

A STUDENT'S GUIDE TO

**EXCEPTIONAL**

**CIRCUMSTANCES**

**GET IN TOUCH**

**0121 204 4848**

[advice@aston.ac.uk](mailto:advice@aston.ac.uk)

10:00am - 4:00pm

**DROP IN**

10:30am - 12:30pm weekdays

No appointment needed at this time

**LOCATION**

Ground floor of Students' Union building



# EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES



Exceptional Circumstances are unexpected events that significantly affect your ability to submit work or complete assessments.

## WHAT ARE EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES?

Exceptional circumstances are unexpected events that significantly affect your ability to meet deadlines, attend assessments, or perform well academically. These include:

- Missing submission deadlines.
- Being unable to attend or complete timed assessments.
- Being unable to attend or complete timed assessments.

These circumstances are typically acute (sudden and short-term) and verifiable with independent evidence like medical notes, letters, emails confirming what happened.

## CIRCUMSTANCES LIKELY TO BE ACCEPTED:

- **Physical or mental illness:** Provide a letter from a healthcare professional detailing your condition and its impact. Include hospital appointment letters, prescriptions, or medication labels.
- **Technical issues with submission:** Submit service outage notifications or emails from Digital Services confirming the issue.
- **Legal Matters:** Submit letters or documents from court, solicitors, or support service confirming your involvement.
- **Personal or Domestic Problems:** Provide supporting letters from relevant individuals or services, including medical notes or appointment letters.
- **Bereavement:** Submit death certificates or letters from family members or counsellors.
- **Mandatory National Service or Jury Duty:** Provide official documentation or letters confirming your involvement.

You must try to provide accurate and relevant evidence to support your EC application.

## CIRCUMSTANCES NOT LIKELY TO BE ACCEPTED:

- Completing and submitting coursework late due to missed deadlines.
- Late submissions due to printing/binding/copying delays.
- Not following submission instructions, leading to incorrect, incomplete, or non-submission.

- Losing coursework due to poor backup practices.
- Work or religious commitments reducing study time.
- General study pressures, workload, anxiety, or stress.
- Minor ailments like a cold.
- Long-standing conditions (e.g., hay fever or migraines) unless experiencing a sudden and temporary flare-up.
- Planned support for family members or partners with minor illnesses or surgeries.
- Misreading assessment timetables or oversleeping.
- Complaints against staff or programme delivery issues.
- Holidays or travel (excluding exceptional circumstances).
- Chronic illnesses unless experiencing a sudden and temporary flare-up.
- Prolonged personal difficulties or anticipated disruptions.
- Death of a pet (not including assistance animals).

## BEFORE APPLYING FOR ECs

Before submitting an EC application, consider these steps:

- **Review criteria:** Check if your situation meets the criteria outlined in the University's Guide to Exceptional Circumstances (on the University's website).
- **Fit to sit policy:** Consider if you're well enough to complete an assessment. Understand that completing an assessment signifies you're fit and your attempt is valid.

## HOW DO I APPLY FOR ECs?

- **Completing the form:**
  1. Describe in detail what happened, when, and the impact on your ability to complete any assessments.
  2. Remember your circumstances and evidence must cover the relevant assessment period.
  3. Upload any supporting evidence. If you do not have evidence explain why not or when you expect to get it.
- **Top Tip:** Draft your statement and gather your evidence in a separate document before completing the online form.
- **How to apply:** Applications must be submitted online via MAP Task.
- **Deadline:** Submit your EC application after the assessment date/deadline but before the EC deadline (check your School's webpage for specific deadlines). Late EC submissions may not be accepted.

**WE CAN HELP...**

EXPLAIN THE PROCESS. PROVIDE FEEDBACK ON YOUR APPLICATION. HELP AND SUPPORT YOU THROUGH THE JOURNEY. AND MORE.

Please visit: [astonsu.com/support](https://astonsu.com/support)

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## WHERE TO SUBMIT THE EC APPLICATION?

Submit your application online via MAP Task. For assistance or information, refer to your School's contact email listed on the University's Exceptional Circumstances webpage.

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- **Review Process:** The Exceptional Circumstances or Absence Panel will review your application and evidence.
- **Decision:** They'll determine if your circumstances meet University regulations and have affected your assessments.
- **Outcome:**
  - a) **Accepted:** You may receive a replacement attempt without penalty or have late work marked without a penalty.
  - b) **Rejected:** Your original mark or a zero for non-completion will stand, with limited resubmission opportunities.

## I NEED HELP - WHO CAN I TALK TO?

1. **Students' Union Advice Service.** THAT'S US! We provide confidential, and independent advice.
2. **Personal Tutors/Advisors and Programme Directors:** Your school's staff members who can offer support and potentially allow a break from studies if needed.
3. **The Student Solutions Centre:** Provides access to support for various issues, including student finance, fees, funding, and visas. They provide access to **Student Welfare Services** such as:
  - **Mental Health & Wellbeing:** Specialised support to meet student mental health and wellbeing needs.
  - **Counselling** Qualified counsellors and psychotherapists.

- **Disability & Academic Support** Advice and support for students with disabilities, including ongoing health conditions and learning disabilities.
- **Chaplaincy (MLK Multi-faith Centre)** pastoral and spiritual guidance for all faiths or none.
- **Residence Advisors (Aston Student Village)** offering pastoral support to residents living in ASV

## HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

The Students' Union Advice Service is here to support you throughout the EC application process. Here's how we can help:

- **Understanding the process:** We can guide you through the EC application process and help you determine if your situation meets the University's criteria for exceptional circumstances.
- **Feedback and Advice** We can provide feedback on your EC application form before submission and offer advice on the evidence required to support your application.
- **Exploring options** If you're unhappy with the outcome of your EC application, we can discuss alternative options and potential next steps.
- **Support and guidance** We offer confidential and independent support, ensuring you have the information and assistance you need during this process.
- **Additional Resources** We can connect you with other support services within the university and externally.

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