issues and domestic violence	• Medical certificate signed by a medical practitioner • Letter from independent authority (e.g. social worker) • A police report with crime reference number • A letter from external or ArtsEd support services who have been actively supporting you
Court appearance and jury service	• A letter from the Court, Tribunal or solicitors including the dates of the legal proceedings and the requirement for you to attend.

Circumstances that are unlikely to be accepted include:

- Circumstances directly related to a disability or long-term health condition where ArtsEd has applied reasonable adjustments to mitigate the potential impact on an assessment (does not include temporary worsening of an existing condition)
- Poor planning and time management
- Minor illness that is unlikely to impact your performance
- IT issues such as broken equipment, accessing facilities, internet access – all work should be saved in online Cloud storage or backed up (free using your ArtsEd account) and

precautionary measures should be taken in case of IT failure e.g. leaving enough time before the deadline.
- Work/employment during teaching hours, including evenings and weekends when required (e.g. public shows)
- Non-urgent personal appointments that can be rearranged
- Foreseeable, planned and minor travel disruption
- Holidays or other non-essential, unavoidable travel plans
- Not being aware of the relevant policies or processes

This list is not exhaustive.

Version Control	
Document Title	Exceptional Circumstances Policy
Maintained By	Quality and Course Manager
Owned By	Registrar
Approving Committee / Ratifying Body	HE Committee
Last Reviewed	May 2026: • Combined the Fit to Sit, Extenuating Circumstances and Extensions and Deferrals Policies into one • Simplified process with increased oversight from the Registry team • Incorporated more information from City St George's such as evidence requirements • Added a new section about late and incomplete submissions that introduces clear penalties and explains how incomplete submissions will be marked • Addition of a process flow chart for better accessibility
To be Reviewed	Academic year 2030-31 (or prior if required)
Current Version	Version 1.0
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Web location	artsed.co.uk/about-us/policies