

11A Appeals: Ground 3 - Student Guidance

If you are appealing on the grounds that you believe that your performance in assessment has been affected by illness or other factors which you have been unable to divulge, you will need to provide evidence of what impacted your assessment and a reason why you could not tell the University before the meeting of the Assessment Board.

By “unable to divulge” we mean that you could not inform the University of any exceptional circumstances via the submission of an Exceptional Circumstances Board Consideration Form before the Assessment Board. You will need to explain why you were unable to tell the University about your exceptional circumstances earlier.

All appeals submitted under this ground must be supported by evidence that supports the reasons *why* you were unable to submit an Exceptional Circumstances Board Consideration Form prior to the Assessment Board, an example of this might be that you were hospitalised and unable to contact the university.

If in reviewing your appeal, it is deemed that there is no valid reason why you were unable to submit a request for Exceptional Circumstances Board Consideration before the published deadline, your appeal will not be upheld on this ground and your Exceptional Circumstances cannot now be considered.

What does the University consider to be a valid reason for not informing the University that you were experiencing exceptional circumstance before the assessment board?

- You were in hospital due to ill health and unable to contact the University.
- You were not in hospital, but you were too unwell to contact the University.
- You experienced an upsetting situation that was not related to your health such as the death of a close family member, and were unable to contact the University

Each of these reasons will need to be supported with evidence that tells us about the impact the situation had on your assessment and ability to submit exceptional circumstances before the assessment board.

A minor illness at the time that board considerations were due is unlikely to be considered a valid reason for not submitting a request on time. The dates for submitting consideration are published throughout the year and students whose performance in assessment has been impacted by exceptional circumstances should apply for consideration in good time.

What sort of evidence will be considered?

The evidence you provide should be from someone who is independent to your situation, and support your account of why you were unable to submit circumstances before the assessment board.

Appropriate evidence could include:

- A letter from a doctor, counsellor, support worker, etc that gives details about the situation/illness that impacted your assessment and the time when you should have notified the assessment board.
- A letter from a doctor, counsellor, support worker, etc that gives detail about an ongoing condition that you have that explains how it would have impacted your assessment and the time when you should have notified the assessment board.

- A letter from a BU staff member or from BU external support services who have been actively supporting you, usually over a period of time. This may include a letter from a member of your programme team, from staff at the Student Advice or ALS services.

The information that you provide should include an explanation of the impact that the situation you experienced had on your assessment and the time when you should have notified the assessment board.

What if I have asked for evidence but it is not ready yet?

We understand that it can take time to get appropriate evidence to support your appeal. If you have asked for evidence but it is not ready, submit your appeal by the deadline and include details of what steps you have taken so far to secure appropriate evidence to support your appeal. Once the letter is ready, send it to the case handler immediately.

Case Study:

A student feels unwell with stomach pains the night before an exam but decides to attend anyway. They experience pain during the exam but complete the paper. Later that same day their pain worsens. They call NHS 111 and they are advised to go to A&E. They are diagnosed with an appendicitis and receive treatment in hospital for several weeks during which time they miss a further exam. The deadline for submitting Board considerations passes whilst they are unwell in hospital. When appealing the decision of the assessment board, they provide a letter from the hospital that explains their condition and the duration of their stay. **Their evidence is accepted.**

Case Study:

A student has an ongoing medical condition that impacts their ability to concentrate. They experience an unexpected flare up of their condition during the exam period and perform poorly in two of their assessments. Their flare up continues to impact them, and they miss the deadline for submitting Board Considerations as they are receiving treatment. When appealing the decision of the assessment board, they provide a letter from their support worker who explains the nature of their ongoing condition and the impact that it has on them. The letter specifically mentions the flare up that impacted the recent exams and impacted their ability to submit Board Considerations by the deadline. **Their evidence is accepted.**

Case Study:

A student contracts covid during the exam period and is unable to attend their examination or to submit coursework as they are feeling unwell. They are ill for 5 days. They do not advise the University that they are ill during their exams, they do not ask for an extension for their course work, and they do not seek Board Considerations. When appealing their results, they write on the appeal form that they were self-certifying for 5 days when they were ill and did not provide any evidence of why they were prevented from submitting board consideration before the assessment board. Whilst the student can self-certify for their period of illness, they must tell the university that they are doing so at the time that they are self-certifying. **Their evidence is not accepted.**

What will not be considered a valid reason for not submitting a request earlier:

- I didn't know that I had to tell the assessment board by a certain date.
- I was out of the country and didn't access my email.

- I thought I had passed the assessment.
- I didn't know about the policy.
- I don't read my uni emails or look at Brightspace.
- If you were unwell and self-certifying but did not tell the university at the time or immediately after you stopped self-certifying.
- Not realising that your performance had been affected until after receiving your results.

Case Study:

A student submitted an appeal after discovering they had failed two of their exams. The student, whose request related to the shoulder pain they were experiencing at the time, said that they were unaware how seriously they had been affected until they saw their results, and that they couldn't have made a request earlier because they hadn't been told about the process to follow. The details of the deadline and process for submitting board consideration had been posted on Brightspace and the exam timetable included a link to the process submitting board consideration. The student was aware of their symptoms during the exams and the process for submitting board consideration had been provided to them. **Their appeal was not upheld** as the student had not provided a valid reason for not submitting board consideration at the right time.

What sort of outcome is possible

If your academic appeal is successful, the University will usually aim to return you to the position you would have been in had the issues that you experienced not occurred. This means that you will most likely be offered the opportunity to resubmit coursework or retake an exam. Your marks will either be capped or uncapped depending on how many times you have already attempted that assessment. In some cases, you may exceptionally be allowed a further assessment attempt even if you have already reached the maximum allowed under the regulations for your programme of study.

You will **not** be offered:

- Extra marks
- A grade uplift to the next classification
- A pass mark without submitting or resubmitting any work

My case was not upheld at the Formal Stage. I have new evidence and I want to request a review. What is a valid reason for not having supplied the evidence I have at the Formal Stage?

- You had requested it in good time, but it was not provided to you until after the Formal Stage decision had been reached.

What is not considered to be a valid reason?

- You didn't request it until after the decision at the Formal Stage
- You didn't think you needed to provide any evidence as you have an ongoing condition that the University is aware of, but you had not provided evidence that showed that you were suffering from a flare-up at the time in question and that your performance was impacted by it.