

EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES HANDBOOK

Chapter 3 - Adjustments to assessment process and ratification of taught student progression and awards in Exceptional Circumstances

3. Adjustments to assessment process and ratification of taught student progression and awards in Exceptional Circumstances

3.1 Introduction

- a. In Exceptional Circumstances, changes to existing assessment processes may be necessary to ensure as far as possible that student outcomes are not impacted by those circumstances. A circumstance would normally only be so judged if it has the potential to have a material impact on student academic performance, or if it will not be possible to assess student academic performance in the usual manner.
- b. The guidance set out below is provided to address Exceptional Circumstances that require adjustments to the assessment process and the ratification of taught student progression and awards. It is presented in the sections as follows:
 - i. Guiding Principles
 - ii. Adjustments to assessments
 - iii. Individual student mitigation
 - iv. Actions at APACs
 - v. Referrals to the University APAC

3.2 Guiding Principles

- a. If circumstances prevent learning opportunities (either planned or substituted) from being provided, or from being provided in time to allow all students to engage with the content in advance of assessments, the approach to assessment may need to be adjusted. This document provides information to assist Faculties (or delegated Schools) in determining when a change to assessment should be made, what change might be needed, and what process should be followed.
- b. **Principle**

Within each Faculty (or delegated School), decisions should be made about where adjustments may be necessary to ensure that students are only assessed based on the

learning opportunities that have been provided. A series of questions are provided in the below to assist in making decisions about what form of adjustment will be appropriate in which circumstances, and what level of authority and oversight may be required.

c. **Communication with students**

At module level, students will need to know of any precise adjustments being made. Of all adjustments, students must be informed, and with regard to adjustments that may have a material impact, students should be consulted where possible (e.g., significant changes to the form of assessment). Further advice on appropriate consultation is provided below corresponding to each type of adjustment.

d. **General points to note in formulating mitigation plans**

- i. The advice in this document is provided in the context that overarching institutional timelines for assessment cannot be changed, therefore plans must not be made which require alterations to dates for APACs, submission of marks to APACs or for the release of results to students.
- ii. Assessments will need to provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate the extent to which they have met the learning outcomes for the module and the programme, and any adjustments made must not compromise the integrity of academic standards.
- iii. Adherence to the Teaching Quality Assurance Manual, and the Assessment, Progression and Awarding Handbook within that, should be upheld. If circumstances arise that necessitate divergence from either, advice must be sought from Education, Policy Quality and Standards.
- iv. Where changes are made to the timing of individual assessments, to accommodate revised schedules of planned learning activities or the provision of substituted learning activities, care must be taken to review the balance of assessments overall, to avoid the bunching of deadlines and to provide sufficient time for student revision/preparation. This will be assessed by the APVCE (or nominee).
- v. In order to allow for changes to be made to assessments at short notice due to Exceptional Circumstances, the APVCE (or nominee) can provide final approval without the need for External Examiner approval. All changes to assessments must be recorded and must be reported at the APAC. Please also refer to section 5 of the External Examiners Handbook.

3.3 Adjustments to assessments

The policies and processes listed below would be in place of those listed in Section 2.2, Setting and Submission of Assessments in the Assessment, Progression and Awarding: Taught Programmes Handbook.

The following questions provide guidance as to how adjustments to assessments should be managed:

3.3.1 Have the original planned learning opportunities been provided on time?

- a. Faculties (or delegated Schools) should undertake a review of the impact of the Exceptional Circumstances with a view to identifying those modules and assessments potentially affected.
- b. In many cases, the originally planned learning opportunities will have been provided on time and no adjustments will be required. In some circumstances, it will be necessary to adjust the planned approach to ensure that students are fairly assessed on the basis of those learning opportunities that have been provided.

3.3.2 If the original learning opportunities have been provided late, substituted, or not provided at all, has consideration been given to the timing, content, and method of the assessment?

- c. If planned learning opportunities have been provided late, been provided by substituted activities, or not provided at all, a review must be undertaken by the Module Convenor as to whether the original planned assessment remains valid. If, on consideration of the timing, the content, and the method of assessment, it is agreed through consultation with the Director of Education and Student Experience (or nominee) that no adjustments are required, then the assessment can go ahead as originally planned.
- d. If the planned assessment is no longer valid, then consideration should be given to options i, ii and iii below:
 - i. **Consider timing of assessment**
 - 3.3.2.d.i.1 Consideration will be given to whether the timing of individual assessments can be altered, to accommodate the scheduling of rearranged or substituted activity.
 - 3.3.2.d.i.2 If the timing of the assessment can be changed to offer a fair and reasonable schedule to all students (on consideration of the overall balance of assessment deadlines) then the timing of the assessment will be rearranged.

3.3.2.d.i.3 Examination periods will not be rearranged, but when scheduling the examination timetable consideration may be given to the timing of examinations for individual modules impacted by the Exceptional Circumstances.

3.3.2.d.i.4 Adjustments to the timing of assessments need to be undertaken in view of the overall balance of the assessment load, and therefore should be agreed with the Director of Education and Student Experience, in consultation with the Module Convenor, and reported to the APVCE (or nominee). Such changes must be recorded as this information will be required later in the assessment process, when considering the impact of Exceptional Circumstances and how effectively this has been mitigated.

ii. Consider content of assessment

3.3.2.d.ii.1 As well as the timing of assessments, consideration must be given to whether assessment questions and activities can be revised to accommodate those learning opportunities that have been undertaken as normal, and those that have been disrupted by the Exceptional Circumstances (i.e., with regard to subject content knowledge). For example, if the major assessment is by formal examination, then the APVCE (or nominee) will need to be assured that the examination paper is consistent with the learning opportunities provided.

3.3.2.d.ii.2 In making such changes it will be necessary to ensure that the revised assessment still meets the Intended Learning Outcomes for the module.

3.3.2.d.ii.3 Such changes to the content of assessment questions/activities are the responsibility of the Module Convenor and must be agreed in consultation with the Director of Education and Student Experience and reported to the APVCE (or nominee). Such changes must be recorded, as this information may be required later in the assessment process, when considering the impact of the Exceptional Circumstances and how effectively this has been mitigated.

3.3.2.d.ii.4 If such changes are necessary for an assessment that might have been set earlier in the term, then the Faculty (or delegated School) must inform students that the expectations for assessments set earlier have been changed to align with the learning opportunities provided. Assessment criteria will need to be amended accordingly.

iii. Consider redesigning the assessment

3.3.2.d.iii.1 If it is not possible to change the timing or content of the assessment to accommodate those learning opportunities that have been undertaken, then consideration may be given to the redesign of the assessment (e.g., an alternative form of assessment).

3.3.2.d.iii.2 In redesigning assessments it will be necessary to ensure that the revised assessment still enables students to demonstrate the extent to which they have met the Intended Learning Outcomes for the module.

3.3.2.d.iii.4 Such changes must be applied across a whole module cohort. This is to ensure parity of experience.

3.3.2.d.iii.4 When there are changes to the assessment so that the form of assessment differs significantly from that which has been published to students (i.e., in the module descriptor or programme specifications) students must be informed about the changes and the reason(s) for them, and where timing allows, give their written consent before any such changes are approved. When timeframes do not allow for student consent to be gained, changes will be permitted without written consent, on the basis that it is in the best interests of the students to do so.

3.3.2.d.iii.5 Such changes require the approval of the Director of Education and Student Experience (or nominee), and the Faculty APVCE (or nominee). Details of the actions taken should be reported to the Programme/Discipline APAC, and also the University APAC.

3.3.3 Can changes be made to module learning outcomes?

- a. In rare situations, which must be avoided, if at all possible, it may be necessary to amend the Intended Learning Outcomes of the module to reflect those learning opportunities and assessment opportunities that have been provided.
- b. Students must be informed about the changes and the reason(s) for them, and where possible, give their written consent, before any such changes are approved. However, when timeframes do not allow for student consent to be gained, changes will be permitted without written consent, on the basis that it is in the best interests of the students to do so.
- c. This course of action will need to ensure the integrity of the Intended Learning Outcomes at the level of the programme (see Programme Outcomes as articulated on the relevant Programme Specification) and will necessitate approval of the Director of Education and Student Experience (or nominee), and the Faculty APVCE (or nominee). The impact on Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body requirements for Intended Learning Outcomes should be considered, if applicable. Details of the action taken should be reported to the University APAC.
- d. Advice should also be sought from the central Quality and Standards Team, where amendments to modules are required.

3.4 Individual Student Mitigation

- 3.4.1 In designated Exceptional Years the number of evidence-free extensions and the maximum length of such extensions available to students could be extended as deemed appropriate by the Dean for Taught Students.
- 3.4.2 This would be an exception to the policy and process listed in Chapter 10 - Mitigation: Deadline extensions and deferrals in the Assessment, Progression and Awarding: Taught Programmes Handbook.

3.5 Action at APACs

- 3.5.1 Programme/Discipline APACs should aim to ratify progression and results in accordance with existing processes and deadlines.
- 3.5.2 The following questions and answers / areas seek to provide advice and guidance concerning changes in practice required during Exceptional Circumstances or designated Exceptional Years:

3.5.2.a Have changes to assessments been made prior to the Programme/Discipline APAC?

3.5.2.a.i As above, in order to allow for changes to be made to assessments at short notice due to Exceptional Circumstances, the APVCE (or nominee) can provide final approval without the need for External Examiner approval. All changes to assessments must be recorded and must be reported at the APAC.

3.5.2.a.ii Where changes have been made to assessments (i.e., assessment content or design), these should be considered by an External Examiner (wherever possible) to ensure it is appropriate in demonstrating the acquisition of the Intended Learning Outcomes for the module, in advance of the assessment being undertaken. If prior external verification has been received, a written report of the changes made should be received at the Programme/Discipline APAC. A detailed record of the changes and the confirmation of the External Examiner should be noted in the minutes.

3.5.2.a.iii Where adjustments have been made and not verified in advance, but an appropriate External Examiner will be attending the Programme/Discipline APAC, a request should be made to the External Examiner to confirm the appropriateness of the changes at the Programme/Discipline APAC meeting. A detailed record of the adjustments and the response of the External Examiner should be noted in the minutes.

3.5.2.a.iv Where an External Examiner is not able or willing to ratify adjustments, the referral of those decisions affected must be presented to the Faculty (or delegated School) APAC where it should be clearly noted in the minutes.

3.5.2.b Have any practical assessments or examinations not taken place or not taken place as originally intended?

3.5.2.b.i In the event of a practical assessment or an examination not taking place, or not taking place as originally intended, due to the Exceptional Circumstances then the relevant Faculty is responsible for identifying appropriate alternative options or mitigating measures.

3.5.2.b.ii Should a practical assessment, such as a presentation, not take place but there is still sufficient time prior to the next APAC to mitigate the situation, the

relevant Faculty is responsible for identifying and appropriate alternative.

For example, in relation to a presentation:

- i. Request that the APAC exclude the assessment from the calculation of the module mark
- ii. Reschedule the assessment, using a different marker
- iii. Record a presentation for later marking
- iv. Submit presentation slides and notes for marking
- v. Students record themselves giving the presentation and submit it for marking
- vi. Set an alternative, non-practical, assessment

3.5.2.b.iii Should an examination paper be missing but there is still sufficient time prior to the next APAC to mitigate the situation, the relevant Faculty is responsible for identifying, which of the following options would be most appropriate:

- i. Request assessment questions from another academic
- ii. Use a previous assessment (from Referral/Deferral or previous year)
- iii. Different assessment type
- iv. Setting aside
- v. Postponement of assessment

3.5.2.b.iv As for a. above, the External Examiner must be informed of, and consider, the mitigating measures adopted to ensure that it will still be possible for students to demonstrate the acquisition of the Intended Learning Outcomes and, where relevant, professional competencies for the module and/or the Learning Objectives for the programme as a whole.

3.5.3.b.v Where an External Examiner is not able or willing to ratify the mitigating measures, the referral of those decisions affected must be presented to the Faculty (or delegated School) APAC where it must be clearly noted in the minutes.

3.5.2.b.vi The Dean for Taught Students should also be informed so that the issue can be recorded for future reference.

3.5.2.c. **Have necessary adjustments to the marking process been identified between assessment completion and the Programme/Discipline APAC meeting?**

3.5.2.c.i Where the need for an adjustment is identified between the completion of an assessment by students and the relevant Programme/Discipline APAC meeting, consideration must be given to marking processes/assessment criteria, bearing in mind the need to assess the Intended Learning Outcomes for the module, and fairness to all students affected. An example of such an adjustment would be the alteration of marking processes/assessment criteria following retrospective analysis of the completed assessment and the impact of the Exceptional Circumstances, for example, when answers to selected examination questions are excluded from consideration when calculating examination marks.

3.5.2.c.ii Faculties may wish to discuss proposed adjustments at a preparatory meeting of the Programme/Discipline APAC, although responsibility for finalising and approving module marks, confirming and approving student progression decisions, and making recommendations for awards, classification and consequences of failure must remain with the full Programme/Discipline APAC. The membership of any preparatory meeting is stipulated in Chapter 7 of the Assessment, Progression and Awarding Handbook.

3.5.2.d **Have any of the modules in a student's profile been affected by the Exceptional Circumstances?**

3.5.2.d.i Faculties (or delegated Schools) will be asked to flag any modules affected by the Exceptional Circumstances, and where a student's profile includes such modules, care must be taken to consider the profile and the potential impact on classification or progression.

3.5.2.d.ii Faculties (or delegated Schools) may wish to discuss the impact of Exceptional Circumstances on students' profiles at a preparatory meeting of the Programme/Discipline APAC (see above) and submit recommendations for consideration at the full Programme/Discipline APAC.

Note: any adjustments of the profiles of individual students must also be identified for further decision at the Faculty APAC.

3.5.2.e Is a full grade profile unavailable for individual students or cohorts of students?

3.5.2.e.i In the event that there has been no disruption to the delivery or completion of assessments and examinations as a result of the Exceptional Circumstances, but subsequent marking has not been completed and/or marks have not been submitted prior to the APAC, appropriate additional actions and options available to APACs should be deployed, drawing on the additional powers of APACs in Exceptional Circumstances and Exceptional Years (see Guidance for APACs below).

3.5.2.e.ii In exercising their additional powers in such situations, APACs should have regard to the following principles:

- i. Where students have completed all required assessments for the current stage of their programme of study, their progression to the next stage should not be materially impacted by the absence of marks. In such cases consideration should be given to, for example, conditional progression and increased trailing of credits, up to a maximum of 60 credits (unless a detailed review of a student's grade profile and an assessment of risk suggests that they may be conditionally progressed in excess of 60 credits (see i. Guidance for APACs below)).
- ii. Where students have completed all assessments for the final stage of their programme of study, their ability to: a) progress onto another programme of study, whether at the University or elsewhere; or b) to take up an offer of employment that is conditional of the achievement of an Exeter award, should not (if at all possible) be materially impacted by the absence of marks. In such cases interim transcripts and a statement explaining the nature and duration of the Exceptional Circumstances should be made available to the student.

3.5.2.e.iii Where students have completed all assessments for an interim stage of their programme, their ability to a) progress on to a professional or industrial placement year; or b) progress on to a Study Aboard year, that is conditional on the achievement of a specified stage credit weighted mean, should not (if at all possible) be materially impacted by the absence of marks. In such circumstances, conditions for progression may be waived or varied, subject

to the agreement of any third parties, such as partner universities or employers.

3.5.2.e.iv Detailed guidance should also be provided to support APACs in discharging their roles and responsibilities in such situations to ensure that academic standards and the integrity of Exeter awards are upheld.

3.5.2.f **Is the Programme/Discipline APAC quorate?**

Please refer to the External Examiners Handbook, section 5.

3.5.2.g **What adjustments to cohort assessment outcomes / scaling should be applied?**

3.5.2.g.i When Exceptional Circumstances have an impact on a cohort of students on a module and create anomalies in mark distributions, it is sometimes necessary to consider scaling marks. Incidences where scaling is applied and the rationale for these must be carefully minuted by Programme/Discipline and Faculty (or delegated School) APACs to enable review. Guidance on how/when to apply scaling can be found under Chapter 5, section 5.8, of the Assessment, Progression and Awarding Handbook. Further advice can be obtained from [Education, Policy Quality and Standards](#).

3.5.2.g.ii Where all, or a significant number of, modules have been impacted by the Exceptional Circumstances, the Dean for Taught Students may direct Programme/Discipline APACs to apply the principle of positive upward scaling, where a significant downward deviation in mark distribution is observed. Programme/Discipline APACs will use their academic judgement to apply an appropriate adjustment to correct this deviation unless there is a strong rationale for not doing so, for example on the advice of the External Examiner. Approval from the APVCE should be sought before deciding not to scale up or to scale down in such circumstances.

3.5.2.h **Guidance for Mitigation Committees**

Exceptional Circumstances as defined at the start of this document are not considered to be grounds that give rise to a need for individual mitigation. Programme/Discipline APACs will consider student profiles as set out above.

Faculty (or delegated School) Mitigation Committees must, however, consider carefully any applications where there is evidence that the impact of the Exceptional Circumstances (e.g. natural disasters or industrial action), has contributed to or exacerbated mitigating circumstances (e.g., contributed to a change in mental health needs or impacted on adjustments required for a disability). Any recommendations for further adjustment must be reported to the Programme/Discipline APAC.

3.5.2.i **Guidance for APACs**

APAC powers that may be exercised only in exceptional circumstances (in addition to those listed in Chapters 7 – 11 in the Assessment, Progression and Awarding: Taught Programmes Handbook) are as follows:

- i. Setting aside an assessment mark or module mark when considering progression, classification or condonement.
- ii. Substituting a proxy mark for an affected assessment where there is sufficient evidence of a student's performance in other examinations/assignments.
- iii. Applying retrospective mitigation in the form of deferral (uncapped reassessment).
- iv. Ability to recommend adjustments to the degree classifications of individual students.
- v. Ability to permit insurance referrals if normal decision-making on progression or condonement of modules is delayed
- vi. Ability to recommend alternative assessments and/or timing or assessments if students are unable to complete outstanding module assessments attempts during the normal Referral/Deferral period
- vii. Ability to permit conditional progression and increased use of trailing of modules, subject to agreed criteria and up to a maximum of 60 credits, if normal decision-making on progression or referrals is delayed
- viii. Ability to permit conditional progression, if normal decision-making is delayed on progression or referrals, of more than the maximum of 60 credits -worth of modules following completion of:

- a. A detailed review of a student's full mark profile, including at component level.
 - b. An assessment of the risk of the student not succeeding in the subsequent academic year; and
 - c. The provision of information, advice and guidance to enable the student to make an informed decision on whether to accept a conditional progression decision or wait for normal decision-making to be resumed.
- ix. Ability to offer a student who has a referral or deferral, which is not covered by 5-8 above, which would need to be undertaken in a subsequent academic year, and thereby prevent their normal progression, the choice of **either**:

Option one: Completing the Referral/Deferral assessment(s) at the relevant time as normal i.e., in the subsequent academic year. The following points would apply:

- i. This would constitute an attempt at an assessment, either via referral or deferral, and would usually be sat in the subsequent academic year without attendance at scheduled teaching events.
- ii. RWA students have access to online learning resources related to the curriculum/assessment pattern of the year in which they were taught rather than having access to live/current teaching events occurring in-year.
- iii. Progression would be on hold pending successful completion of these assessments and in alignment with module completion timeframes as outlined in Chapter 2 - Setting and Submission of Assessments, of the Assessment, Progression and Awarding Handbook. Failure to complete within the stipulated module timeframes as a result of an Exceptional Year could necessitate a repeat year.
- iv. A student could be referred or deferred in multiple assessments/modules per stage and with more flexibility during an Exceptional Year.
- v. Students would not pay tuition fees (with the exception of fees for sitting any referrals) and would not be eligible for student finance.
- vi. Students sitting referrals and/ or deferrals in the subsequent academic year would be classed as registered students.

- vii. Module marks, in relation to any referrals, would be capped at the pass mark.

Option two: Having a partial Repeat Study for the modules they have not yet passed. The following points would apply:

- i. Repeat Study students would be in attendance and fully registered for the term(s) they are repeating and would then be shown as inactive for the rest of the year.
- ii. Repeat Study students would have access to relevant teaching activities and learning resources as any standard student would.
- iii. Repeat Study students would be assessed on the curriculum/assessment pattern of the current year (rather than that of the year in which they were originally taught).
- iv. Progression would be on hold pending the successful completion of these modules.
- v. Repeat study can be of modules or whole years but requires submission of supporting evidence (with the exception of PSRBs) in order to be approved; usually the option to repeat a whole year or module is only available once per programme of study, however where APACs have granted a period of repeat study as a result of an Exceptional Year, this should not count against the student should they subsequently require/ where they have previously required a period of repeat study in non-Exceptional Years.
- vi. Repeat Study students are charged tuition fees on a pro-rata credit basis; Repeat Study years will count towards the total number of years for which a student is eligible for student finance (a maximum of five years of student finance is available).
- vii. Marks from repeated modules would not be capped, unless a student was referred on a repeated module during the Repeat Study year.
- viii. Usually, Repeat Study students would not be repeating any modules they had already passed as per standard repeat study rules (unless PSRBs required it). However, where an APAC believes a student has been severely impacted by an Exceptional Year, they may permit passed modules to be repeated. In addition, where the assessment patterns have changed students may need to repeat all the assessments.

- ix. Where an APAC believes a student has been severely impacted by an Exceptional Year, they may permit a further opportunity to be referred in failed elements in order to improve the final outcome.

If students do not make a choice, option one would be the default.

3.5.2.j **Repeat Study Students:**

The following Repeat Study rules, as outlined in Chapter 11.5 of the Assessment Progression and Awarding Handbook, should be relaxed in Exceptional Years/Exceptional Circumstances or following significant periods of Exceptional Circumstances only. In order to support Repeat Study students more comprehensively (during/as a result of an Exceptional Year) to allow them to perform better in the subsequent year, the following rules will be relaxed:

- i. Usually, the option to repeat a whole year or module is only available once per programme of study; however, where APACs have granted a period of repeat study in an Exceptional Year, this should not count against the student should they subsequently require/ where they have previously required Repeat Study in non-Exceptional Years.
- ii. Where APACs believe a student has been severely impacted by an Exceptional Year, they may permit passed modules to be repeated.
- iii. Where APACs believe a student has been severely impacted by an Exceptional Year, they may permit a further opportunity to resit failed elements in order to improve the final outcome.

3.5.2.k **Study Abroad Students**

In cases where it is deemed that students studying abroad have been subject to Exceptional Circumstances that have disrupted their studies, the APAC will take this into consideration when calculating the mark for their year abroad and make recommendations to the Dean for Taught Students to determine how the year abroad should be calculated. Options available include the APAC powers for Exceptional Circumstances as detailed in this chapter, as well as the possibility of reverting to pass/fail for the study abroad.

3.5.2.1 Students on Placements

In cases where it is deemed that students on a year- or stage-long placement have been subject to exceptional circumstances that have disrupted their studies, the APAC will take this into consideration when calculating the placement mark and make recommendations to the Dean for Taught students to determine how the placement mark should be calculated. Options available include the APAC powers for exceptional circumstances as detailed in this chapter, as well as the possibility of reverting to pass/fail for the placement.

3.6 Referrals to the University APAC

- a. In Exceptional Circumstances, our current regulatory framework allows Faculties (or delegated Schools) to refer decisions taken at the Faculty (or delegated School) APAC to the University APAC. The primary responsibility of the University APAC is to oversee assessment, progression and awarding from an institution-wide quality assurance perspective, as outlined in Chapter 7 of the Assessment, Progression and Awarding: Taught Programmes Handbook. It has the following Terms of Reference:
 - i. To receive reports on Dean's exceptions.
 - ii. To ensure the consistent application of the Academic Regulations across Faculties (or delegated Schools).
 - iii. To identify and share good practice from Programme/Discipline APACs and Faculty (or delegated School) APACs.
 - iv. To identify areas where policy clarifications or enhancements are required.
 - v. To make institution-wide recommendations on quality assurance matters relating to APACs.
- b. During Exceptional Years, as determined by the Dean for Taught Students, the University APAC must convene in advance of the release of marks. Where necessary to facilitate marks release, the business of the University APAC may be divided between two formally constituted meetings. The first must take place before the release of marks and must provide assurance that Dean's Exceptions and the application of Academic Regulations have been consistently applied, including the provisions of the Exceptional Circumstances Handbook; the second should take place no later than two weeks from the date of the first and must reflect on good practice, request policy clarifications and

make recommendations for future quality assurance and enhancement, including in the event of Exceptional Circumstances.

- c. Exceptional circumstances could lead to compromised assessment processes relating to either an individual candidate or cohorts of students but could also compromise the operation or constitution of Programme/Discipline and/or Faculty (or delegated School) APACs (e.g., inquorate meetings). In these instances, the University APAC may also be required to consider and ratify recommendations put forward by the relevant Programme/Discipline and/or Faculty (or delegated School) APACs.
- d. Referrals must be made to the University APAC via the submission of written reports in advance of the meeting or oral reports during the meeting if the time between the Faculty and the University APACs does not permit the former. Further information and advice with respect to the role and function of the University APAC in Exceptional Years and under Exceptional Circumstances maybe sought from [Education, Policy Quality and Standards](#).

3.7 Graduation

- a. In designated Exceptional Years, or following significant periods of Exceptional Circumstances, when the absence of completed marks or completed assessments due to exceptional events beyond the control of the University makes it impossible to guarantee a confirmed award result for a graduating cohort within required timescales, graduation ceremonies may be held as an academic achievement/programme completion event. This removes the statutory authority to confer a degree award from the graduation ceremony event in these circumstances.
- b. In the event that the nature and purpose of graduation ceremonies change in response to Exceptional Years/Circumstances, students should be fully informed and in a timely manner of what to expect at the event and its status. Interim transcripts, supported by a letter from the University outlining the Exceptional Circumstances that have led to the absence of marks, should also be issued to final-year students to ensure that they have a record of their achievement/programme completion to date.