

If the unexpected happens...

What to do when exceptional circumstances affect your ability to study

Tell someone

You can speak in confidence to someone you trust, who should be able to listen and advise you on your options. People you can talk to include:

- Your academic supervisor or a member of staff from your department
- YUSU Advice and Support Centre
- The Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Advice Service (for Postgraduates)
- Student Support Services
- Your college welfare team

Submit an Exceptional Circumstances claim

If you let someone know that you are having difficulties, there are processes in place to help. You can submit a claim for Exceptional Circumstances which can result in:

- being offered the opportunity to take an exam again "as if for the first time" at the next assessment opportunity
- being offered an extension to a submission deadline

Would my circumstances be considered "Exceptional"?

Exceptional circumstances are situations that go beyond the normal difficulties experienced in life. They are usually things that are unforeseeable or unavoidable and/or outside of your control, and can significantly affect your ability to study effectively or complete assessments on time and to a good standard.

Examples include:

- exceptional medical and personal circumstances
- close bereavement
- being a victim of serious crime,
- disabilities for which reasonable adjustments are not yet in place
- serious and unforeseeable transport difficulties
- legal proceedings requiring court attendance

Examples of circumstances that are specifically not considered exceptional are computer/ printer problems, submitting the wrong file and misreading the exam timetable.

For more information see:

york.ac.uk/students/studying/progress/exceptional-circumstances/

If you are not sure, ask your department or an advisor at YUSU or the GSA.

Why is it important to raise issues at the time?

It is always best to seek help at the earliest opportunity if you are experiencing difficulties that are impacting on your academic performance. If your circumstances prevent you from sitting an exam or submitting on time, you run the risk of failing to perform to a certain standard and potentially failing a module. This could result in a lower degree classification or even lead to you being discontinued from your course.

Once this has happened, it is very difficult to successfully appeal the decision if you did not submit an Exceptional Circumstances claim form at the time. So if you are experiencing difficulties it is best to speak to someone rather than trying to cope on your own - use the processes in place that are there to help you.

How do I claim Exceptional Circumstances?

The Exceptional Circumstances Claim Form can be found at:

york.ac.uk/students/studying/progress/exceptional-circumstances/

The form should be completed and submitted to your departmental office at the time that the circumstances arise and before the exam date or assessment deadline if possible, and no later than 7 days after the assessment.

The form should be sent from your University of York email address. Supporting evidence should be submitted with the claim form or otherwise at the earliest opportunity.

What evidence do I need to provide?

Exceptional circumstances claims cannot be accepted without evidence. It is important that you seek support as soon as possible from a doctor, counsellor, or other relevant service to help with your circumstances and to provide evidence.

Evidence should:

- reflect an independent professional's opinion that the circumstances have had an impact on your academic ability
- be based on the professional having met you at the time circumstances affected you

Any questions? Need more information?

You can arrange a confidential, independent appointment with one of our advisers at YUSU, or at the Graduate Students' Association Advice Service if you are a postgraduate, by contacting us in any of the following ways:

YUSU

asc@yusu.org

01904 323724

Advice and Support Centre,
University of York Students' Union The Student
Centre, James College, Heslington
(office hours: 10am to 4pm, Mon - Fri)

GSA

advice@yorkgsa.org

01904 322718

Book an appointment at:
yorkgsa.org/students/welfare/arrange-an-appointment-with-the-gsa/

