

6J - Exceptional Circumstances: Policy and Procedure

1. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

- 1.1 This policy and procedure is for Bournemouth University (BU) students and staff.
- 1.2 The university recognises that there may be occasions when events outside your control have a negative impact on your ability to study or complete your assessment activities. This policy explains what to expect if you are experiencing difficulties with your study due to personal circumstances.

2. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1 **Students:** to seek advice and support when encountering individual circumstances and to submit circumstances request, including appropriate evidence using the Exceptional Circumstances forms within published deadlines.
- 2.2 **Programme Leaders:** to consider assignment extension requests and applications for exam postponements in line with BU's policy and procedure.
- 2.3 **Exceptional Circumstance Board:** to consider applications made by individual students for the consideration of circumstances to inform the decisions made at Assessment Boards.
- 2.4 **Programme Boards:** to receive recommendations from the Exceptional Circumstance Board and to consider the outcomes in light of students' individual profiles.
- 2.5 **Unit Boards:** To confirm unit marks, level aggregate and/or classification.

3. ACCESSING TO OTHER RELEVANT BU DOCUMENTS

- 3.1 All documents can be accessed [here](#)
- 6A - Standard Assessment Regulations Undergraduate
 - 6A - Standard Assessment Regulations Postgraduate
 - 6A - Standard Assessment Regulations Foundation Degree
 - 6A - Standard Assessment Regulations Higher National
 - 6A - Standard Assessment Regulations GradCert GradDip
 - 6A - Standard Assessment Regulations Postgraduate Research Degrees
 - 6A - Standard Assessment Regulations Integrated Masters
 - 6K - Assessment Boards: Policy
 - 6L - Assessment Board Decision-Making, Including the Implementation of Assessment Regulations: Procedure
 - 11A - Academic Appeals: Policy and Procedure for Taught Awards
 - 11F - Student Complaints: Policy and Procedure
- 3.2 Other documents with direct relevance to this are:
- [Student Welfare Policy](#)
 - [Important Information](#) (Student-facing Policies and Procedures)

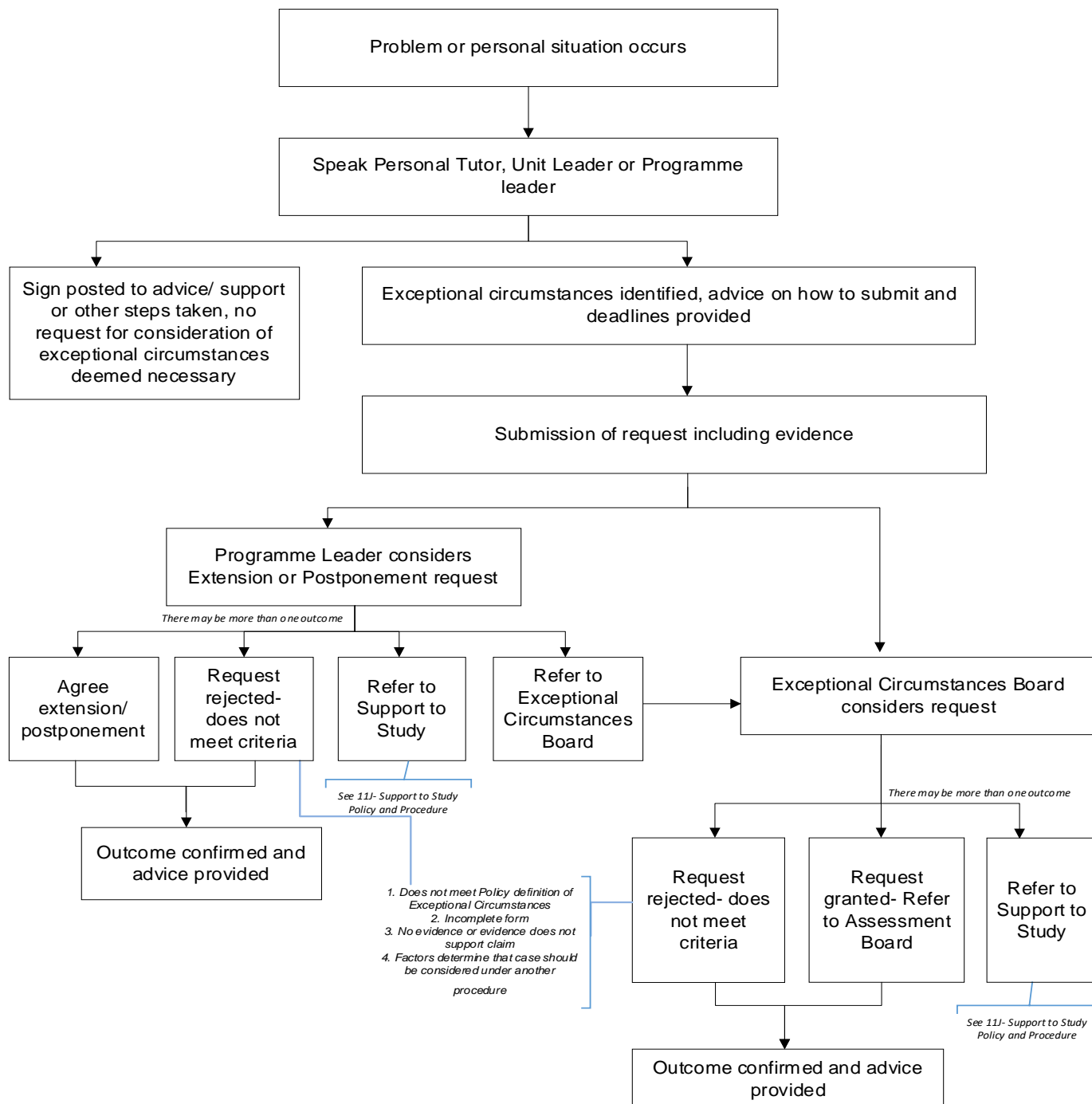
4. DEFINITIONS AND PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 As outlined in the student welfare policy we expect you to look after your own health and wellbeing whilst studying at BU. However, we know that there will be times when illness or other personal matters, such as family issues and bereavement may put you at a disadvantage and have a negative impact on your study.
- 4.2 In order to ensure you have the best chance to complete your work you should talk to your personal tutor, unit leader or programme leader as soon as things go wrong. You will have the opportunity to ask for your circumstances to be considered and it may be that these are considered exceptional. It is important that you understand what Exceptional Circumstances are. We define these as:
- short-term, sudden and/ or unforeseen events or circumstances that impact your ability to study or complete your assessment
 - provable - you need to be able to provide evidence of what happened and describe how this disadvantaged you
 - beyond your control
 - something that you have not already declared to us on Admission or registered with the Additional Learning Support (ALS) service
- 4.3 Wherever possible we will endeavour to provide the necessary support in order that you can undertake your study and assessment in as close to the same pattern as you would have if you had not been experiencing difficulties. This may mean that you are offered:
- **an extension** to your assignment submission date
 - **a postponement** to your examination
 - that your circumstances be taken into consideration by the Programme Board (via **Exceptional Circumstances Board consideration**)
- 4.4 The form you have to complete asks you to describe what impact the situation has had on your studies. You will also need to give us some evidence to confirm what has happened. There is a list of examples of what we would normally consider as Exceptional Circumstances, and the sorts of evidence you need to give us in appendix 1 of this policy. For short term illness we will accept self-certification as evidence as long as this is provided on the relevant University form. Self-certification can be used for illnesses of up to five working days and must be submitted prior to, or during, an assessment. Faculties may monitor the number of times you use the self-certification option and refer you other avenues of support if it appears that your circumstances are of a longer-term nature.
- 4.5 There are specific deadlines for requesting consideration of your circumstances which you will be informed about through various communications. It is important to let us know as soon as things go wrong and deadlines have to be met in order for us to give you either an extension or consideration at the programme board. If you delay in telling us about your circumstances, there will be less time for us to offer support.
- 4.6 We recognise that each student will be impacted by their personal exceptional circumstances in a different way. All considerations are made on a case by case basis.
- 4.7 When your request has been considered you will be informed of the outcome(s) and sign-posted to any relevant support we feel may be appropriate. You will receive guidance on what will happen next. If your request is turned down, we will explain why that decision was made.
- 4.8 All outcomes will be based on your individual circumstances and the details and evidence you have submitted. It is important for all students to understand that even if the request is accepted the outcome(s) will not result in a change to your mark(s).
- 4.9 All exceptional circumstances requests and associated evidence will be treated as confidential and the details will only be shared with those staff members involved in the decision-making

processes. It is important that you provide us with as full an account of the situation and its impact on you as possible.

4.10 If you should find yourself in circumstances which, for a valid reason means that you are unable to submit by the deadline you are required to provide us with evidence of this as part of the Academic Appeals procedure. Students who are in this unusual situation are advised to discuss this with personal tutor, unit leader or programme leader as soon as possible and may wish to refer to 11A- *Academic Appeals - Taught Awards: Policy and Procedure*. If there is no valid reason why you were unable to submit a request before the deadline any Appeal will not be upheld and your Exceptional Circumstances will not be accepted.

Procedure



General

5. DATA PROTECTION ACT

- 5.1 As required by Data Protection Legislation, BU will not normally disclose personal information to a third party other than with the data subject's explicit permission; except where there is a legal obligation to do so. Likewise, it is not possible for BU to obtain information about a student from a third party (such as a doctor) without the student's prior written explicit consent.

6. REFERENCES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

- 6.1 If a student is not satisfied with a decision concerning an extension request, they may address this through the University's complaints process as outlined in *11F - Student Complaints: Policy and Procedure*. If a student wishes to lodge an appeal against the decision of the Programme Board, they may do so in accordance with *11A - Academic Appeals: Policy and Procedure for Taught Awards*. All appeals must be submitted within 10 working days of the date of publication of results.
- 6.2 Further guidance, advice and information can be obtained from askBU Student Services (telephone 01202 969696 / e-mail askBUstudents@bournemouth.ac.uk or SUBU Advice (telephone 01202 965779 / e-mail subuadvice@bournemouth.ac.uk).
- 6.3 This policy was reviewed according to the University's *Equality Analysis Procedure*

7. APPENDICES AND FORMS

Appendix 1 A guide to identifying exceptional circumstances for students and staff
Request for Board Consideration
Self-Certification of Short-Term Sickness (up to 5 working days in duration)