

EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES HANDBOOK

Chapter 2 - Recovery of learning opportunities in the event of Exceptional Circumstances

2. Recovery of learning opportunities in the event of Exceptional Circumstances

2.1 Introduction

In Exceptional Circumstances, teaching and other learning opportunities may not be provided or may not be provided in the way initially planned. This guidance is intended to suggest alternative ways for providing teaching and other learning opportunities that have been disrupted by Exceptional Circumstances.

2.2 Guiding Principles

- a. If teaching and other learning opportunities have not been provided as originally intended due to significant but time-limited Exceptional Circumstances, the recovery of lost learning should be prioritised on return to normal teaching and learning activities. For example, a transmissive lecture which has been cancelled, suitable alternative delivery methods can be employed. However, in the event that a field trip is cancelled, it is unlikely that the learning opportunity can be replicated in totality and in such cases an alternative provision may be required (see Section 2.3 below).
- b. If teaching and learning opportunities have not been provided as intended due to ongoing Exceptional Circumstances an initial assessment will need to be undertaken by the Faculty (or delegated School) as to whether or not the lost learning opportunities and any future learning opportunities can be provided by alternative means. For example, an in-person lecture could be replaced with an online delivery, whether synchronously or asynchronously.
- c. The Faculty should take all reasonable steps to assure themselves that the lost learning has been / or can be recovered, within an appropriate timescale in order to mitigate the impact on taught students' progress and preparation for assessment. The Faculty (or delegated School) should maintain a record of such steps and the outcomes. These records will need to be reported to APACs and may be needed when considering academic appeals or complaints.
- d. This guidance applies to all Faculties within the University as well as Partner institutions. Where the Faculty (or delegated School)/Partner Institution deems that a learning opportunity cannot be provided satisfactorily by alternative means, options for ensuring that students are not disadvantaged during assessment, progression and awarding should be forwarded via email

to [Education, Policy Quality and Standards](#) for consideration by the Dean for Taught Students and recorded for future reference by Education Policy Quality and Standards (EPQS). When providing learning opportunities through alternative methods, this should take place in advance of any assessment related to this learning. Where this is not possible, it is likely that the assessment will need to be adjusted (see below).

- e. If learning opportunities cannot be provided in advance of assessment, then they should be provided by the end of the academic year, as this may have implications for students' success on subsequent modules and assessments in a later stage of their programme.
- f. All students affected by lost teaching and learning opportunities should be kept fully informed and in a timely manner of any action being taken to recover lost learning and any alternative provision being put in place.
- g. Where roles are named, these may need to be substituted for an equivalent role at a Partner Institution.

2.3 Alternative Provision

- a. Finding an appropriate method of alternative provision for missed teaching and other learning opportunities will be dependent on the type of learning activity that has been disrupted.
- b. The alternative provision should, as far as possible, provide students with the same learning opportunity, taking into account the aims and objectives, Intended Learning Outcomes and student experience of the provision that was originally planned. For example, if a transmissive (non-interactive) lecture is cancelled, the provision of lecture notes, reading materials, and/or a recording of the same lecture given previously, alongside an invitation for students to ask follow-up questions in Office Hours, may be sufficient. However, if Exceptional Circumstances prevent the provision of a seminar session, in which students would have been able to interact with peers as well as academic staff, alternative provision may have to provide equivalent opportunities for student-student and student-staff interaction (whether virtually/face-to-face, synchronously/asynchronously, etc.)
- c. A list of possible alternative methods of provision are listed below. This list is not exhaustive and provides examples. In the event of disruption due to Exceptional Circumstances, it is recommended that multiple methods are considered to ensure learning opportunities are appropriately recovered, but it is not intended that all need to be undertaken.
 1. Upload previous lecture recordings (or equivalent presentations) to the online Virtual Learning Environment.

2. Upload additional learning resources to the Virtual Learning Environment, including readings, web-based and other electronic resources.
 3. Use of mobile devices, multimedia management capabilities, social media and online learning platforms.
 4. Provide notes and teaching materials from cancelled taught sessions online.
 5. Provide a sample of coursework or other assessments online.
 6. Organise one-to-one or group drop-in sessions to discuss module content or more general concerns about the disrupted teaching and learning opportunities.
 7. Encourage students to attend Office Hours sessions and extend the quantity and duration of such provision.
 8. Organise replacement and/or additional lectures, tutorials, workshops, etc. to address some or all of the missed content and/or to discuss forthcoming assessments.
 9. Within the parameters of what is permissible in terms of module/programme approval processes, and in consultation with the students, re-design the remainder of the course in terms of syllabus plan, learning opportunities and/or teaching methods.
- d. Associate Pro Vice-Chancellors for Education (or nominees) (APVCE) will be responsible for deciding if the alternative provision is satisfactory in terms of mitigating the effects of teaching and learning opportunities that have been disrupted due to Exceptional Circumstances.
- e. It is advised that records are kept, detailing how missed teaching and learning opportunities have been provided by alternative means. These records will need to be reported to APACs and may be needed when considering academic appeals or complaints.