



Hull York Medical School

Postgraduate Research Student Extension and Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances (MEC) Policy

Approval Process:	
Committee	Outcome/Date of approval
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Joint Senate Committee	1 July 2026
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Responsibility to update:	Chair, PGR Board

To obtain this Policy in an alternative format, please contact
governance@hyms.ac.uk

Terminology on mitigating circumstances, exceptional circumstances, extension and additional considerations

HYMS recognises that while “exceptional circumstances” is a widely used terminology in the sector, “mitigating circumstances” remain a well-established terminology within HYMS and UK medical schools. The University of Hull’s terminology of “extension and additional consideration”, while aligned with the Office of Independent Adjudicators (OIA), is less well-adopted in the sector. On the ground of familiarity, HYMS uses “mitigating and exceptional circumstances” to retain the current familiarity in the students’ interest.

Definition of terms

Day	A working day unless stated otherwise.
Programme	All academic activities undertaken by a student for the purpose of achieving the award of a degree or Postgraduate Research Development points.
Student	Any student studying a Hull York Medical School programme jointly awarded by the University of Hull and the University of York.
Disability	A physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on a person’s ability to do normal daily activities. Long term is defined as lasting one year or more or likely to last one year or more.
Relevant university	Either the University of Hull or University of York, depending on the student’s registration
Two universities	The University of Hull and University of York. HYMS may liaise with the two universities on case-by-case basis in line with existing Data Sharing Agreement between the two universities
Final decision Deadline	Generally before the relevant Board of Examiners meeting

Abbreviations

HYMS	Hull York Medical School
SSP	Student Support Plan
HJSC	Hull York Medical School Joint Senate Committee
MEC	Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances
SC	Self-Certification

Contents

PART A – PGR EXTENSION POLICY	1
1. Introduction	1
2. Student visa holder and ATAS clearance	1
3. Making an application	2
4. Reasons for an extension.....	2
5. Evidence requirements.....	5
6. Extension time limits	5
7. Application outcomes	6
8. Implications of extending studies.....	6
 PART B – PGR MITIGATING AND EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES POLICY	 7
9. Introduction	7
10. Process of submitting MEC and decision making.....	8
11. Outcomes available in response to a PGR MEC claim	8
12. Circumstances that are accepted as mitigating and exceptional.....	9
13. Circumstances that are not mitigating and exceptional	14
14. General principles and requirements for evidence.....	15
15. Students on Student Visa	17
16. Appeals	17
17. Confidentiality, data protection, information sharing and safeguarding	18

PART A – PGR EXTENSION POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Policy only applies to postgraduate researchers (PGRs) enrolled on HYMS PGR programmes.
- 1.2. There are a number of several types of extension and so it is important that PGRs and supervisors are clear on what type of extension is required. An extension is defined as an extension of time beyond a given end date as follows:
 - 1.2.1. An academic extension to the research period (registered study) of the research degree.
 - 1.2.2. An extension to the thesis finalisation / writing up period of the research degree.
 - 1.2.3. An extension to the deadline for thesis corrections, amendments, or resubmission.
- 1.3. Where there are **valid and evidenced exceptional factors**, and these cannot or have not been accommodated through a Leave of Absence (please see [HYMS Policy for Leave of Absence](#)), PGRs may apply for an extension to the research period, but in very exceptional circumstances only – see section 4 below.
- 1.4. PGRs are expected to meet their thesis submission deadline date (or thesis corrections or amendments or resubmission deadline date, where this applies). As such, it is of paramount importance for both PGRs and supervisors to plan a research project that can be realistically delivered within the timeframe of the research degree.
- 1.5. However, where there are valid and evidenced exceptional factors (see section 4 below), PGRs may apply for an extension to the deadline date for the submission of their thesis, thesis corrections or amendments, or resubmission. Failure to apply for an extension to their submission deadline - or the refusal of a request for an extension to their submission deadline - will result in failure on the grounds of non-submission.
- 1.6. A PGR can request an extension, but there is no guarantee that an extension will be granted.
- 1.7. Both PGRs and their supervisors should be aware that, as a rule, extensions to the research period will not be funded. For funded projects, provisions and agreements for extended funding must be made with the funders of the work separately and in addition to this academic process.

2. Student visa holder and ATAS clearance

- 2.1. Relevant universities are bound by the requirements of UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI). This means that PGRs who are Student Visa holders are subject to additional restrictions on extensions that are beyond the control of HYMS and relevant universities.

- 2.2. If a programme end date changes by more than three months and the programme requires ATAS clearance, PGRs are required to apply for new ATAS clearance within 28 days of the extension being processed.
- 2.3. International PGR students who are intending to stay in the UK for the duration of the requested extension must ensure that their visa allows them to do so and may be required to apply for a visa extension to cover the extended study period. **It is not the responsibility of HYMS or the academic units to do so.**
- 2.4. International PGR students must consult with the relevant International/Visa Compliance teams at their relevant university before submitting an application for an extension, must ensure they understand the visa implications of applying to extend their studies and must follow the recommendations and requirements from their relevant university visa compliance teams.

3. Making an application

- 3.1. Where a PGR has exceptional factors and requires additional time to research, submit or resubmit their thesis, they must complete the PGR Student Special Cases Form and submit to the postgraduate office. The form must be accompanied by appropriate documentary evidence to support their application.
- 3.2. An application for an extension to the thesis submission deadline date should be submitted at least three months before a PGR's thesis submission deadline date and as early as possible before the deadline for the submission of corrections, amendments or a resubmission.
- 3.3. Where there are exceptional circumstances, a retrospective request for an extension may be considered, and must include an explanation from the PGR as to why the request was not submitted within the appropriate timeframe. Please note however that retrospective extensions are rarely granted.
- 3.4. In the case of request to extend the research period, as well as the requirements set out above, PGRs must also provide evidence of the event or situation resulting in the need for an extension to this period, as well as evidence of attempts to mitigate.

4. Reasons for an extension

- 4.1. The reasons for an extension should be based on severe, unexpected, relevant and evidenced exceptional factors.
- 4.2. Cases relating to illness should normally use the Leave of Absence procedure or a change to the mode of study, rather than extension. Please note that while an extension adds time to a student's research/write-up/correction period (see section 6) a Leave of Absence "stops the clock" on the period of registration so that the period of time for the Leave of Absence is not lost (please refer to the Policy on Leave of Absence)

- 4.3. Some examples of what might be considered a valid exceptional factor when applying for an extension to the research period are listed below. These would need to be fully evidenced and must have affected the PGR's ability to complete work for their thesis.
 - 4.3.1. Inability to progress with research due to the lack of University resources (e.g. essential laboratory equipment, software, lab closures etc.) when this is the only work the PGR was able to undertake at this time.
 - 4.3.2. Required reasonable adjustments for a disability have not been put in place, or have been delayed, and where this lack/delay was not due to the PGR.
 - 4.3.3. Reasonable adjustments for disability are insufficient to mitigate the disadvantage caused by the disability.
 - 4.3.4. Significant disruption to supervisory situation meaning that progress was severely impacted.
- 4.4. Some examples of what might be considered valid exceptional factors when applying for an extension to thesis submission deadlines are listed below. These would need to be fully evidenced and must have affected the PGR's ability to submit the thesis.
 - 4.4.1. Inability to progress with work due to the lack of required University resources (e.g. essential university software, etc.).
 - 4.4.2. Failure of University IT systems.
 - 4.4.3. A serious life event that has an ongoing impact beyond a granted Leave of Absence (for example, a medical situation or being a victim of a serious crime or difficult personal or domestic circumstances may have an ongoing physical and/or mental health impact; bereavement of a close relative may have an ongoing mental health impact).
 - 4.4.4. Required reasonable adjustments for a disability have not been put in place, or have been delayed, and where this lack/delay was not due to the PGR.
 - 4.4.5. Reasonable adjustments for disability are insufficient to mitigate the disadvantage caused by the disability.
 - 4.4.6. Sudden illness or injury during the period when the PGR is working on the thesis for imminent submission.
 - 4.4.7. A worsening of a long-term health condition during the time the PGR is working on the thesis for imminent submission.
 - 4.4.8. A close family member or friend died at the time of a thesis submission.
 - 4.4.9. Personal problems, for example court proceedings or separation from a spouse or partner, which have affected the PGR at the time of thesis submission.

- 4.4.10. A close family member becoming unexpectedly ill at the time of a thesis submission which either required the PGR to look after them or resulted in severe stress.
- 4.4.11. Being the victim of a crime.
- 4.4.12. Significant disruption to supervisory situation meaning that thesis feedback and submission was severely impacted.
- 4.5. For examples above that occur very close to a submission point, could not be foreseen and meant an extension request could not be submitted in time before a submission deadline, the MEC policy route should be followed.
- 4.6. The following are not considered exceptional factors and will not be accepted as valid grounds for an extension:
 - 4.6.1. Completing, submitting the thesis too late, and missing the submission deadline (time management problems, delay with finalising thesis layout).
 - 4.6.2. IT problems.
 - 4.6.3. Non-availability of books or journals.
 - 4.6.4. Not backing up the thesis electronically; PGRs are expected to take appropriate precautions to back their work up.
 - 4.6.5. Undertaking further research and/or other research-related activities (eg writing papers, conference attendance).
 - 4.6.6. A long-standing condition for which the PGR has reasonable adjustments have been put in place which mitigate the impact of the long-standing condition.
 - 4.6.7. Financial problems (other than cases of the most extreme hardship, e.g. redundancy/bankruptcy).
 - 4.6.8. House moves, home renovations, family celebrations or other events where a PGR has control over the date or could choose not to participate.
 - 4.6.9. Normal work commitments reducing time available for research.
 - 4.6.10. Long-standing appointments (legal, medical, etc.) which could be re-arranged.
 - 4.6.11. Cover for childcare.
 - 4.6.12. Unrealistic time plan.
 - 4.6.13. Holidays or periods of absence taken earlier in the registration.
 - 4.6.14. Poor academic progress.
 - 4.6.15. Requirement to improve language skills.

4.6.16. Proof-reading of thesis.

4.6.17. Problems with supervision that had not been raised earlier during the registration period.

4.6.18. Changes to the research topic or direction that have previously been agreed by the PGR and supervisor.

4.6.19. Not being aware of deadline dates.

4.6.20. Delay in obtaining official certified translations of evidence into English.

4.6.21. Lack of progress.

5. Evidence requirements

- 5.1. All applications for extensions should be accompanied by appropriate supporting evidence of impact on progress. However, we understand this is not always possible or appropriate. As such if PGRs are unable to provide documentary evidence, they are advised to contact the postgraduate office to discuss this or ask their supervisor or an appropriate member of staff to do so on their behalf.
- 5.2. Supporting evidence should normally be submitted at the same time as the application form. If this is not possible, PGRs must clearly indicate the reasons for the delay on the form, otherwise the request will not be considered and the application will be rejected. Where there are reasons of confidentiality, PGRs should refer only to this on the form.
- 5.3. It is the PGR's responsibility to ensure that any evidence in a language other than English is translated and certified prior to the submission of an application.

6. Extension time limits

- 6.1. Extensions are normally for periods of up to three months; longer extensions of up to twelve months for full-time and twenty-four months for part-time (or for separate extensions that cumulatively total twelve/twenty-four months) may be requested if sufficient evidence is provided.
- 6.2. In all cases, the extension request must bear a close relationship to the grounds cited, and appropriate documentary evidence must be provided in support of the application.
- 6.3. In all cases, extension requests will not be considered if such an extension takes the PGR past the period of maximum registration on their programme. It should be noted that unlike a Leave of Absence which "stops the clock" on the registration period an extension adds time onto the student's research/write-up/correction period, and that added time can't go past the period of maximum registration on their programme.
- 6.4. Extensions are intended to be time-limited, unique allowances of extra time. Therefore, applications for subsequent extensions are highly unlikely to be approved, except in the most exceptional of cases.

7. Application outcomes

- 7.1. Approval of an extension request is granted by the HYMS Education Committee following recommendation by the Chair of the PGR Board. If required, both the PGR Board and/or Education Committee may request further information and/or clarification from the applicant in support of their application.
- 7.2. Where the application is approved, the PGR student will be informed of the revised thesis submission, resubmission date or end of research period, where appropriate. It is the PGR student's responsibility to check that the information is correct and raise any concerns as soon as possible.
- 7.3. Where the application is not approved, the PGR student will be informed of the reason the application was not approved.

8. Implications of extending studies

- 8.1. Tuition fees will be adjusted to take into account the extension period in accordance with the Relevant University's fees policy.
- 8.2. PGR students will be charged fees for the duration of any agreed extension, with effect from their original submission due date.
- 8.3. PGR students should be aware that if they have applied for and are granted an extension to the research period, standard tuition fees apply. Fees which apply will differ dependent on the extension period (e.g. full-time research period extension vs write-up period extension).
- 8.4. PGR students in receipt of a scholarship should be aware that an extension to the thesis submission deadline does not mean that they will receive additional funding. Restrictions may apply if the PGR student is funded by one of the UK Research Councils. The PGR student must seek advice from the postgraduate office in order to confirm the financial implications of an extension in advance of applying.
- 8.5. If a PGR student is sponsored by an external sponsor, it is the PGR student's responsibility to contact the funding body to inform them of their intention to apply for an extension, and where the application is approved, confirm the revised thesis submission deadline date with them.
- 8.6. PGR students should make themselves aware of any additional accreditation, professional, disciplinary or sponsor-related requirements that may affect their extension request before they apply.
- 8.7. Where the thesis submission or resubmission deadline date, or the deadline for submission of corrections or amendments has lapsed, and the requirements for the award have not been completed, PGR students will be deemed to have withdrawn and their programme of study will be terminated.

PART B – PGR MITIGATING AND EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES POLICY

9. Introduction

- 9.1. This Policy only applies to postgraduate researchers (PGRs) enrolled on HYMS PGR programmes.
- 9.2. This policy defines mitigating and exceptional circumstances affecting PGR students' assessment completion, how to evidence them, assess their impact, and what adjustments ensure fair assessment.
- 9.3. The PGR MEC policy is intended for serious, unforeseen, short-term but significant and unavoidable, circumstances that cause a student to miss a thesis submission deadline or be unable to undertake a viva voce examination at the scheduled time (when, in both cases, a Leave of Absence or Extension request was not appropriate or possible), or if their performance in a viva voce examination was seriously impaired due to the circumstance. If the circumstances that led to this situation were exceptional it may be possible to defer the assessment, or to take the assessment again.
- 9.4. For the exceptional circumstances to be considered as mitigation with respect to poor performance in a viva voce examination, the circumstance normally should have happened immediately prior to, or during, the meeting/oral examination. For example, if a PGR student falls seriously ill within the examination or is subsequently found to have been seriously ill in the examination although this was not recognised at the time.
- 9.5. Examples of circumstances that are likely to count as exceptional please see section 12.
- 9.6. MEC adjustments are not intended to apply to the following situations:
 - 9.6.1. **Impact on non-assessed learning activities:** For difficulties engaging with the programme outside assessments, students should seek HYMS wellbeing support or consider Leave of Absence for long-term impacts.
 - 9.6.2. **Disabilities:** These should be addressed through support from University Disability Services or specific urgent adjustments per [HYMS Policy on Disability and Reasonable Adjustments in Assessments](#). These include a Student Support Plan (SSP) or, in urgent or severe cases, specific adjustments to assessment outside an SSP. However, MEC claims are available for situations that would be covered by an SSP that isn't yet in place and aren't urgent or severe.
 - 9.6.3. **Predictable, recurrent, or reasonably anticipated circumstances:** Adjustments are **not** available for scheduled assessments conflicting with work commitments, social/family events, or extra-curricular activities, except where impacts are beyond the student's reasonable control as provided in this policy.
 - 9.6.4. **Prep-TAPs and Progression-TAPs** are excluded from the PGR MEC policy. Issues with Progression/Prep-TAP submission and evaluation should be managed locally with the Thesis **Advisory** Panel and via Leave of Absence and/or extension policies where appropriate.

9.6.5. **Mandatory components of the Postgraduate Researcher Development (PRD) scheme:** For difficulties engaging with the PRD scheme students should discuss with supervisors and the Postgraduate Researcher Development lead for appropriate support and appropriate mitigations.

9.7. This policy will be applied in accordance with HYMS [regulations, policies and codes of practice relating to assessment and reasonable adjustments](#).

9.8. Those assessing MEC claims must accept them in good faith while expecting students to reasonably explain and demonstrate their situation and reasons for deviating from the specified assessment schedule.

10. Process of submitting MEC and decision making

10.1. Students should submit MEC claims with evidence as soon as possible. The submission window for MEC is five days before and after the thesis submission deadline or viva voce examination date.

10.2. Late MEC is not normally accepted. If a MEC is submitted after the five day deadline, students must provide the reasons for lateness and MECC will review the reasons. Where sufficient evidence exists, the request may be treated as if submitted on time. Where this exception does not apply, MECC will reject the MEC.

10.3. MEC must be submitted using a template provided by HYMS. Submission without using the template will be automatically rejected.

10.4. MECs are considered by HYMS Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee (MECC). All MEC decisions will be made by the MECC before the relevant Board of Examiners meeting. Students will be notified of the outcome of their claim as soon as reasonably practicable, to their HYMS email address.

10.5. Where a claim is rejected, HYMS will provide a brief rationale to allow the student to make an informed academic appeal if they wish (see Section 16). Where a decision is conditional on further information or evidence, HYMS will clearly state the consequences of non-submission.

10.6. While the MECC is responsible for deciding a MEC claim, it is the responsibility of the relevant Board of Examiners to decide the assessment arrangement depending on the MEC outcome. Students have no input into the decision of the relevant Board of Examiners.

11. Outcomes available in response to a PGR MEC claim

11.1. Only the adjustments set out below are available in response to an accepted MEC claim.

11.1.1. The opportunity to submit the thesis or take the viva voce examination at a later date, normally within one month, or at the earliest possible opportunity, of the original date.

- 11.1.2. If exceptional circumstances mean that a PGR student's performance in their viva voce examination was significantly compromised a rescheduled viva voce examination will take place as soon as possible, normally within one month of the original date.
- 11.2. When a PGR student is informed that a MEC has been approved, they will be informed of the new deadline/date of examination.

12. Circumstances that are accepted as mitigating and exceptional

12.1. Students must show circumstances that:

- 12.1.1. Are temporary and relatively short-term in their impact (Leave of Absence and Extension policies should be utilised for longer-term impacts).
- 12.1.2. Significantly impact their ability to complete thesis submission or viva voce examination to their usual standard.
- 12.1.3. Could not be reasonably anticipated or factored into planning for thesis completion and/or examination.
- 12.2. Where an MEC claim reveals significant, general, and ongoing circumstances that may constitute disability disclosure requiring urgent/severe case support, HYMS will follow the measures in [HYMS Policy on Disability and Reasonable Adjustments in Assessments](#), including signposting to Disability Services. However, MEC measures can provide adjustments while awaiting an SSP (or SSP revisions) in non-urgent/non-severe cases.
- 12.3. Where an MEC claim reveals significant, general, and ongoing circumstances outside the scope of [HYMS Policy on Disability and Reasonable Adjustments in Assessments](#), HYMS will discuss with the student whether alternative adjustments (such as leave of absence) would better support the student.
- 12.4. Decision makers must use the claim and evidence to determine whether the case fits one of the following circumstances:

Circumstances normally accepted	Examples of evidence that would support a claim based on the circumstances
12.4.1. Temporary and significant physical or mental illness, health or wellbeing difficulties or conditions including treatment and therapy	This includes immediate physical or mental illness/health emergencies (hospitalisation, incapacitation through injury/illness/mental health crisis), and treatment (including diagnostic steps) sufficiently impacting assessment ability that cannot be reasonably changed or delayed. Evidence may come from health professionals or support workers but may also include, particularly for minor cases, evidence of appointment-seeking or support access attempts.

	Mental health claims may be supported by mental health professionals (Open Door/Mental Health teams), but relatively minor claims (e.g., under one week extension) may be accepted based on university support staff (Student Wellbeing Officers, college members, personal supervisors) or external support workers. However, HYMS will ensure students are properly supported and that adjustments don't exacerbate mental health situations. Repeated minor extensions are unlikely to be fair, appropriate, or supportive of student needs. Decision makers need not develop medical expertise and should base adjustment decisions on students' impact explanations supported by evidence.
12.4.2. Disabilities for which reasonable adjustments under a Student Support Plan are not yet in place	An MEC request or submission may be the first disability disclosure to HYMS or the University. Staff must refer to and follow HYMS Policy on Disability and Reasonable Adjustments in Assessments including urgent/severe case procedures for reasonable adjustments. Students with ongoing conditions/disabilities meriting assessment adjustments should seek an SSP outlining ongoing adjustments. Where claims/evidence reveal such conditions without an SSP in place, appropriate adjustments must be made based on information provided. As a general principle, significant or frequent adjustments shouldn't be made under this policy for disability claims. Such students must be encouraged to seek an SSP via Disability Services when communicated the adjustment.
12.4.3. Recent bereavement: where the student can show a sufficiently close relationship to a person that has died recently and that is likely to have had an impact on the student's ability to complete assessment tasks	Students may seek adjustments due to recent death of someone with whom they have a sufficiently close relationship affecting assessment ability. Closeness is inferred for close relatives (parents, grandparents, siblings, spouses/long-term partners, children, step-relatives) and household members. Other cases depend on circumstances and evidence. Given potential difficulties proving death and relationship closeness, proportionality should be considered when requesting bereavement evidence. Death certificates or funeral service evidence aren't required; other reasonable proof may be accepted. Although no time limit exists for bereavement-based adjustments, HYMS will consider whether short initial adjustments are appropriate based on less cogent evidence, with later review based on subsequent evidence (which may

	include mental health impacts or practical consequences of dealing with the death).
12.4.4. A long-term relationship breakdown, e.g. a marriage.	The breakdown of a significant relationship represents a major life event that can cause acute emotional and psychological distress, comparable in severity to bereavement. The effects are rarely short-lived; the student may experience disruption to their living arrangements, financial instability, and ongoing emotional difficulty over an extended period Because relationship breakdowns are inherently personal, direct documentary evidence can be difficult to obtain, and most institutions acknowledge this. Typically accepted evidence includes a statement from the student's GP, counsellor, or therapist confirming the psychological or emotional impact; a personal statement from the student outlining the circumstances and their effect on studies; correspondence or documentation relating to separation or divorce proceedings (such as a solicitor's letter); and supporting statements from a personal tutor or supervisor who can corroborate the impact on the student's engagement and performance. A supporting statement from University Open Door or Wellbeing Service is also acceptable.
12.4.5. Being a victim of a crime, harassment or otherwise involved in a criminal matter or other legal proceedings	This applies where students are crime victims or involved in criminal proceedings (witness, defendant, etc.) affecting assessment. Adjustments may also be made for other legal proceedings and jury service. Criminal and legal involvement may have mental health impacts beyond the assessment period. Adjustments should be based on wellbeing impact and disruption to assessment completion from time demands. This impact and disruption should be identified and evidenced in or inferred from the MEC application. Evidence typically includes police or court documents but may also include letters from legal representatives or, where appropriate, supporting statements from university staff responsible for student support.
12.4.6. Disruptions to transport or travel that were not reasonably avoidable, including unpredictable and	Students are generally expected to attend examinations at the University (or designated locations) and should arrive in good time, accounting for potential delays. However, MEC claims may be accepted for significant delays or transport disruptions the student couldn't reasonably anticipate or avoid.

unpreventable visa issues	Transport disruption doesn't normally justify extensions, but significant travel disruption (regional, national and international) preventing assessment completion within scheduled time may warrant consideration. HYMS will consider disruption beyond what the student could reasonably anticipate or accommodate in their assessment plans. Evidence typically includes public announcements, news items, or direct communications about disrupted travel.
12.4.7. Disruptions to necessary IT systems beyond the student's reasonable control (site-wide, nationally, or internationally)	Students are generally expected to ensure reasonable access to internet connections, IT software/hardware, etc. needed for assessments and, where appropriate, should use University or Placement Provider on-site IT facilities. Students should allow sufficient submission time to overcome slow connections. Late submission when starting close to deadlines (without other good reasons) is poor planning, not an MEC. Students should back up work regularly. Planning should mitigate slow internet and computer crash risks. Therefore, IT slowness and work loss are generally not acceptable MEC claims. However, IT problems significantly more severe or different than reasonably expected may warrant extensions or 'as if for the first time' reassessment, including site-wide, national, or international disruptions verifiable by independent sources. Claims should demonstrate the technical problem's nature and show (or allow inference) that students couldn't reasonably account for it in assessment planning. Evidence may include announcements about power or system failures.
12.4.8. Commitments and obligations conflicting with the completion of the assessment that were not reasonably avoidable	Students are expected to prioritise assessments during assessment periods. Social, work, family, or other commitments generally won't justify adjustments. Such activities should typically be deferred during exams or short-duration coursework and factored into planning for longer assessments. However, situations where obligations are critically timed (e.g., job interview) and/or have significant impact (unavoidable legal obligations) may affect assessment ability or completion timeframe. MEC adjustments may be appropriate where claims and evidence show such impact and that obligations couldn't be reasonably avoided (e.g., deadline extensions or later 'as if for the first time' assessment).

	Adjustments may be allowed for voluntary but significant situations (interviews, representing professional teams or country in sporting events, etc.) if the outcome remains reasonably fair to the student and other students.
12.4.9. Students in 'vulnerable' categories	Students in the following groups can apply for a 4-day extension or deferral using a University letter/email or a letter/email issued by the relevant authority confirming year-round eligibility: a. Hardship funding/University Bursary recipients; b. Estranged students; c. Care experienced students; d. Students with caring responsibilities; e. Students with children; f. Students supported by Sexual Violence Liaison Officers; g. Students on active Support to Study cases; h. Refugee/asylum seeking students. Students in these groups are eligible only during specified periods: i. Students subject to or bringing disciplinary action/outcome; j. Students actively seeking disability support without an SSP yet in place. Students in categories a-j receive eligibility letters and may apply via MEC. No additional evidence is needed for 4-day extensions or deferrals (if appropriate), though more substantial adjustments require additional evidence. HYMS monitors these requests and may refuse repeated applications and make alternative adjustments if deemed contrary to student welfare or assessment integrity. In such cases, consideration should be given to what alternative support or adjustments will instead sufficiently support the student.
12.4.10. Military conflict, natural disaster, or extreme weather conditions	Typically accepted evidence includes news reports or official governmental or international agency communications confirming the event and its impact in the relevant region; a personal statement from the student explaining how the event affected them and their studies; correspondence from family members, community leaders, or local authorities confirming the student's personal connection to the event; and, where relevant, medical or psychological evidence confirming any resulting distress or trauma, such as a letter from a GP, counsellor, or therapist.

	Evidence of disrupted travel, such as cancelled flight confirmations or embassy communications, may also be relevant where the student was unable to attend an assessment. A supporting statement from University Open Door or Wellbeing Service is also acceptable.
12.4.11. Severe financial difficulties	General financial pressures that many students experience would not ordinarily constitute grounds for MEC. Severe financial difficulties may include acute financial crisis arising from sudden and unexpected events such as the loss of a primary source of funding, the sudden death or incapacitation of a financial sponsor, unexpected family financial collapse, or the abrupt withdrawal of financial support. Commonly accepted evidence includes bank statements or financial records demonstrating a sudden and significant change in financial circumstances; a letter from a financial sponsor, employer, or funding body confirming the withdrawal or loss of funding; evidence of redundancy, such as a letter from an employer, where the loss of income relates to the student's own employment; official documentation relating to a family member's death, illness, or financial collapse where that person was the student's primary source of support, such as a death certificate, medical letter, or legal correspondence; a letter from the university's own financial support or student funding team confirming that the student has sought assistance and the nature of their difficulties; and a personal statement from the student setting out the circumstances and explaining how they affected their studies and assessment performance.

13. Circumstances that are not mitigating and exceptional

13.1. Usual, predictable, or preventable circumstances, including ordinary life matters, are typically not mitigating and exceptional, including (non-exhaustive):

13.1.1. Minor short-term illness/injury without significant adverse assessment impact

13.1.2. Stress or anxiety inherent to assessment.

13.1.3. Academic work pressure (unless contributing to ill-health).

13.1.4. Inability to balance assessments with daily commitments.

13.1.5. Holidays, celebrations, weddings.

- 13.1.6. Poor time-management.
- 13.1.7. Lack of awareness of assessment dates/times
- 13.1.8. Formal investigations (e.g. disciplinary processes)
- 13.1.9. Equipment failures, including IT systems and viruses (accepted only as specified in Section 12).
- 13.1.10. Job/placement interviews (students should rearrange if employer has flexibility; if the employer has no flexibility, please refer to Section 12.4.8).
- 13.1.11. Routine paid/voluntary employment commitments.
- 13.1.12. Pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption (see [HYMS Student Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Policy](#)).
- 13.1.13. Driving test.
- 13.1.14. Planned health appointments.
- 13.1.15. Financial difficulties.

14. General principles and requirements for evidence

- 14.1. MEC claims should generally be supported by sufficient evidence, with sufficiency proportionate to the claim's nature and requested adjustments. In urgent or severe cases amounting to disability, evidence is not required and [HYMS Policy on Disability and Reasonable Adjustments in Assessments](#) must be followed.
- 14.2. Evidence is sufficient if it is:
 - 14.2.1. Reasonably contemporaneous to the situation the student alleges: Evidence must be dated. Evidence from significantly after the events may be less credible, unless circumstances prevented the student from obtaining it earlier. Where the wellbeing claim and any non-contemporaneous evidence indicate that the students' circumstances could have prevented them from securing evidence at an earlier point, the claim can still be considered.
 - 14.2.2. Independent: Normally from a third party independent of the student. For minor adjustments, evidence from someone close to the student may be accepted if more independent evidence is difficult to obtain.
 - 14.2.3. Objectively verifiable: Allows HYMS to reasonably determine the nature and impact of circumstances beyond the student's assertion, supporting the claimed disruption's nature, duration, and impact to justify the requested adjustment.
- 14.3. **Claims without evidence**

Claims can be submitted before evidence is available. Students unable to provide immediate evidence should submit the claim, identify expected evidence, and indicate when they hope to obtain it. Evidence must be submitted as soon as possible and no later than ten days before the relevant Board of Examiners meeting.

14.4. Claims 'subject to evidence'

Where claims lack sufficient evidence, consideration should be given to provisional acceptance 'subject to evidence' based on the student's explanation and steps to secure evidence.

14.4.1. Provisional decisions can be made if the circumstances could reasonably constitute a valid claim and evidence can realistically be obtained. Students must be informed the decision is conditional and risks retrospective rejection if evidence isn't produced or doesn't support the claim. Students should be strongly encouraged to submit work or participate in assessments so there is work to mark (without penalty) if the claim is rejected.

14.4.2. Once evidence is submitted, the claim should be reviewed and accepted (wholly or partly), rejected, or made subject to further evidence requests.

14.4.3. If evidence isn't provided by the final decision deadline, the claim should be reviewed and accepted (wholly or partly) without evidence or rejected.

14.4.4. HYMS regularly reviews outstanding 'subject to evidence' claims to ensure evidence production and enable final decisions.

14.5. Deciding a case without evidence

The evidence requirement may be waived if obtaining independent third-party evidence is not possible or practicable, either when first deciding the claim or at the final decision deadline. Decision makers should consider the nature of the claim and whether requiring evidence is proportionate to the requested adjustment.

14.6. Review of claims rejected for lack of evidence

If a claim is rejected for lack of evidence, students may obtain and submit further evidence for reconsideration before the final decision deadline.

14.7. Translations of evidence

Evidence must be in English or translated upon request. Translations should be reasonably credible, independent, and objective relative to the claim. For minor claims or easily understood documents, informal translation may suffice. For significant claims or complex central documents, professional translation may be required and provided by the student.

HYMS may use Google Translate or similar software with the student's express consent, taking care to protect confidentiality by not uploading personal details. Given misinterpretation risks, alternative translation methods should be used where possible, except for quick translation of small terms or phrases.

15. Students on Student Visa

- 15.1. The approval of a MEC claim does not override a student's visa conditions. Where an extension to studies is granted as an outcome of an approved claim, this does not automatically confer the right to remain in the UK for the duration of that extension, as immigration legislation takes precedence over any academic decision made under this policy. An approved MEC outcome is an academic determination only and carries no legal weight in respect of immigration status. Where a claim results in an extension to the period of study, the student's continued presence in the UK remains entirely subject to the requirements of UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) and the conditions of their visa.
- 15.2. Students are strongly advised to seek guidance from the University Immigration/Compliance Team at the earliest opportunity to understand the implications for their visa and to explore whether a further visa application may be possible and appropriate. Where it is determined that remaining in the UK is not legally viable, the student may need to consider alternative arrangements for completing their studies.

16. Appeals

- 16.1. Students have the right to appeal the MEC Committee's decision in accordance with [HYMS Code of Practice on Academic and Fitness to Practise Appeals](#) within 28 days of the relevant Board of Examiners' meeting, providing legitimate grounds for appeal. Students should seek advice from the relevant Student Unions regarding appeals.
- 16.2. Grounds for appeal: The usual ground for appeal against an MEC Committee decision is procedural irregularity, i.e. that the Committee did not follow the correct procedures when considering the claim. Appeals will not normally be considered on any other basis.
- 16.3. Disagreement with a decision: Students may not appeal an MEC Committee decision solely on the basis that they disagree with the outcome. Dissatisfaction with a decision, or a belief that the outcome should have been different, does not in itself constitute valid grounds for appeal.
- 16.4. Timing of appeals: The appeal window opens following the relevant Board of Examiners' meeting, rather than at the point of the MEC decision, because the MEC outcome may not be relevant to a student's academic progression. For example, a student may have passed an assessment without the MEC adjustment being applied, meaning the decision had no material impact on their result. Students are therefore only able to determine whether they have been disadvantaged and whether an appeal is warranted once the Board of Examiners has confirmed their progression outcome.
- 16.5. New evidence: Where a student wishes to submit evidence that was not available at the time the MEC Committee considered the claim, and the student can demonstrate good reason why that evidence could not have been provided earlier, this may constitute grounds for reconsideration. Students should note that evidence which existed at the time of the original claim but was not submitted will not normally be accepted. Any

request to reconsider on the basis of new evidence should be submitted in accordance with the [HYMS Code of Practice on Academic and Fitness to Practise Appeals](#).

- 16.6. External review: Where the HYMS appeals process has been completed and a student remains dissatisfied with the outcome, the relevant University, on behalf of HYMS, will issue a Completion of Procedures Letter. Students may then submit a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) for independent review within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures Letter.
- 16.7. **Vexatious appeals:** In accordance with [HYMS Code of Practice on Academic and Fitness to Practise Appeals](#), appeals which are frivolous, vexatious, or which repeat matters already considered and decided without new grounds will not be investigated. Students are reminded that the submission of a vexatious appeal may be referred to the student disciplinary process.

17. Confidentiality, data protection, information sharing and safeguarding

- 17.1. Personal information may be collected from students when they submit a claim form and during the decision-making process, for the purposes of administering MEC decisions under this policy.
- 17.2. Students' personal information is used to prepare, process and determine claims, and to identify whether additional support or signposting to other University services may be beneficial.
- 17.3. Personal information is shared within HYMS only to the extent necessary for determining the claim. Evidence from one claim may be used to inform another where relevant.
- 17.4. When someone handling an MEC application thinks a student needs extra support, their information may be shared internally to arrange appropriate assistance (e.g. advising on Leave of Absence or welfare check-ins).
- 17.5. Outcomes of MEC claims may be shared with a student's supervisor to support academic progress advice, but the details and evidence behind the claim will not.
- 17.6. If an appeal is submitted, personal information may be shared with the relevant HYMS Committee. To investigate, MEC staff may consult tutors or personal supervisors, who will know an appeal exists but will not receive personal information.
- 17.7. If a student complains about their experience of this policy, the claim form, evidence and outcome may be reviewed by the relevant Committee, and by the University Complaints Team if escalated.
- 17.8. Where wellbeing concerns arise from a MEC claim, staff may seek advice from the University (e.g. Mental Health Team, Open Door Team or Disability Services) and share personal information as needed. Where a student has an SSP, information may be shared with the disability contact to ensure adequate support. If a claim suggests an undiagnosed disability, staff will follow [HYMS Policy on Disability and Reasonable Adjustments in Assessments](#).

- 17.9. While the primary focus of this Policy is to support a student's academic progression and wellbeing, HYMS recognises its legal and ethical obligations to safeguard the welfare of all students, staff, and members of the public.
- 17.10. Information shared in this Policy is generally treated as confidential. However, HYMS staff must share any declarations of health conditions, mental health issues, or safeguarding concerns made within MEC or SC application with Student Wellbeing or Support Services within HYMS and the relevant university to ensure appropriate support pathways or reasonable adjustments can be arranged.
- 17.11. Where a safeguarding concern is identified, HYMS reserves the right to share necessary information with internal departments or external agencies (such as emergency services or social care) without the student's explicit consent, in accordance with the [Data Protection Act](#) and the [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)](#).
- 17.12. This Policy is not an emergency response. In cases of immediate or life-threatening danger, students and staff should contact emergency services on 999/Local Number and University Security before initiating any formal stages of this policy.
- 17.13. HYMS will also observe the Safeguarding procedures of the two universities:
- 17.13.1. [University of Hull Safeguarding Policy](#)
- 17.13.2. [University of York Safeguarding Process](#)