

# THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

## EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES: ADJUSTMENTS TO LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

### POLICY DETAILS:

Date of approval	18 October 2023
Approving body	Academic Council
Supersedes	Code of Assessment: Exceptional Circumstances Addendum October 2021
Date of EIA	EqIA Updated August 2023
Date of next review	<i>See departmental schedule</i>
Author	Head of Learning and Teaching
Responsible Executive Group area	Academic Quality Office
Related policies and documents	<a href="#">GSA's Code of Assessment</a> <a href="#">GSA's Examination Board Policy</a> <a href="#">GSA's External Examiner Policy</a>
Benchmarking	<a href="#">UK Quality Code</a> and <a href="#">Assessment Advice and Guidance</a>

## THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

### Exceptional Circumstances Policy for Adjustments to Learning, Teaching and Assessment

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out the processes and mechanisms by which GSA can make emergency adjustments to learning, teaching and assessment in light of exceptional circumstances outside GSA's control which significantly impact normal operations.
- 1.2 This policy supports the principle that GSA will fully and appropriately take into account the impact of periods of significant disruption to normal operations and that GSA will endeavour to avoid or mitigate, or at worst minimise, any detrimental impact on student outcomes while maintaining quality and academic standards.
- 1.3 Academic Council, or the Exceptional Circumstances Subgroup on behalf of Academic Council (see appendix 1), shall be responsible for the implementation of this policy. Academic Council holds overall responsibility for oversight and monitoring of the operation of this policy, quality and standards.

#### 2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught programmes and courses only. The policy can be applied at cohort, programme, Department, academic School or institutional level.
- 2.2 For joint programmes delivered in partnership with another institution, amendments to learning, teaching and/or assessment arrangements as a result of the activation of this policy must be made in consultation with the partner institution.
- 2.3 Any amendments to arrangements for postgraduate research programmes as a result of exceptional circumstances shall be approved by Academic Council, with advice from the Research Degrees Committee.

#### 3. Principles

- 3.1 This policy maintains the principles of assessment as set out within the GSA Code of Assessment, Section 1.3, and is informed and guided by the following precepts:
  - a. In the event of exceptional circumstances which interrupt normal operations of learning, teaching and/or assessment, the health, safety and well-being of students, staff and our community remains GSA's key priority.
  - b. Every effort shall be made to maintain existing arrangements for learning, teaching and assessment. Where this is not possible owing to exceptional circumstances, and approved within the scope of this policy, delivery of programmes and courses, including arrangements for assessment, may be adjusted to ensure continuity of operations.
  - c. Every effort shall be made to ensure that students' progress to the next stage of their programme and complete their degree as scheduled. Where this is not possible owing to exceptional circumstances, students will be supported to progress or graduate within appropriately amended timescales.

- d. Any adjustments made to the delivery of programmes and courses, and/or arrangements to assessment, will ensure the maintenance of quality and academic standards as set out in GSA's policies and regulations.
- e. In determining the nature and level of adjustments required to maintain continuity of operations, GSA will ensure that students are appropriately engaged in decision making, and that outcomes are communicated.

#### **4. Activation of this Policy**

- 4.1 An interruption to GSA's normal operations may result in the need to make rapid changes to arrangements for the delivery of programmes and courses, and arrangements for assessment, in order to ensure continuity of experience and to support progression and award.
- 4.2 These interruptions are defined as unforeseeable, unpreventable and exceptional events, beyond the control of the GSA, that are likely to have a material impact at a cohort, programme, department, academic School, or institutional level on a student's ability to continue to study, progress and/or complete their studies.
- 4.3 Where such exceptional circumstances arise, the Convenor of Academic Council may activate this policy, and the Senior Leadership Group and Academic Council will be informed.
- 4.4 If the policy is activated, this must be communicated to the University of Glasgow, as GSA's validating body, and where appropriate the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) will be informed.
- 4.5 Where activated, Academic Council, or the Exceptional Circumstances Subgroup, shall determine the impact and risk of continuing with existing arrangements for programme and course delivery and arrangements for assessment. Where arrangements are deemed not viable, adjustments shall be made to support alternate delivery of learning and teaching, and arrangements for assessment.
- 4.6 Following the activation of this policy, the Exceptional Circumstances Subgroup will have responsibility for determining the period of use and cessation and for reporting this to Academic Council.

#### **5. Adjustment to the delivery of learning and teaching**

- 5.1 Where continuing with current arrangements for the delivery of learning and teaching is deemed not viable adjustments to the delivery mode of a programme may be proposed for approval, allowing learning and teaching to be undertaken by distance or through online / blended learning where viable and appropriate to achieving programme and course intended learning outcomes.
- 5.2 It is recognised that the period of adjustment required will be determined by the nature of exceptional circumstance. Should the period of adjustment need to continue beyond the academic session in which this policy was enacted, this would require extension of the activation of this policy by Academic Council.
- 5.3 Should a Head of School or Programme Leader seek to continue with the adjustments for future academic sessions, or make this as a permanent change to a programme or course,

this should be undertaken in line with the requirements of the Major Programme Amendment Policy or Minor Programme and Course Amendment Policy.

## **6. Adjustments to assessment schemes**

- 6.1 Where continuing with current arrangements for assessment is deemed not viable, assessment schemes within each programme may be expanded and adapted. This will normally involve:
- a. An expansion of assessment methods used by staff to support effective academic judgement regarding a student's achievement of course intended learning outcomes;
  - b. An adaptation of a programme's assessment scheme to enable the introduction of alternative methods of assessment that enable assessment of course intended learning outcomes.

## **7. Procedure for proposing and approving adjustments to learning, teaching and assessment**

- 7.1 Where an adjustment to the delivery of programmes and courses, and/or arrangements for assessment are required the Head of School or Programme Leader should complete an Exceptional Circumstances Adjustment to Learning, Teaching and Assessment Pro-forma (appendix 2). This should outline the nature of the proposed adjustment, the duration of operation, and confirm that adjustments continue to meet and fully assess programme and course intended learning outcomes.
- 7.2 In addition to the pro-forma, the Head of School or Programme Leader should provide amended programme and course specifications updated with the proposed adjustments to delivery and/or assessment. Copies of current published specifications can be obtained from the Academic Quality Office.
- 7.3 Pro-formas and specifications should be shared with the Programme External Examiner for comment and endorsement prior to submission to the Exceptional Circumstances Subgroup.
- 7.4 Proposals should be discussed with student representatives, and comments recorded within the pro-forma. Student feedback should be incorporated into proposals where possible and appropriate, dependent on the nature of the emergency situation.
- 7.5 Where a programme is accredited by a Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) the Head of School or Programme Leader should confirm appropriate consultation has taken place with the PSRB and outline any implications.
- 7.6 The pro-forma and amended course specifications should be submitted to the Exceptional Circumstances Subgroup for review and approval.
- 7.7 The Head of School or Programme Leader should update the Exceptional Circumstances Subgroup with updates on the adjustments, or the cessation of adjustments, as required and as requested.

## **8. Communicating adjustments to learning, teaching and assessment**

- 8.1 Where adjustments are approved by the Exceptional Circumstances Subgroup, the Head of School or Programme Leader shall be responsible for implementing adjustments as outlined within the pro-forma and amended specifications. The Head of School and/or Programme Leader shall also be responsible for informing students and staff of the approved

adjustments, and providing the Academic Quality Office with a final version of the specification for publication.

#### **9. Reverting to normative arrangements**

- 9.1 Following the cessation of adjustments in line with this policy, all arrangements for learning, teaching and assessment will revert to normative arrangements as outlined within published programme and course specifications.
- 9.2 The Head of School and/or Programme Leader shall be responsible for informing students and staff of the cessation of adjustments and the return to normative arrangements.
- 9.3 Where a student has not successfully completed assessment requirements within adjusted arrangements they would be provided with the opportunity for reassessment in line with the Code of Assessment and as outlined within the adjusted arrangements.
- 9.4 Where a student is required to repeat a course following cessation of adjusted arrangements for learning, teaching and assessment they would undertake the course as published in programme and course specifications.
- 9.5 Following the cessation of adjusted arrangements for learning, teaching and assessment, the Programme Leader should ensure appropriate reflection and evaluation of adjustments is undertaken through annual monitoring in line with the GSA Programme Monitoring and Annual Reporting (PMAR) policy.

## **Appendix 1. Academic Council Exceptional Circumstances Subgroup Remit and Membership**

**Reports to:** Academic Council

The Academic Council Exceptional Circumstances Subgroup will be called following activation of the Exceptional Circumstances Policy for Adjustments to Learning and Teaching and Assessment by the Academic Council Convenor.


### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To oversee, on behalf of Academic Council, the implementation and operation of the Exceptional Circumstances Policy for Adjustments to Learning, Teaching and Assessment until such time as Academic Council determines the policy's use cease.
- 1.2 To act with delegated responsibility to review and approve adjustments to learning, teaching and assessment in line with the Exceptional Circumstances Policy for Adjustments to Learning, Teaching and Assessment.
- 1.3 To maintain oversight of the implementation of all adjustments to learning, teaching and assessment in line with the Exceptional Circumstances Policy for Adjustments to Learning, Teaching and Assessment.
- 1.4 To have anticipatory oversight over potential challenges which may emerge regarding progression and completion and make relevant recommendations to address these challenges to Academic Council.

### **2. Membership**

- 2.1 The Academic Council Exceptional Circumstances Subgroup is convened by the Deputy Director (Academic).
- 2.2 Members of the Academic Council Exceptional Circumstances Subgroup are as follows:
  - Two Heads of School
  - Head of Learning & Teaching
  - Head of Research
  - Academic Registrar
  - Student Association Sabbatical Officers x 2
  - Representative of the University of Glasgow
- 2.3 The Secretary to Academic Council shall act as secretary for the Academic Council Exceptional Circumstances Subgroup.

**Appendix 2. Exceptional Circumstances Adjustment to Learning, Teaching and Assessment Pro-forma**

	<b>Exceptional Circumstances Adjustment to Learning, Teaching and Assessment Pro-forma</b>
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<b>Submitted by: (Proposer)</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Confirmed by Head of School:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

1. Please indicate the Programme and Courses to which the proposed adjustments relate:				
<b>Programme:</b>				
Stage:	Course Title:	SCQF Level:	Credit:	Core / Optional:

2. Please outline the nature and rationale for the proposed adjustments to learning, teaching and assessment being put forward.

3. Please confirm that adjustments to learning, teaching and/or assessment continue to meet and fully assess programme and course intended learning outcomes.

4. Please outline how consideration has been given to equality, diversity and inclusion in the development of these proposals. Where any negative equality impacts are identified please outline how these will be mitigated.

<b>5. Please confirm that these proposals have been discussed with student representatives.</b>	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>	
<b>Please outline any feedback received from students and where required any actions in response to comments.</b>				

<b>6. Please confirm that these proposals have been consulted upon with the External Examiner</b>	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>	
<b>Please outline any feedback received from the External Examiner and where required any actions in response to the External Examiners comments.</b>				

<b>7. Is the programme accredited by a Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs)?</b>	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>	
<b>If Yes please provide details of how consultation with the PSRB has been undertaken and where required any actions in response to comments.</b>				

<b>8. Is the programme delivered as a joint programme or within a collaborative agreement?</b>	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>	
<b>If Yes please provide details of how partners have been consulted with and where required any action in response to comments.</b>				

<b>9. Please outline any anticipated risks associated with the proposed adjustments to learning, teaching and assessment.</b>

<b>10. Please outline any support required to implement the proposed adjustments to learning, teaching and assessment.</b>



**11. Please outline the anticipated period for which these adjustments would be implemented.**

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# Exceptional Circumstances: Adjustments to Learning, Teaching and Assessment

## Stage 1: Activating the Policy

Head of School / Programme Leader requests activation of Exceptional Circumstances Policy to the Convenor of Academic Council (via the Secretary of Academic Council)

Convenor of Academic Council approves activation of the Exceptional Circumstances Policy (via the Secretary of Academic Council)

Exceptional Circumstances Subgroup is convened by Chair and Secretary

AQO informs the QAA and University of Glasgow

## Stage 2: Proposing Adjustments

Head of School / Programme Leader proposes adjustments to learning, teaching and assessment:

Head of School approves the Exceptional Circumstances pro forma and submits the pro forma and amended specifications to the Subgroup (via the Secretary)

Exceptional Circumstances Subgroup meets and approves adjustments to learning, teaching and assessment

Programme Leader completes the Exceptional Circumstances Pro Forma

Programme Leader amends programme and course specifications with the proposed adjustments to delivery and/or assessment

Programme Leader provide the External Examiner with the Exceptional Circumstances pro forma and the amended programme and course specifications

Programme Leader discusses proposals with student representatives and records comments within the Exceptional Circumstances pro forma

*(If accredited by PSRB)*

Programme Leader consults with PSRB and records comments within the Exceptional Circumstances pro forma

*(If delivered as a joint programme/collaborative agreement)*

Programme Leader consults with partner and records comments within the Exceptional Circumstances pro forma

## Stage 3: Implementing Adjustments

Head of School / Programme Leader implement adjustments:

Head of School / Programme Leader communicate adjustments to students

Head of School / Programme Leader communicate adjustments to staff

Head of School / Programme Leader provide AQO with final version of the amended specifications

Head of School / Programme Leader update the Exceptional Circumstances Subgroup as required and requested

## Stage 4: Reflecting on Adjustments or Proposing Extensions or Continuations

Head of School and Programme Leader reflect on the adjustments as part of PMAR

*(If period of adjustments needs to be extended)*

Head of School / Programme Leader requests activation of Exceptional Circumstances Policy to the Convenor of Academic Council via the Secretary *(return to Stage 1)*

*(If adjustments should continue for future academic sessions or made permanent)*

Head of School / Programme Leader proposes major or minor amendments in line with the Major Programme Amendment Policy or the Minor Programme Amendment Policy