



**RCSI**

## Exceptional Circumstances Professional Examinations

RCSI DEVELOPING HEALTHCARE LEADERS WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE WORLDWIDE



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## 1. Scope of this Policy

The procedures laid out in this document apply to all Professional Examinations conducted by RCSI in Ireland or in our overseas centres.

## 2. What to do if you can't attend an examination

There may be occasions when your attendance at an examination is affected by circumstances beyond your normal control. These circumstances may include health/personal problems or bereavement.

In the first instance, it is important that you **discuss these issues with an appropriate person as soon as possible**, and inform Student, Academic and Regulatory Affairs (SARA) ([pgexams@rcsi.ie](mailto:pgexams@rcsi.ie)) to ensure you are made aware of the options available to you regarding your examination.

If you have circumstances which have affected your attendance at an examination you are required to submit an Exception Circumstances Application. This document outlines the Exceptional Circumstances process and the form for completion is available at the end of this document.

The deadline for submission of your Exceptional Circumstances Form is within **14 days** of the date of the affected examination, completed forms should be emailed to [pgexams@rcsi.ie](mailto:pgexams@rcsi.ie).

## 3. What are Exceptional Circumstances?

Exceptional Circumstances are defined as serious and extraordinary circumstances outside the candidate's control, normally unforeseeable and unpreventable which affect the candidate's ability to attend an examination.

In general, Exceptional Circumstances will be of a medical or personal nature affecting the candidate and must be corroborated by independent evidence.

Key points to note:

1. The circumstances have to be exceptional. Unfortunately, all of us can expect to experience some unwanted events and we have to manage our lives around them. This includes being able to manage or compensate for the minor illnesses and disruptions that, in the normal way of things, may occur in everyone's life from time to time. Listed below in section 4 are some circumstances which might be viewed as exceptional, and in section 5 some circumstances which are unlikely to be accepted as being exceptional.
2. Applications for Exceptional Circumstances **must be made within 14 days** of the date of the examination. Retrospective applications will only be considered where there are valid reasons for non-submission within the usual timeframe.



- RCSI reserves the right to verify all and any evidence provided by you in support of your submission. In cases where a fraudulent submission is reasonably suspected, candidates will be dealt with under Malpractice Regulations.

#### 4. What counts as Exceptional Circumstances?

Some examples of circumstances that might be upheld as exceptional are given below, together with examples of documentation to support your submission.

Circumstance	Supporting Documentation
Illness which prevented you from attending an examination	Letter/certificate from a health professional.
Unforeseen major travel disruption which caused you to miss an examination.	Letter from transport company. Letter from embassy.
Legal matters	Letter/documents from court/solicitor.
Bereavement	Supporting evidence of bereavement, e.g. Death Certificate or letter from health professional.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT IF YOU PRESENT YOURSELF FOR AN EXAMINATION AT THE TIME OF THE EXAMINATION YOU HAVE DECLARED YOURSELF FIT.**

#### 5. What does not count as Exceptional Circumstances?

Long term issues, such as ongoing health, anxiety, personal or financial issues, which affect your ability to study or attend an examination generally, do not count as Exceptional Circumstances.

The following are examples of circumstances which are not likely to be upheld:

- work or religious commitments;
- a minor ailment;
- a minor domestic upset;
- a long-standing condition;
- misreading the examination schedule;
- attending family engagements;
- holidays or travel;
- chronic ill health (unless there has been a sudden and temporary flare-up);
- prolonged personal difficulties.



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## **6. What to do if you are unable to attend an examination?**

If you are unable to attend on the day of an examination you should inform the SARA Office (pgadmin@rcsi.ie) of your absence as soon as possible and no later than 14 days after the date of the examination.

A candidate who absents himself or herself from any examination without prior notification will be considered to have withdrawn from the examination and will forfeit their examination fee in full.

To claim Exceptional Circumstances, see section 8 below for the procedures on how to initiate such a claim and sections 4 and 5 in relation to determining what may constitute as “Exceptional Circumstances”.

## **7. Outcome of an exceptional circumstance application**

When you submit an Exceptional Circumstance Application this will be reviewed in line with this policy. We will contact you within 30 days of receipt of your fully completed application (including all supporting documentation) to inform you of the outcome of your application.

If your exceptional circumstance application is upheld the following options may be available to you.

- Refund of examination fee less 20% administrative charge.
- Full examination fee transfer to a future diet of the examination.
- Applications for consideration of a refund/transfer on the grounds of being refused a visa will be subject to a 20% administrative charge.

All Exceptional Circumstances are dealt with in a confidential manner and all copies of applications are retained by the Student, Academic & Regulatory Affairs (SARA) Office. By submitting your application, you agree to allow summarised information to be presented to persons relevant for the purposes of decision making.

## **8. How and when do I submit Exceptional Circumstances Form?**

The Exceptional Circumstances Form is available at the end of the policy. The deadline for submission is within 14 days of the examination date.

Claims for Exceptional Circumstances cannot be accepted after this deadline unless you can provide good reason why you were not able to submit them earlier. If you wish to submit a claim of Exceptional Circumstances you should submit a form even if you are still waiting supporting documentary evidence.

Please note that a medical certificate that does not have enough detail may be rejected. All supporting documentation must be submitted with the application.

If work commitments prevent attendance the College is not responsible and will not refund or transfer any part of the examination fee.



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## 9. RCSI Exceptional Circumstances Form

This form **MUST** be submitted by **the candidate** to the Student, Academic & Regulatory Affairs (SARA) Office ([pgexams@rcsi.ie](mailto:pgexams@rcsi.ie)) for all circumstances which affect candidate examinations.

All claims for consideration of Exceptional Circumstances must be submitted on this form, with supporting evidence attached as appropriate. Forms **must be** signed and dated.

<b>Name:</b>			
<b>Candidate Number</b>			
<b>Examination</b>			
<b>Date of Examination</b>			
<b>Examination Centre</b>			
<b>Nature of the Circumstances</b>			
<b>List of supporting evidence attached. If you do not have evidence, or cannot attach such evidence, please explain why.</b>			
<b>Signature:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	