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EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES POLICY

DOCUMENT HISTORY 1
INTRODUCTION 2
PURPOSE 2
ABBREVIATIONS 2
A. SCOPE AND APPLICATION 2
B. DEFINITIONS 3
C. POLICY PRINCIPLES 4
D. EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES REGULATIONS 5
E. CONFIDENTIALITY 7

DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version	Author	Approved by	Date
1.0	University Compliance, Audit and Quality Assurance	Senate	07/2025

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INTRODUCTION

British University Vietnam (BUV) recognises that students may encounter unforeseen and serious circumstances beyond their control that impact their academic performance.

This Exceptional Circumstances Policy establishes a transparent and consistent framework for considering such cases, while safeguarding the academic standards and integrity of BUV's awards.

The Policy aligns with BUV's quality management framework and complies with applicable Vietnamese higher education regulations. It should be read in conjunction with the Exceptional Circumstances Procedure and other relevant University policies.

PURPOSE

This Policy sets out the process for the consideration of Exceptional Circumstances that may adversely affect a student's academic performance.

It ensures that valid claims are appropriately considered while maintaining academic standards and compliance with regulations issued by the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training (MOET).

ABBREVIATIONS

BUV – British University Vietnam
ASSA – Academic Services and Student Administration
UCAA – University Compliance, Audit and Accreditation
CC – Campus Central
EC – Exceptional Circumstances
MOET – Ministry of Education and Training (Vietnam)

A. SCOPE AND APPLICATION

1. This policy applies only to students enrolled in BUV Own Degree programmes.

2. In the event that new MOET regulations come into force and conflict with this policy, the new regulations shall take precedence. BUV will revise this policy accordingly and in a timely manner to maintain alignment.

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3. Students enrolled in partner university programmes should refer to the relevant partner university's appeals and complaints procedures.

4. This policy does not apply to: non-academic personal conduct matters, which are governed by the Student Disciplinary Procedure; matters relating to appeals against academic decisions, which are covered under the BUV Appeals and Complaints Policy; and research misconduct at postgraduate level, which is addressed under the Research Ethics Policy.

B. DEFINITIONS

1. *Exceptional Circumstances* refer to unforeseen situations beyond a student's control that occur close to assessment deadlines and have a significant impact on academic performance or participation. Examples include:

Health

- A sudden and serious illness or injury
- A significant worsening of an existing illness

Life Event

- Death of a close friend or family member
- Victim of crime

Personal

- Major disruption to travel on the day of an assessment requiring attendance, which the student could not have done anything about.

Students experiencing circumstances not listed above are encouraged to contact UCAA for advice.

2. The following circumstances do not normally constitute Exceptional Circumstances:

Health

- Minor illnesses such as a cough or cold
- Routine medical appointments
- Ongoing medical conditions where there is no change in their condition. For example, a condition for which the students already have a Learning Support Statement.

Life Events (over which the students have control)

- Moving house where this is within control.
- Holidays

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- Weddings
- Change of employment where this is within control
- Technical Issues including but not limited to:
    - Devices Breaking
    - Work being lost or corrupted

  Students are responsible for backing up their work regularly and for ensuring they have reliable access to the necessary facilities and systems.

Personal Errors

- Misreading assessment instructions
- Submitting an incorrect version of work
- Failure to follow submission procedures

3. For the purposes of this policy and related procedures, all references to days shall mean working days, defined as Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays and officially designated University closure days.

C. POLICY PRINCIPLES

1. This policy is underpinned by the following principles:

Fairness: All students are treated equitably and consistently regardless of background or circumstances.
Transparency: Processes and decisions are clear, documented, and communicated effectively to students.
Student Welfare: BUV is committed to supporting students in crisis without compromising academic standards.
Due Process: Students have the right to submit applications, respond to queries, and appeal decisions.
Continuous Improvement: Regular review and enhancement of policy and practice in accordance with ISO 9001 quality management principles.

2. This policy operates in conjunction with the following BUV policies and procedures:

- BUV Exceptional Circumstances Procedure
- BUV Academic Conduct Policy and Procedure
- BUV Assessment and Examination Regulations
- BUV Appeals and Complaints Policy
- BUV Data Protection and Privacy Policy

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D. EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES REGULATIONS

1. Students must submit EC applications within 2 weeks of the assessment date or submission deadline (excluding public holidays and university closures).

Late applications will only be considered if there is clear evidence that the student could not submit the application on time.

2. Students must complete the EC Application Form available at Campus Central and submit it in hard copy together with all required supporting evidence.

The submission must include:

- a detailed description of the circumstances;
- a clear explanation of their impact on the student's ability to undertake the assessment or examination;
- relevant documentary evidence (e.g., medical certificate, death certificate, police report).

Campus Central will acknowledge receipt and forward the documentation to UCAA for referral to the EC Panel.

3. EC Application Form submitted without appropriate supporting documentation will not be considered. Any false declaration or falsified documentation will be addressed in accordance with the Academic Conduct Policy.

The required documentation will vary depending on the nature of the circumstances and may include, but is not limited to, the following:

Health

- Evidence from a medical practitioner who is treating the student. This must confirm that they were ill and seen around the time of their assessment.

Life Event

- Evidence of the bereavement and the student's relationship with the deceased.
- If the student is a victim of crime, a formal police report must be provided. An incident reference number alone is insufficient.

Personal

- If the student has experienced unexpected travel disruption, they can evidence this through traffic, news, or weather reports. Students cannot claim for pre-published travel disruption as this is something they could have planned for.

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4. An Exceptional Circumstances Panel shall be established to review applications. The Panel shall comprise appropriately senior academic representatives to ensure objectivity and academic oversight.

The Panel shall meet regularly to review cases, normally in advance of the relevant Examination Board.

5. Upon submission of an EC claim, UCAA shall first assess its eligibility. At this stage, no judgement shall be made regarding the exceptionality of the circumstances or the adequacy of the evidence.

The eligibility check shall confirm that:

- the claim was submitted no later than two weeks after the assessment due date.
- accompanied evidence has been submitted relevant to the dates of the incident.

If the claim matches the criteria above it will be referred to the EC Panel. They will assess the claim and provide one of the following outcomes, including an explanation about why the decision has been made.

Upheld: The Panel has reviewed the claim and confirmed that it meets the University's definition of EC. This decision will be recorded against the students' assessment attempt and may lead to one of the following outcomes:

- If the student submits their work within one week of the original deadline, and the type of assessment allows for late submission (e.g. coursework), the work will be marked as if it had been submitted on time.
- Where the student was unable to submit or has failed the assessment at first attempt, an additional uncapped attempt may be granted.
- If the EC applies to a resit attempt, further reassessment will depend on the student's academic profile and the Award Board's decision. The attempt may be capped or uncapped depending on prior attempts and their academic history.
- In certain circumstances, a reassessment opportunity may not be available, including where:
    - The student has no remaining reassessment opportunities.
    - The failed assessment has been condoned.
    - The student reached the end of their maximum registration period.

Student Action: The Panel may request more evidence and will give the student a timeframe in which to provide this evidence. If they cannot provide additional evidence the claim will be assessed based on the evidence already provided.

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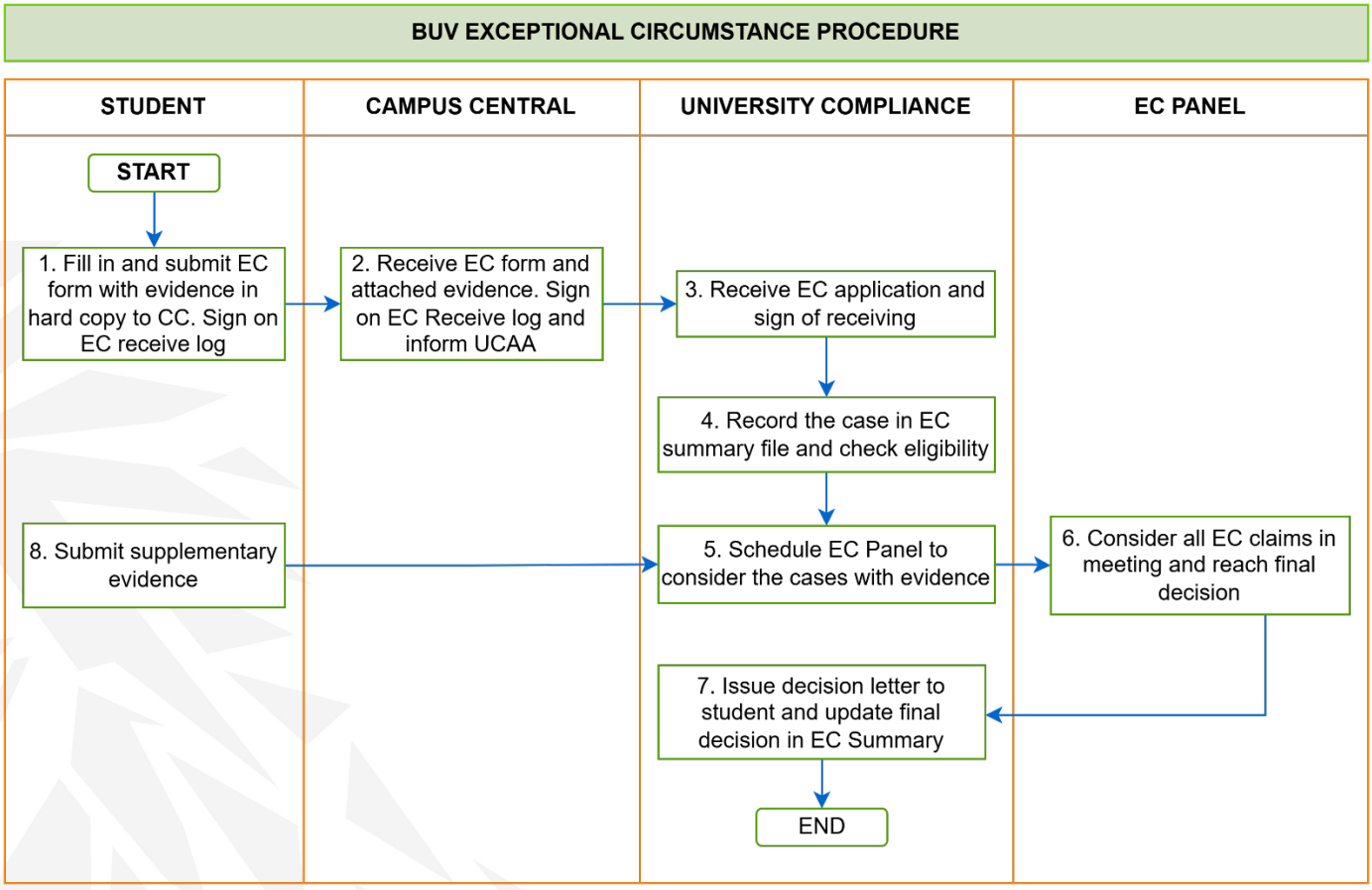
Not Upheld (Rejected): The Panel may decide not to uphold the claim for several reasons. For example, their circumstances do not meet the University's expectations of exceptionality, or the evidence does not meet the standard of acceptable evidence. Assessments will then be considered at the Examination Board as normal and standard Regulations will apply.

6. Students shall be notified of the Panel's decision within five working days of the meeting. The notification shall include the final decision, the rationale, and information regarding the appeals process (where applicable).

7. EC claims handling process



E. CONFIDENTIALITY

1. All information provided by students in relation to Exceptional Circumstances claims shall be treated as confidential.

2. Information shall only be shared with individuals directly involved in the review and decision-making process.

3. All records and evidence will be securely stored according to the University's Data Protection and Privacy Policy.