Contact: eamc@admin.cam.ac.uk

2026-27 Exam Allowances Guidance Notes (Undergraduate and Postgraduate students)

For students and Colleges

These guidance notes explain the exam allowances system, for circumstances where serious, unanticipated illness or grave cause has impacted a student's exams and a remedy is required.

The exam allowances system is for **all** undergraduate and postgraduate students **except** those on the following professional/research courses that are **not included**:

- Medical students and Veterinary Medical students during the last three clinical years of the course;
- Bachelor of Divinity Degree, Doctor of Medicine Degree, Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Degree, Ph.D. Degree (including by special regulations), Cert. PG study, Doctor of Business Degree, Doctor of Engineering Degree, Masters of Letters Degree (M.Litt and M.Sc.), M.Phil by Thesis

Students on the Foundation Year Programme have different exam allowances available.

These guidance notes are for applications relating to the academic year 2026-27. The guidance notes complement the relevant Ordinances.

Contents

Key changes to the exam allowances system

1. Criteria for granting an exam allowance
2. Types of exam allowances
3. How to make an application
4. The consideration process for exam allowance applications
5. Reviewing exam allowance decisions
6. Questions and further information

Changes for 2026-2027

There have been minor changes to this year's exam allowances Guidance Notes:

- Timeframes and submission of student direct applications (3.1)
- Eligibility of Postgraduate dissertations/theses for exam allowances (1.8 and 2.8)

There have also been clarifications throughout, based on commonly received questions in AY2025-26.

Exam Allowances Overview for 2026-27

The process (Section 3)

1. Students are responsible for determining whether they can attend each exam. Where they become unwell during an exam, they are responsible for determining whether they are able to continue the exam or alternatively, should leave partway through the exam (after having notified an Invigilator). Where a student is unable to attend or complete an exam, due to illness or grave cause, they must seek **contemporaneous medical assessment** so that they can receive appropriate support and later demonstrate the circumstances for the purpose of an exam allowance application.

2. Where an exam or assessment has been impacted, students are responsible for initiating an exam allowance application by submitting the **Student Initiation Form** to their College within **7 days** of the impacted exam/assessment or, where the exam falls within a wider exam period, within 7-days of the student's final exam in that exam period;
   → This is before the exam results are known.

3. Where illness or grave cause has impacted a student's studies, they are expected to apply to intermit in the term first substantially affected, or, where studies are impacted later in the year, **before** their first Easter Term exam, at the very latest:
   → Where a student considers they are unable to sit their exam(s), they should not attempt the exam(s) to 'see how they do', and, if they have not already applied for intermission, they must seek contemporaneous medical evidence to demonstrate their inability to sit the exam(s) and subsequently apply for an exam allowance.
   → Where a student applies for intermission just before the start of exams, they will not know the outcome before their exams commence and, unless their studies were substantially impacted, they may be offered an exam allowance instead of intermission, **or neither remedy** if the circumstances do not meet the criteria. If the student chooses not to sit their exams and subsequently does not meet the criteria for intermission or an exam allowance, then they will be withdrawn. Consequently, students are strongly advised to make intermission applications as early as possible.

4. Retrospective intermission will only be granted to students with contemporaneous evidence of lacking capacity to decide not to sit exams, who have failed overall and who were unaware of the impact of their circumstances at the time of the exams and had not disclosed them to their College:
   → Applications need to be made within 14 days of the exam result;
   → Where granted, students will be permitted to repeat the 1-3 terms and re-sit exams.

The criteria (Section 1)

5. The illness or grave cause must be **so serious** that it:
   → prevents the student from attending the exam;
   → prevents the student from completing a substantive part of the exam;
   → removed the decision-making capacity of the student; or
   → prevented them from completing an assessment and submitting an extension request.

See the **full criteria** outlined in **section 1.3** of the Guidance Notes.

The allowances (Section 2)

Tripos students

First and second years:

- → get to progress to the next year if they would have otherwise failed;
- → receive a statement on their academic transcript that confirms "*This candidate's results for one or more papers were impacted by illness or other grave cause*";
- → where applicable, all second year marks are discounted from the Overall Degree Classification.

Final years (third and fourth years of integrated Masters:

- → 25% or less of assessments impacted - disregard and recalculate degree results;
- → More than 25%:
  - sit reassessment in the Long Vacation/first half of Michaelmas Term to receive an Overall Degree Classification;
  - sit reassessment with next year's cohort, to receive new marks on the transcript and reclassification of the Part, ranking and Degree.

Postgraduate students

- → 25% or less of assessments impacted, if permitted by the Degree Committee, disregard and recalculate award results;
- → More than 25%, or where the Degree Committee do not permit disregarding:
  - Sit reassessment within 3 months – may result in updated transcript, will enable Examiners to determine whether to give the academic award;
  - Sit alongside next year's cohort, to receive new marks on a transcript and full results.

1. Criteria for granting an exam allowance

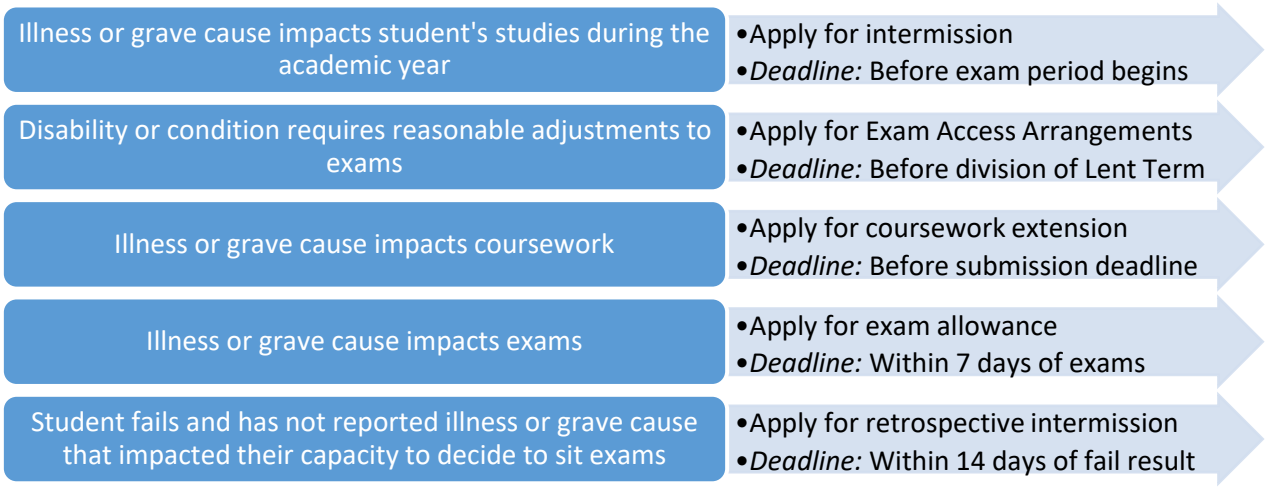
1.1 What is an exam allowance?

An exam allowance is a remedy for a student whose assessment(s) (exam, coursework or other formal assessment where the marks contribute to the student's formal examination result) has been impacted by serious illness or grave cause that prevented them from completing the assessment. In such circumstances, the University can grant an exam allowance so that the student is not substantively disadvantaged by the illness or grave cause.

Exam allowances are only for unanticipated illness or grave cause. Where circumstances that are likely to impact a student's performance begin before the exam/assessment then different action will need to be taken:

- If the illness or grave cause has impacted studies, then an application must be made for a break in studies, called intermission. Intermission should be applied for in the term first substantively affected, or, at the latest, before the student's first exam(s) in their main exam period (usually Easter Term) begins. Students can then return to study once no longer impacted by the illness or grave cause, or reasonable adjustments have been put in place. In exceptional circumstances or where it is not academically feasible to return to the same term, students may repeat terms already completed.
- If the illness or grave cause has impacted coursework or a dissertation then an extension to the submission deadline must be applied for prior to the submission deadline (and following any self-certified extension available via the department).
- For disabled students, or students with short-term conditions that are expected to impact the exams then reasonable adjustments (exam access arrangements) must be applied for and put in place in advance of the exam. An exam allowance is not provided as an alternative to this process.

Illness or grave cause processes listed by chronological order



1.2 Who can receive an exam allowance?

The exam allowances described in this guidance are available for **all undergraduate students and postgraduate students**, **except** those on the following professional or research only degrees.

- Medical students and Veterinary Medical students during the last three clinical years of the course;
- Bachelor of Divinity Degree, Doctor of Medicine Degree, Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Degree, Ph.D. Degree (including by special regulations), Cert. PG study, Doctor of Business Degree, Doctor of Engineering Degree, Masters of Letters Degree (M.Litt and M.Sc.), M.Phil by Thesis

Students on the Foundation Year Programme have different exam allowances available to them. See the separate Foundation Year Exam Allowance Guidance notes.

1.3 What is illness or grave cause?

An exam allowance can only be granted where the illness or grave cause is:

a) so serious that it prevented the student from:
   i attending the exam; or
   ii completing a substantive part of the exam; or
   iii having the decision-making capacity to determine they were not fit to sit the exam; or
   iv completing the assessment by the deadline and applying for an extension.
b) unanticipated;
c) entirely beyond the student's control;
d) close in time to the assessment;
e) evidenced by contemporaneous evidence from an independent, appropriately qualified source; and
f) accompanied by academic evidence that the student would have otherwise been expected to pass the exam. If the student attended the exam, the academic evidence must demonstrate that the student was expected to achieve a significantly higher mark than was received.

Students should be aware that the decision to not attend an exam is not in itself sufficient to meet criterion 'a) i'; the application must demonstrate and evidence illness or grave cause that was sufficiently serious to warrant the non-attendance.

In respect of criterion 'a) ii', in order to be prevented from completing a substantive part of an exam (or assessment), the illness or grave cause must be so serious that it required the student to leave the exam room part-way through the exam and that they were unable to return to the exam room to complete the exam. Where a student attends an exam and remains in the exam room until its end time, they are considered as having 'completed' the exam, regardless of whether they answered the required number of questions or felt that their performance was impacted. Where a student completes an exam, they will only meet criterion 'a' if there is contemporaneous evidence that the student lacked the decision-making capacity to accurately assess their fitness to sit the exam or to remain in the exam.
NB. Where a student determines they need to leave an exam mid-way through, they must inform an Invigilator.

To demonstrate impaired decision-making capacity, there must be contemporaneous evidence that, as a direct result of illness or grave cause, the student was unable to understand, retain or properly weight the decision to attend and remain in the exam, or that they

were unable to communicate their decision (including by speech, sign or movement) to leave the exam.

1.4 Examples of illness or grave cause

Where the circumstances meet the criteria set out at 1.3 a)-f) above, and not otherwise, the following is a non-exhaustive list of examples that are **likely** to be accepted:

- short-term illness e.g. a sufficiently serious viral illness that prevented the student attending the exam;
- worsening of an ongoing illness or disability, including mental health conditions, e.g. a chronic migraine condition that despite ongoing medical treatment fluctuates, and the student had a migraine on the day of the exam, the symptoms of which prevented them from attending the exam;
- necessary hospitalisation for a physical or mental illness at the time of the exam;
- symptoms of an infectious disease that may be harmful if passed on to others, where medical advice requires isolation at the time of the exam, and the exam cannot be undertaken remotely;
- significant illness or death of a close family member (for example, parents or siblings) or close friend shortly before the exam;
- illness of a family member or dependent that leads to unexpected caring responsibilities on the day of the exam that cannot be performed by anyone else because of their sudden nature, for example taking a child to A&E;
- the impact of witnessing or experiencing a traumatic incident and/or crime shortly before the exam that is so substantial, it prevents the student from attending the exam;
- involvement in a criminal or court process required by the state, that cannot be reasonably moved. Students called for jury duty are expected to use the exceptions process and undertake the duty during the vacation period.

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, or minor illnesses that did not have a substantial impact on the exam on the day e.g. a vomiting bug the day before the exam;
- events that are serious but took place prior to the exam in question, and therefore, the event did not prevent the student from attending the exam;
- assessments that are scheduled close together;
- misreading the exam timetable;
- forgetting or otherwise accidentally not attending exams or submitting the assessment at the correct time, including because the student was unintentionally sleeping;
- poor time management;
- transport disruption;
- computer or IT issues including printer failure where the student should have backed up their work
- exam stress or mental ill health that has been caused or exacerbated by a lack of engagement in studies or exam revision;
- minor life events;
- the death or funeral of someone who is not an immediate family member or partner, without additional evidence of the substantial impact on the student's mental health;
- 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.

1.5 Evidencing illness or grave cause

The criteria in section 1.3, requires contemporaneous evidence from an independent, appropriately qualified source to 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. Bereavement requires evidence in the form of a death certificate or equivalent.

Evidence should be obtained as close to the date of the examination as possible, students are expected to make use of College Nurses, 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 seen only by decision-makers and those staff administering the decision-making processes. Consequently, redacted evidence, including redacted medical evidence, is not acceptable and will not be considered.

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.

The vast majority of courses (including all undergraduate courses and the majority of Postgraduate courses) require students to be resident in Cambridge during term time. Where this is the case, students are expected to provide medical evidence from a UK-based medical professional in support of an application. All students are expected to register with a Cambridge GP Surgery at the beginning of their first term to ensure immediate access to medical support, should it be required. Where an international student requires medical support/treatment for an ongoing or long-term condition, it is expected that they will engage with UK-based medical professionals/NHS services during the course of their studies (this may be in addition to continued medical support received remotely from their home-based treating professional). Where a student's course does not require residency in Cambridge or where the illness occurs during a vacation period, evidence from a non-UK-based medical professional may be provided.

Evidence must be in English or include an official, accredited translation from a third party (not translated by the student themselves or generated by the student or others using AI or any other unofficial translation services).

The University may check the veracity of any independent evidence that is included in the application. Any evidence that is suspected to have been amended, only partially submitted or falsified in any way will be reported as a suspected breach of the Rules of Behaviour and the consideration of the application will be paused until any investigation has been completed.

Exam warnings system

Colleges can contemporaneously record circumstances that impact students' exams using the 'exam warnings' system. Previously, the system was used to corroborate exam allowance applications. However, the change in timeframes of the exam allowances process means this corroboration is unnecessary, and the system will not be used for this purpose; the original communication trails and notes from College and University colleagues provide the relevant evidence. Colleges may continue to use the exam warnings system for internal purposes, and the system will remain in use to record colour-blindness, and conditions that require examiners to ignore minor spelling and grammatical errors.

1.6 Academic evidence

Academic evidence needs to demonstrate that the student would have otherwise been expected to pass an exam/assessment that they did not complete or, if the student attended the exam/completed the assessment, the academic evidence must demonstrate that the student was expected to achieve a significantly higher mark than was received.

All of the student's supervision reports must be included from all years of study. Other forms of academic monitoring and progress reports are appropriate where supervision reports do not exist. Additional statements from academics are not required where supervision reports exist, and the Committee attaches the greatest weight to in-year supervision reports as they are contemporaneous evidence of students' academic progress and engagement.

The Committee will take note of the 'Industry', 'Progress' and 'Interest' indicators, the 'Estimation of Work', any 'Academic concern' flags, and the text of the supervision report. Inferences may be drawn where the 'Estimation of work' in a supervision report is 'Not Specified'.

For courses where supervision reports are not routinely available (e.g. the LL.M.), the College should supply whatever testimony of the student's industry and ability it can offer. Where a course does not have any form of interim academic monitoring, statements can be sought from academic staff delivering the academic content of the course to the student.

1.7 Exam allowances cannot be granted where academic misconduct has been found

Exam allowances cannot be granted for exams or assessments where academic misconduct has been found. The student can provide mitigation, including circumstances that amount to illness or grave cause as part of the academic misconduct process. Where the student considers that the outcome of this process is unreasonable or there has been insufficient consideration of the mitigation, then the student can appeal the academic misconduct outcome. An exam allowance is not an alternative option to an appeal.

1.8 Can coursework ever be eligible for an exam allowance?

Where students are unable to submit coursework by the deadline then an extension should be requested. There may be some extreme circumstances where a student's coursework submission is impacted by a lack of decision-making capacity, normally this would result in an intermission request. However, if the student's study is already complete, but the

circumstances affected the submission and would be ongoing (and therefore an extension is not suitable) then an application for an exam allowance will be considered.

Postgraduate students for which extensions and intermissions are overseen by the Department or the Student Registry (via the CamSIS self-service ‘Change in Student Status’ process), will not be eligible for an exam allowance for a dissertation or thesis. Exam allowances are not an alternative to applying for an extension or intermission, including where these processes are applied for and declined.

2. Types of Exam Allowances

Where a student's circumstances meet the criteria of illness or grave cause, the student shall be eligible for the most relevant exam allowance, as set out in Statutes and Ordinances. When granting an exam allowance, conditions may be imposed, for example, requiring medical evidence of fitness to resume and sustain study before the student can continue on the course.

2.1 A summary of the exam allowances available

Impact of illness or grave cause	**Exam allowance**	**Impact of Exam allowance** All allowances include an Exam Allowance statement on the student's transcript (2.3 below)
Tripos students undertaking the first or second year of a BA degree		
Overall fail – cannot continue with the course	*Allowance to progress* section 2.4	• progression to the next Tripos Part • where applicable, disregard the Part results from the Overall Degree Classification
Overall pass – will continue onto the next Tripos Part	*Allowance on transcript* Section 2.5	• where applicable, disregard the Part results from the Overall Degree Classification
All other students (Tripos students undertaking the third year of a BA Degree, integrated Masters students undertaking the fourth year of Tripos, or postgraduate students)		
25% or less of the assessed components in the Tripos Part or course affected	*Disregard and recalculate results* Section 2.6	• Examiners disregard the affected assessment components and recalculate the award, Class/result, rank etc • Degree Committees, where applicable, have authority to recommend reassessment instead of disregard for postgraduate students
More than 25% of the assessed components in the Tripos Part or course affected	*Reassessment for Classed Degree* (Tripos only) section 2.7	• Bespoke reassessment by division of Michaelmas Term resulting in a revised Overall Degree Class, or Tripos Part for integrated masters, where applicable
	Bespoke reassessment (postgraduate only) Section 2.8	• Bespoke re-assessment either in-year (for in course assessment) or within 3 months
	Reassessment at the next planned opportunity Section 2.9	• Reassessment alongside the next cohort • Reassessment results will be used to award, class and produce final transcript
	Unclassed Honours Degree (DDH) or *Ordinary BA Degree* (Tripos Only) Section 2.10	• No reassessment required for student to be awarded either of the awards but the academic criteria must be met

All summative assessments are included when determining the percentage of impacted assessment for students in the third year of a BA degree or on an integrated Masters or postgraduate course. Exams, coursework and any other formal assessment where the marks contribute to the student's formal examination result are included in the calculation with the relevant weighting applied by the department.

2.2 Courses with exceptions to the reassessment exam allowances

A small number of courses are unable to create bespoke reassessments within the required timeframe. Consequently, the following alternative allowances apply to these courses:

Course	**Exception**
Part II Human, Social and Political Sciences Tripos (all tracks)	*Variation to Reassessment for Classed Degree*: The Examiners will consider all summative assessment completed during the Tripos, and supervisors' and Directors of Studies' reports. The Examiners may determine a Classed Degree

Part II History and Politics Tripos Part II Geographical Tripos	based on this evidence; or the Examiners may require that student to complete additional assessments i.e. a portfolio of essays or oral exam and then provide a Classed Degree.
Part II Computer Sciences Tripos	*Variation to Reassessment for Classed Degree*: Where more than 25% of the Easter Term exams are impacted, the Examiners will award a Classed Degree on the basis of the dissertation and two submitted modules of a fail, 3, 2.ii or 2.i (a 1 Class cannot be awarded but students may progress to Part III with a 2.i at the discretion of the Faculty Board). Students either keep the Classed Degree or choose to be reassessed alongside the next cohort in the following Easter Term. Where a dissertation has not been submitted, an extension can be granted, at most until 1 September, in order to determine the Classed Degree.
Part II Mathematical Tripos	*Variation to Reassessment for Classed Degree:* Students are permitted to 'disregard and recalculate results' for up to two of the four Easter Term exams. If more than two exams are affected by illness or grave cause, students may still be permitted to progress onto Part III at the discretion of the Faculty Board and receive an unclassed honours degree to do so. Otherwise, the student can choose to either receive an unclassed honours degree, or to return to be reassessed alongside the next cohort in the following Easter Term, receiving one revision session per subject, as the reassessment will relate to the material taught in the new academic year.
Part III Mathematical Tripos – MMath MASt in Mathematics Part III NST Quantitative Climate and Environmental Science	*Variation to Reassessment for Classed Degree/Bespoke reassessment:* where more than 25% of the assessments are affected, the student can take a pass/fail reassessment, which will take place either during the long vacation period or in the first half of Michaelmas Term. Students and Colleges should submit applications as early as possible if they wish to undertake this form of reassessment, so there is sufficient time to create and deliver the reassessment where an application is approved. *Variation to 'Reassessment at the next planned opportunity'*: if a student wishes to receive more than a 'pass', the student may return into residence at the beginning of the Easter Term to re-sit a full selection of exam papers alongside the next cohort. Candidates must carry forward their essay mark but cannot carry forward marks on papers taken previously (even if those papers were unaffected by the circumstances pertaining to the allowance). The student will access the Department's revision sessions, alongside the next cohort, as the reassessments will relate to the material taught in the new academic year. The Fee Remission Panel have confirmed that in this circumstance the student will not be charged tuition fees for the repeat of the Easter Term. The College will still need to make a fee remission application.

2.3 Changes on transcripts for all exam allowances

For each exam allowance, the student's original papers, marks, Class and results etc will be recorded on their transcript. Following receipt of an exam allowance, this information will not change, as it is a factual record of what took place. However, a statement will be added to the student's transcript, alongside the affected term, stating: "This candidate's results for one or more papers were impacted by illness or other grave cause". Any new results will be recorded under the term in which the reassessment(s) take place (Michaelmas for bespoke reassessment or the following Easter Term for reassessment alongside the next cohort). Alternatively, where a reassessment has taken place in advance of the original results being recorded on the transcript, the following statement will be added to the original transcript: "Results presented include marks awarded following reassessment permitted under University regulations due to the impact of illness or other grave cause."

2.4 Allowance to progress

Only for Tripos students undertaking the first or second year of a three-year BA Degree and students on a preliminary course

Where a student receives an overall 'fail' in the Tripos Part (each Part covers an academic year) the student would otherwise be prevented from continuing onto the next Part of the Tripos. An 'allowance to progress' permits a student to continue onto the next Part of the Tripos.

A temporary 'allowance to progress' may be granted where a student is prevented from continuing onto the next part of the course because the Examiners have not yet determined the marks for the Tripos Part because of an ongoing procedure, for example relating to academic misconduct and therefore, impacting the marking process. A temporary allowance is independent of the ongoing procedure and is not indicative of the outcome. A student may prefer to intermit rather than to continue onto the next year of a course of study with a risk of being withdrawn partway as a result of the ongoing procedure. The temporary 'allowance to progress' will not result in an exam allowance statement on the student's transcript.

Where the Tripos Part results would normally be used to calculate the student's Overall Degree Classification (ODC) at the end of the Tripos, the Part impacted by the allowance will be removed entirely from this ODC calculation.

Where a first or second year student has failed the Tripos Part, until such time as an Allowance to Progress has been granted, it is not possible for the student to continue to undertake any elements of the course that were scheduled to take place during the long vacation, such as starting a Year Abroad or undertaking resits of professional exams.

Additional criteria for the exam allowance

- For a temporary 'allowance to progress': the decision-maker in the ongoing process, for example the Student Discipline Officer, considers such an allowance to be appropriate in all the circumstances.

Fourth year courses – confirmation of illness or grave cause

'Allowance to progress' is unavailable for students undertaking their third year of Tripos and wanting to move into an integrated fourth year course, as entry to the course requires evidence of particular levels of previous academic performance. Students in this position should request an 'Opinion to Progress', a letter confirming whether or not the student's circumstances were impacted by illness or grave cause. This letter can be presented to the relevant academic body, who will then determine whether to admit the student onto the fourth year.

The fourth year courses affected are:

- Chemical Engineering Tripos Part IIB
- Computer Sciences Tripos, Part III*
- Engineering Tripos Part IIB
- Management Studies Tripos
- Manufacturing Engineering Part IIB
- Mathematical Tripos Part III
- Natural Sciences Tripos, Part III

*See section 2.2 where Part II students who have missed more than 25% of their assessments may be progressed

2.5 Allowance on transcript

Only for Tripos students undertaking the first or second year of a three-year BA Degree

Where students have received an overall pass in the Tripos Part (the exams for the academic year) and therefore can continue onto the next Part (year) of the Tripos (undergraduate course).

The student receives the statement outlined in section 2.3 and if the Tripos Part results would normally be used to calculate the student's Overall Degree Classification (ODC), these will be

removed entirely from the ODC calculation and it will be based on the final Tripos Part only. For example, if the weighting of each tripos part for the purpose of the student's ODC was originally 0:30:70, it would become 0:0:100 following approval of the exam allowance.

Where a student applies for this allowance, the change to the weighting of the Overall Degree Classification is mandatory.

2.6 Disregard and recalculate results – 25% or less of the assessments on the Tripos Part or Course are impacted by illness or grave cause

For all undergraduate and postgraduate students except Tripos students undertaking the first or second year of a three-year BA Degree and students undertaking a Year Abroad

Where the illness or grave cause has only affected a single or small part of the assessments undertaken, up to 25% of the Tripos Part or all course assessments may be disregarded.

For Tripos students, where the allowance is granted the Examiners will always disregard the affected assessments. For postgraduate students, if the allowance is granted, the Degree Committee must also agree that the award can still be granted with the relevant assessment components missing. If the Degree Committee do not grant this allowance, then the student will be offered reassessment instead.

Where the Examiners are disregarding and recalculating results, only whole assessments can be removed – e.g. not individual questions. However, where a Paper mark is a combined mark from coursework and an exam, just the impacted component can be removed (e.g. just the coursework or just the exam). The Chair of Examiners or Senior Examiner will be consult with at least one other Examiner when determining the recalculation of the student's results by disregarding the affected assessments. This may or may not result in a change of award, class, or ranking.

2.7 Reassessment for Classed Degree

For students in their final year of a three-year Tripos, or undertaking an integrated masters course as the fourth year of Tripos

Where a student has been impacted by illness or grave cause in more than 25% of their assessments, the student will be offered reassessment(s) either during the long vacation or in the first half of Michaelmas Term. The reassessment may or may not take the form of the original assessment(s), for example, a single exam may be set in place of multiple exams, or an alternative type of assessment may be set, such as a portfolio of essays. This will be entirely at the Examiners' discretion. The reassessment will provide the Examiners with sufficient academic material to be able to assess whether the learning outcomes have been met and if so, to provide the student with a Classed Degree.

For students in their final year of a three-year Tripos this will result in an Honours Degree with an Overall Degree Classification (1, 2.i, 2.ii or 3) for the Tripos. Students who receive this allowance will not receive any individual marks relating to the reassessment(s) or Class for the Tripos Part, only an Overall Degree Class (ODC). The ODC will be granted taking account of the reassessment, any results from the Tripos Part, and, at the Examiner's discretion, previous Tripos Parts.

For students undertaking an integrated masters course as the fourth year of Tripos, this will result in an integrated masters degree with the corresponding fourth year Class or 'Pass', 'Merit', or 'Distinction. The ODC received relating to the previous Tripos parts will remain unchanged.

Any reassessment will be timetabled without consultation with the student and will not take account of the student's preferences. However, any exceptional circumstances that would prevent a student from sitting a reassessment at a particular date, should be noted in the exam allowance application, e.g. a scheduled required surgery, and these will be considered.

No additional teaching or supervision sessions will be offered to the student by the University or College, as the student's illness or grave cause will have only impacted the assessment itself, and the reassessment will take place within a few months of the original assessment. The variation of reassessment may have an impact on any course accreditation and this should be discussed with the relevant Department/Faculty.

In cases where the student attended the original sitting(s) of the exam(s) for which they will undergo reassessment, they should be aware that the result(s) received for the reassessment will stand, whether higher or lower than the original result(s). The criteria for an exam allowance requires that the circumstances were so serious that the student was either prevented from attending the exam or from completing a substantive part of the exam, or that they were so unwell that their decision-making capacity was impaired, such that they attended the exam when they were not fit to do so. Where the student has attended the exam, the criteria also require academic evidence that the student was expected to achieve a *significantly* higher mark had it not been for the illness or grave cause. As such, it is considered unlikely that a student's results would go down following reassessment, but students should be aware that this is a possibility when opting to apply for and undergo reassessment.

Important: Students and their Colleges should submit applications for this form of reassessment as early as possible so there is sufficient time to create and deliver the reassessment by the division of Michaelmas Term, if the application is approved.

Exceptions

See section 2.2 for the following Triposes:

- Part II and Part III Mathematical Tripos
- Part III NST Quantitative Climate and Environmental Science
- Part II Computer Sciences Tripos
- Part II Human, Social and Political Sciences (all tracks)
- Part II History and Politics
- Part II Geographical Tripos

2.8 Bespoke reassessment

For postgraduate students

Where a student has been impacted by illness or grave cause for more than 25% of their assessments, or where the Degree Committee has not approved the disregarding of a lower amount, the student will be offered a bespoke reassessment to take place within 3 months of the Committee decision granting a bespoke assessment. The reassessment may or may not take the form of the original assessment(s), for example, a single exam may be set in place of multiple exams, or an alternative type of assessment may be set, such as a portfolio of essays. This will be entirely at the Examiners' discretion. The reassessment will provide the Examiners with sufficient academic material to be able to determine whether the student has met the learning outcomes to receive the academic award.

Bespoke reassessment is not available for extended pieces of coursework, such as a thesis or a dissertation, instead students must apply for an extension, or where more suitable, an intermission. The only forms of coursework which may be suitable for an exam allowance of bespoke reassessment are shorter pieces of coursework (typically completed within a single term) that would ordinarily be permissible for disregarding, but where this is not possible due to the core nature of the assessment. In such cases, a new piece of coursework could be set.

Reassessments will be timetabled without student consultation and will not take account of the student's preferences. However, any exceptional circumstances that would prevent a student from sitting a reassessment at a particular date, should be noted in the exam allowance application, e.g. a scheduled required surgery, and these will be considered.

No additional teaching or supervision sessions will be offered to the student by the University or College, as the student's illness or grave cause will have only impacted the assessment itself, and the reassessment will take place within a few months of the original assessment.

In cases where the student attended the original sitting(s) of the exam(s) for which they will undergo reassessment, they should be aware that the result(s) received for the reassessment will stand, whether higher or lower than the original result(s). The criteria for an exam allowance requires that the circumstances were so serious that the student was either prevented from attending the exam or from completing a substantive part of the exam, or that they were so unwell that their decision-making capacity was impaired, such that they attended the exam when they were not fit to do so. Where the student has attended the exam, the criteria also requires academic evidence that the student was expected to achieve a *significantly* higher mark had it not been for the illness or grave cause. As such, it is considered unlikely that a student's results would go down following reassessment, but students should be aware that this is a possibility when opting to apply for and undergo reassessment.

Exceptions

See section 2.2 for the following courses:

- MASt in Mathematics

2.9 Reassessment at the next planned opportunity

*For all undergraduate and postgraduate students **except** Tripos students undertaking the first or second year of a three-year BA Degree and students undertaking a Year Abroad*

Where students wish to receive a full transcript, rather than an Overall Degree Class (Tripos) or academic award, students can elect to be reassessed at the next planned opportunity, rather than have a Classed Degree or Bespoke Reassessment. This will be alongside the next cohort of students and therefore will normally take place a year from when the original assessment was scheduled. Students will return to Cambridge to undertake the reassessment(s) only; they will not repeat the term in which the impacted assessments occurred.

The student will not receive any further teaching for the reassessment but may receive one revision supervision per paper from their College, usually remotely. The student will be tested on the content that they were taught in the previous year; this may require the Department to produce bespoke papers.

Students will have access to the VLE for one term prior to the reassessment taking place (this timeframe takes into account additional time for reasonable adjustments), e.g. if a student is undertaking reassessment in Easter Term, the student requires access to the VLE from the

beginning of Lent Term. The student will have access to the VLE content for the year of their studies they attended teaching (the content that they will be assessed upon in the reassessment).
In cases where the student attended the original sitting(s) of the exam(s) for which they will undergo reassessment, they should be aware that the result(s) received for the reassessment will stand, whether higher or lower than the original result(s). The criteria for an exam allowance requires that the circumstances were so serious that the student was either prevented from attending the exam or from completing a substantive part of the exam, or that they were so unwell that their decision-making capacity was impaired, such that they attended the exam when they were not fit to do so. Where the student has attended the exam, the criteria also requires academic evidence that the student was expected to achieve a *significantly* higher mark had it not been for the illness or grave cause. As such, it is considered unlikely that a student's results would go down following reassessment, but students should be aware that this is a possibility when opting to apply for and undergo reassessment.

Exceptions

See section 2.2 for the following courses:

- Part III Mathematical Tripos – MMath
- MASt in Mathematics
- Part III NST Quantitative Climate and Environmental Science

2.10 Unclassed Honours Degree (DDH) (allowances 3b(i) and 3c(i)) or Ordinary BA degree (allowance 3b(ii))

For final year Tripos students in their final year of a 3 year or 4 year full-time course

This allowance is only for students who have failed, where more than 25% of the assessments have been impacted and the student cannot undertake a reassessment (section 4.4 or 4.6).

Where there is sufficient academic evidence that the student would have achieved at least a Class III, but for the illness or grave cause, the student can be declared to have deserved honours and receive the award of an honours degree (DDH).

Where there is only sufficient academic evidence that the student would have passed the examination at Part II, IIA or IIB, the student can be granted an Ordinary BA degree.

DDH is not a classed award and may not be acceptable for some professional requirements. Students should consider the long-term implications of a DDH, rather than a reassessment, which requires explanation, for example to prospective employers.

Additional criteria for the exam allowance

- Residency requirements for the degree e.g. a B.A. degree is 9 terms (3 years).

What appears on the transcript?

In addition to the information in 2.3:

- 'Declared to have deserved honours' appears on the student's academic transcript as the result for that examination.
- 'Ordinary BA Degree', appears on the student's academic transcript as the result for that examination, the degree awarded on a transcript is titled 'BA Degree (Ordinary).

2.11 Exam allowance remedies - attendance of congregation (graduation ceremony) and progression to further study

This section only applies to those students who wish to apply for an exam allowance and have also:

- **passed** their course, and are therefore eligible to attend a graduation ceremony; and/or
- been offered a place on new course of study.

Whether a student should graduate or proceed to the new course in these circumstances depends on the remedy they wish to apply for via the exam allowance process.

Disregard a paper

Where 25% or less of the assessed/weight-bearing elements of the Tripos Part or Course have been impacted by illness or grave cause, the available remedy, where a student meets the criteria for an exam allowance, will be to disregard the affected assessment(s). Where a student has passed, in spite of this impact, they may proceed to graduate and still be eligible to disregard the paper. This is because the remedy only requires a recalculation of the student's existing results without reference to the impacted papers; it does not require the student to undergo further assessment for the course.

Postgraduate students should consider that although the sum of the impacted assessments may be 25% or less of the overall assessed components in their course, if the Degree Committee does not grant approval for the assessments to be disregarded, they will be required to undergo reassessment, in which case, the below applies.

Reassessment

Where more than 25% of the assessed/weight-bearing elements of the Tripos Part or Course have been impacted by illness or grave cause, the available remedy, where a student meets the criteria for an exam allowance, will be some form of reassessment. Where a student has passed their course, in spite of the impacted assessments, they should not graduate if they wish to remain eligible to undergo reassessment; once a student has attended a congregation (graduation ceremony), and their degree has been conferred, it is not possible to undertake further assessment for that degree.

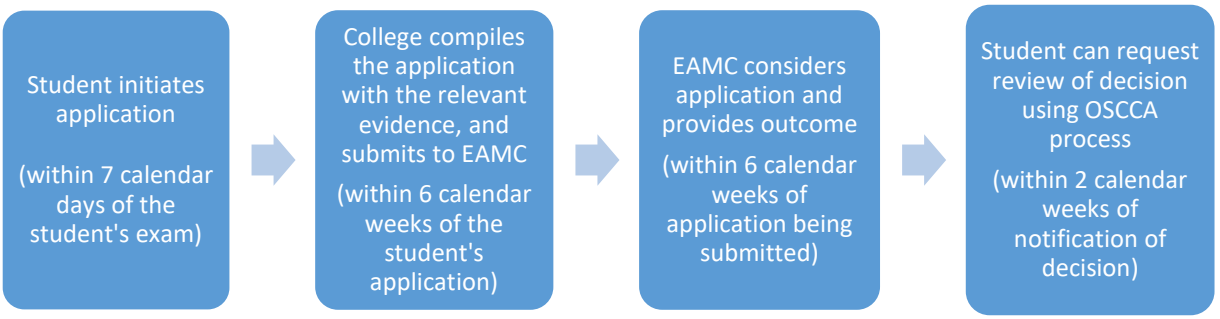
Similarly, if a student has an offer of further study at the University of Cambridge, and the relevant Department is willing to admit them on the basis of their original results (prior to the exam allowance or any reassessment), then the student is able to progress onto the next course of study, however, in doing so, will be ineligible for reassessment associated with the previous award once the new course has begun. It may be possible to undertake bespoke reassessment before the new course begins, but this will depend on how early the application was submitted, the outcome, and how soon the reassessments are able to take place. Where a student requests reassessment alongside the next cohort, this will not be possible if the student proceeds onto another course of study at Cambridge in the same year the reassessments are due to take place. In this case, the student will need to weigh up whether to attempt to delay entry onto their next course of study, in order to undertake the reassessment, or whether to forgo reassessment and proceed onto the next course, accepting their current results.

Where a student has an offer of further study at a *different* institution, it will be up to that institution whether the student may be permitted to undertake reassessment at Cambridge alongside the new course.

3. How to make an application

3.1 General information

Applications for exam allowances are submitted by email to EAMC@admin.cam.ac.uk by a College on the student's behalf (via their Tutor) or via direct application from a student.



Flow chart of process and timings

Student action – within 7 days of the exam

The student has 7 days to submit the Student Exam Allowance Form to the College from the date of the exam impacted or, where there are multiple exams in close succession, 7 days of the final exam for that period.

College action – within 6 weeks of receiving the Student Exam Allowance Form

The College then has 6 weeks from the date of receiving the Student Initiation Form to submit the application and all accompanying evidence to EAMC@admin.cam.ac.uk.

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

- the completed Student Initiation Form, including signed Student Declaration;
- a completed and signed College Exam Allowance Application form;
- a statement(s) from the College and/or student outlining the circumstances;
- evidence of the illness or other grave cause (outlined in section 1.5);
- the full student support document (SSD), where applicable, to include all disability information and document sections
- academic evidence (outlined in section 1.6). Academic evidence should be provided in chronological order, **most recent first.**

Important: Where an application has implications for the student's continuation on their course, progression onto another course, or employment prospects, Colleges and students are advised to submit the application as early as possible. This is to allow time for the consideration of the case, the outcome to be shared, and, if necessary, for the student to submit a Review of the decision. Where a Review is upheld, the application must be referred back to the Committee for reconsideration. This process can take several months in total and therefore it is advisable to submit applications which have impacts for the upcoming academic year as soon as possible after the exams conclude. Similarly, if a student wishes to undertake reassessment in the long vacation the student and College should endeavour to submit the application as soon as possible to allow the application to be considered and, if approved, time for the bespoke reassessments to be created and delivered by the division of Michaelmas Term.

Direct applications from the student – made to the University within 7 days of the exam

All students are encouraged to submit an allowance application through their College, so that the College can provide administrative support and factual information relating to the application. However, it is possible for a student to make a direct application to the University (without engagement with the College), for example, if the student does not wish to communicate with their College. In such a circumstance, the student will need to submit the Student Initiation Form directly to EAMC@admin.cam.ac.uk within 7-days of the exam or the final exam in the relevant exam period. The student must then supply the following within 6 weeks of submitting the Student Initiation Form:

- a student statement outlining the circumstances;
- a completed College/Student Direct Exam Allowance Application Form – the student should add the relevant information as directed by the form, leaving College signatures blank;
- evidence of the illness or other grave cause (outlined in section 1.5);
- the full student support document (SSD), where applicable, to include all disability information and document sections
- academic evidence (outlined in section 1.6). Academic evidence should be provided in chronological order, most recent first (where a student has not been able to obtain a copy of their Supervision reports from the College, this will be requested on the student's behalf).

Where a direct application is received from a student, the student's College will be informed of the application and the allowance requested, as well as the outcome in due course. The College will be asked to supply further information for the application where relevant, e.g. all supervision reports, or confirmation of relevant College action. The impact of this further stage is likely to result to an extension of the normal six-week turnaround time.

Students are encouraged to seek support and make their College aware of any direct application submitted. Failure to keep the College informed, including where the Review procedure is initiated, may affect future provision (e.g. accommodation) should the exam allowance be granted.

3.2 College and student statements

Where an application is made by a College on the student's behalf, it is expected that the student's Tutor or Senior Tutor shall provide a statement. The College may wish to draw attention to any matters which it would like to be taken 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. Statements will not normally exceed one side of A4.

Where the student's illness or grave cause will affect the next year of their studies, an application for intermission may also be required, see Guidance notes on intermission.

3.3 Action following the submission of an application

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

Details of EAMC meetings and application submission deadlines can be found here. An application will be considered at the next upcoming meeting for which it has met the application submission deadline.

3.4 Applications where the student or College deadline has been missed

Applications received outside of this timeframe are highly unlikely to be accepted. It is expected that where a student is unable to make their own application in the timeframe (e.g. they are in hospital) that the College will make an application on their behalf within the permitted timeframe.

Where the student or College considers there is a truly exceptional and valid reason for late submission of an application that is independently evidenced, an application can be submitted with the explanation and evidence attached. This must be as soon as possible after the missed deadline. The application will be considered by the Secretary of the Committee in the first instance and the allowance will only be considered by the Committee where the late submission has been accepted. Otherwise, the confirmed decision will be that the application is out of time. The student will have an opportunity to seek a review of this decision.

Where a student is delayed in submitting the Student Initiation Form, an exceptional, valid and evidenced reason for the **full** period of the delay will need to be provided.

Example: A student's last exam was on 8 June, therefore, their deadline for initiating an exam allowance was 15 June. The student does not submit the Student Initiation Form until 30 June. In this case, the student not only needs to provide an exceptional, valid and evidenced explanation for why they could not submit within the usual 7-day timeframe (i.e. by 15 June), they also need to demonstrate an exceptional, valid and evidenced for why they could not submit the form until 30 June.

Student Initiation Forms submitted after the student's results are known are highly unlikely to be accepted and will require strong evidence that the student could not have initiated the application any earlier than the date it was submitted.

A lack of awareness of the existence of exam allowances will not normally be considered a sufficient reason for delayed initiation of an application; students have access to information about exam mitigation online and are expected to reach out to their College Tutorial and/or Welfare staff to contemporaneously report any circumstances which affected their attendance of or ability to complete an exam, and, through doing so, it is expected that they will receive the applicable information about the exam allowances process, should they not already be aware.

4. The consideration process for exam allowance applications

4.1 The Examination Access and Mitigation Committee

The Examination Access and Mitigation Committee (the Committee) is a committee of the General Board, which typically meets monthly throughout the year (and more frequently during the summer) to consider applications for adjustments, allowances and related matters. Its membership includes representatives from across the Collegiate University 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 Committee 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 Committee has the following overarching aims:

- To grant remedy where students would otherwise be substantively disadvantaged by disability, illness or grave cause in relation to their study or 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 Committee.

Correspondence relating to exam allowances must take place using 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 Committee receives copies of applications a week before the meeting. Prior to the meeting, the Secretary may contact the Department or Faculty for further information.

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

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

Where a student who has already been granted one exam allowance applies for a second or further allowance, each application will be considered on its own merits. In awarding multiple allowances, the Committee 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.

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 Outcomes

Once the Committee has made a decision, an outcome letter will be sent to the College and the student via email.

The Committee's Secretariat endeavours to issue outcome letters within 10 working days of the meeting at which the application was considered. However, during peak times, particularly June to September, it may take up to 15 working days for outcome letters to be issued. The outcomes of applications which impact a student's ability to attend a graduation ceremony or are otherwise genuinely urgent and could not have been submitted earlier by the College/Student, will be prioritised and any request for decisions to be expedited following a meeting should be made clearly in the application.

5. Reviewing exam allowance decisions

Where a student is dissatisfied with the decision in relation to their 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.