

## Guidance notes for coursework or dissertation extensions to the submission deadline

### Guidance notes for staff and students

These guidance notes explain the coursework and dissertation extensions process for students on the following courses:

- foundation year students
- undergraduate students
- postgraduate students on the following courses:
  - MBA and Executive MBA
  - Master of Accounting (MAcc)
  - Master of Architecture (MArch)
  - Master of Engineering (MEng)
  - Master of Mathematics (MMath)
  - Master of Science (MSci)
  - Master of Law (LLM)
  - Master of Advanced Study (MASt)
  - Masters Degree in Corporate Law (MCL)
  - Master of Finance (M.Fin)
  - Master of Music (MMus)
  - PGCE

Students on the MPhil by advanced Study, MEd, MRes and CPGS courses use different processes for extensions available [here](#).

These guidance notes are for applications relating to the academic year 2024-25. The guidance notes complement the relevant Ordinances, which can be found online in [Chapter III \(Examinations\) of Statutes and Ordinances](#).

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## **1. Self-certifying coursework and dissertation extensions**

These guidance notes explain the process for students who have exhausted any self-certifying extension options for coursework and dissertation. Self-certifying extensions are short extensions (up to 7 days) where there is no need to evidence the need for the extension. The relevant application information will be in the student's course handbook (or similar), as the policy is department-based and where the course allows.

For extensions beyond 7 days, or where the course restricts or does not permit self-certification, this process can be used.

## **2. Coursework and dissertation extensions to the submission deadline**

### **2.1 What is a coursework or dissertation extension?**

A coursework or dissertation extension is permission for the student to submit the coursework or dissertation at an agreed date after the original submission deadline. Extensions can be granted where the coursework or dissertation has been impacted by illness or grave cause.

Extensions provide an opportunity for students to spend longer on the relevant assessment. However, students need to consider the impact that any extension may have on other assessments or learning for their course.

### **2.2 What is the criteria for granting an extension?**

To be granted an extension, the following criteria must be met:

- any self-certification extension must have already been used;
- the assessment must have been impacted by illness or grave cause (as explained in 2.3);
- the requested extension must allow for the work to be examined in time for the Examining Board. In exceptional circumstances a longer extension may be permitted but this would delay any Classing or completion of the degree (including graduating);
- applications can only be made to [EAMC@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:EAMC@admin.cam.ac.uk), the Examiners should not be asked directly about the extension;
- applications must be made as soon as possible, preferably at least 72 hours before the submission deadline and always before the submission deadline. Where, in exceptional circumstances, it is not possible to submit an application in advance of the submission deadline, sufficient reason and evidence must be provided, for example, emergency hospitalisation at the time of submission. In these circumstances the application should be received as soon as possible after the deadline.

### **2.3 What is illness or grave cause?**

Illness or grave cause is:

- a) serious;
- b) unanticipated;
- c) entirely beyond the student's control;
- d) close in time to the assessment; and
- e) evidenced by contemporaneous evidence from an independent, appropriately qualified source.

## 2.4 Examples of illness or grave cause

Where the circumstances meet the criteria set out at 2.3 above, the following are a non-exhaustive list of examples that are **likely** to be accepted:

- short-term illness or injury;
- worsening of an ongoing illness or disability, including mental health conditions;
- symptoms of an infectious disease that could be harmful if passed on to others;
- death or significant illness of a close family member or friend;
- unexpected caring responsibilities for a family member or dependant;
- significant personal or family crises leading to acute stress;
- witnessing or experiencing a traumatic incident;
- a crime which has had a substantial impact on the student;
- accommodation crisis such as eviction or the home becoming uninhabitable;
- an emergency or crisis that prevents the student from accessing an online assessment.

The following list are examples of circumstances **unlikely** to be accepted:

- holidays, house moves or other planned or expected events;
- minor illness such as common colds or hay fever;
- assessments that are scheduled close together;
- misreading the exam timetable;
- forgetting or otherwise accidentally not submitting assessments on time;
- poor time management;
- minor transport disruption;
- computer or printer failure where the student should have backed-up their work
- exam stress;
- minor life events, unless the circumstances have had a disproportionate impact that meet the criteria in section 2.3;
- the impact of a University sanction, including an academic penalty, as a result of academic misconduct or another breach of the University's Rules of Behaviour.

## 2.5 Evidencing illness or grave cause

As outlined in the criteria in section 1.3, contemporaneous evidence from an independent, appropriately qualified, source must be provided in order to be granted an exam allowance.

Evidence should include the nature, severity and impact of the illness or grave cause; it should state how the condition is likely to have affected the student's examination preparation and / or performance. The evidence should be precise, self-explanatory and where relevant, should offer a clear diagnosis from a medical professional.

Evidence should be obtained as close to the date of the examination as possible, students are expected to make use of College Nurses, Tutors and welfare staff, in addition to GP services. Evidence obtained after the impact of the illness or grave cause that states the student 'reported' they were impacted by illness or grave cause is unlikely to be sufficient. Where an existing or long-term condition is relevant to the circumstances, pre-existing evidence can be used to confirm the condition, alongside contemporaneous evidence documenting the circumstances affecting the relevant assessments.

Where a student is aware of a long-term condition that affects their day-to-day activities, it is their responsibility to seek reasonable adjustments in advance of the examination taking place. Only unanticipated worsening or changing of the condition shall be considered to meet the illness or grave cause criteria and this will need to be sufficiently evidenced.

Evidence is treated sensitively and confidentially and is only seen by decision-makers and those staff administering the decision-making processes. Consequently, redacted medical evidence is not accepted.

Evidence must be from an independent source, not family or friends, and the author must be sufficiently qualified to provide the relevant evidence e.g. a doctor is qualified to diagnose illnesses, a nurse is qualified to report medical symptoms, an accredited counsellor is qualified to confirm the engagement they have had with a student; the ADRC (Accessibility and Disability Resource Centre) can provide screening assessments or evidence of engagements regarding a student's disability. Where a student's referral to a specialist medical advisor has been delayed for reasons outside the student's control, this should be made clear.

Evidence must be in English or include an official translation from a third party (not generated or translated by AI).

### **3. How to make an application**

#### **3.1 General information**

Applications for exam allowances are submitted by email to [EAMC@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:EAMC@admin.cam.ac.uk) by a College on the student's behalf (via Tutor or wellbeing advisor) or via direct application from a student, within three months of the formal notification of the student's exam results.

The application must be complete at the time of submission and the email must include all of the following:

- a completed and signed application form;
- a statement(s) from the College and/or student;
- a completed student declaration form;
- evidence of the medical circumstances or other grave cause;
- the full student support document (SSD), where appropriate, to include the disability information and document sections

Exceptionally, where the sender has become aware of an error in the submission of an application before the application has been considered, the application must be re-submitted in full, with an explanation for the re-submission. The date of re-submission will be used in determining at which meeting the application will be considered.

Students can expect an application to be considered at the meeting following the meeting deadline, with an outcome being sent within ten working days of the meeting date. Details of meetings and submission deadlines can be found [here](#).

#### **3.2 College and student statements**

Where an application is made to the EAMC from a College on the student's behalf, it is expected that the student's Senior Tutor or Tutor shall provide a statement about the application. The College may wish to draw attention to any matters which it would like the Committee to take into

consideration. There may be instances in which an additional statement by a DoS is helpful. The Committee pays close attention to the care with which College statements are prepared.

Students may also wish to provide a brief statement outlining the impact of the illness or grave cause. Any statement should be concise, factual and linked to the relevant criteria.

#### **4. The consideration process for extension applications**

##### **4.1 The Examination Access and Mitigation Committee**

The Examination Access and Mitigation Committee (EAMC) is a committee of the General Board which meets at least monthly throughout the year to consider applications for examination allowances and related matters. Its membership includes representatives from across the Collegiate membership and medically qualified members. There is also a large volume of student casework undertaken under delegated authority, much of which involves the expert opinion of its medically qualified members.

The EAMC may only consider cases and make decisions within the bounds of the authority granted within Statutes & Ordinance and in accordance with this guidance. Applications that fall outside these parameters shall be declined.

The EAMC has the following overarching aims:

- To grant relief where students would otherwise be substantively disadvantaged by illness or grave cause in relation to their assessments;
- To endeavour to ensure parity of treatment between applicants to the Committee who share similar circumstances, while recognising that each case is individual.
- To be mindful of the interests of students undertaking the same course but who are not applicants to the EAMC.

All correspondence relating to exam allowances must take place using the [EAMC@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:EAMC@admin.cam.ac.uk). There must be no attempt to correspond with individual EAMC members, Examiners or the Degree Committee regarding the details of applications.

##### **4.2 General overview**

The EAMC receives copies of applications seven days prior to a meeting. Prior to the Committee meeting, the Secretary may contact the Department or Faculty for further information, e.g. information on grade boundaries.

In considering the application, the EAMC shall consider the application presented, any additional information received from the Department, Faculty or relevant University office, and any previous applications that have been made to the EAMC.

Where the criteria of a requested examination allowance have not been met, the EAMC may grant a different exam allowance to the student.

Where a student who has already been granted one examination allowance applies for a second or further allowance, each application will be considered on its own merits. In awarding multiple allowances, the EAMC will have particular regard for maintaining equality of educational outcomes between students in different circumstances.

### **4.3 Matters dealt with by delegated authority**

Some matters may be dealt with by authority delegated to the Chair and/or Secretary. Typically, this includes straightforward applications to resume study or disregard terms (colloquially known as intermission).

In very exceptional circumstances i.e. where a decision cannot reasonably wait until the next scheduled meeting of the Committee and where the case is not straightforward, the Committee may be prepared to consider an application by circulation. If, however, in such circumstances any member of the Committee wishes the application to be considered at a scheduled meeting, then the application will need to await that meeting.

### **4.4 Communication throughout the process**

It is not appropriate for the Degree Committee and the College or student to communicate directly regarding the form of allowance. All communications between the College or student and the Degree Committee should be via the EAMC to ensure parity of treatment and for approval of any offers made. Agreements made outside of the EAMC process, and therefore not approved by the EAMC, may not constitute a formal allowance.

### **4.5 Outcomes**

Once the EAMC has made a decision an outcome letter will be sent to the College and the student via email, with the College receiving at least 24 hours' notice of the decision.

Outcome letters will normally be issued within ten working days of the EAMC meeting at which the application was considered.

Some cases need confirmation from the appropriate Examining Board before the final outcome can be confirmed. Where this is the case, the College and the student will be notified of the EAMC's initial decision. Subsequently, once the Examining Board has confirmed its decision, the College and student will receive the final decision.

## **5. Reviewing extension decisions**

Where a student is dissatisfied with the decision in relation to an extension application, a review can be submitted within 14 days of receiving the decision in line with the [Procedure for the Review of Decisions of University Bodies](#).

Requests for review can only be made on set grounds: procedural irregularities; new evidence that for good reason could not be submitted with the original application; or a belief that the decision is wholly unreasonable. If the student remains dissatisfied following the review outcome, the student may take their case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

## **6. Questions and further information**

Any queries regarding exam allowances should be directed to [eamc@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:eamc@admin.cam.ac.uk).