

Fairtrade Exceptions – A Summary Guide for Businesses

What are Exceptions to the Fairtrade Standards?

We know that companies manage a huge amount of complexity when sourcing ingredients. To ensure that producers are not unreasonably blocked from market opportunities, we have rules in place to permit exceptions to the Fairtrade Standards in very specific circumstances.

What kind of Fairtrade products use Exceptions?

For composite Fairtrade products such as chocolate, biscuits and cakes, many small ingredients are involved that can be difficult to source as Fairtrade due to availability, minimum order size or quality specifications.

Please note that the finished product will still need to adhere to our [composition guidelines](#) with any exceptions in place.



Who grants Exceptions?

UK exceptions are granted by the Fairtrade Foundation through our online approval system CONNECT. This is where evidence is submitted and exceptions are granted for ingredients.

If an exception is needed by your [FLOCERT](#) certified supplier on the unfinished compound ingredient they are supplying you (e.g. toffee chunks, chocolate chips), your supplier will need to contact their analyst at [FLOCERT](#).

Exceptions are only ever granted for a fixed period of time, to ensure that the need is still valid, up to a maximum of two years. We will be in touch to remove or renew your exception when it is due, which may involve submitting up-to-date evidence at any stage during this period.

Useful Documents & Links

- [Unavailable List](#)
Find out which ingredients have an automatic exception due to lack of Fairtrade availability.
- [CONNECT](#)
Our online product registration system.
- [Guide to how to manage exceptions in CONNECT](#)
To show you what steps to take in our online approval system to get your exception approved, including how to submit evidence that your exception is needed.

Any Questions about Exceptions?

Please contact the Fairtrade Foundation team on 0203 301 5001 or at commercial@fairtrade.org.uk

