Guidance notes for the Conditional Allowance of a Term

Guidance notes for Staff and Students 2026-27

These guidance notes explain the conditional allowance of a term, which can be used by the following students who are required to be resident for a specific number of terms:

- foundation year students
- undergraduate students
- postgraduate students and integrated masters 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

These guidance notes are for applications relating to the academic year 2026-27. The guidance notes complement the relevant Ordinances, which can be found online in Chapter 2, Residence and Precincts of the University in Statutes and Ordinances.

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1. Criteria for granting conditional allowance of a term

1.1 What is conditional allowance of a term?

For students who have lived outside of Cambridge for more than 20 days in a term (or 17 days in Easter Term) due to illness or grave cause but do not wish to intermit, a 'conditional allowance of a term' must be granted in order for a student to continue on the course.

Where students have lived outside of Cambridge due to intermission, leave to work away (postgraduate students) or a year abroad, permission has already been granted to live outside of Cambridge and no further permission is required.

Students who have lived outside of Cambridge without permission for reasons other than illness or grave cause may be withdrawn from their course, as they will be ineligible to sit exams or receive their degree.

1.2 Who can receive conditional allowance of a term?

Students on the following courses can receive conditional allowance of a term as they are required to be resident in Cambridge for a specified number of days each term, and attend for a specified number of terms before being awarded the degree:

- the Foundation Year;
- all Undergraduate courses;
- the following Postgraduate or integrated masters courses: EMBA; LLM; MAcc; MASt; MBA; MCL; MEng; M.Fin; MMath; MMus; MSci; PGCE, MArch.

1.3 Maximum number of terms permitted to be allowed

Students can have up to two terms 'allowed' in total, where the attendance requirement for the course is at least six terms (at least two academic years). Where courses have an attendance requirement of fewer than six terms, a maximum of one term may be granted to a student.

1.4 How many days are students required to be resident in Cambridge in a term?

In order to 'keep term', students are required to be resident in Cambridge for not less than three-fourths of every term (resident for at least sixty days in Michaelmas Term, sixty days in Lent Term, and fifty three days in Easter Term). Where a student has not 'kept term', then an application can be made to have that term 'allowed'.

The Statutes and Ordinances states the following dates for each term.

- The Michaelmas Term shall begin on 1 October and shall consist of 80 days, ending on 19 December. The Lent Term shall begin on 5 January and shall consist of 80 days, ending on 25 March or in any leap year on 24 March. The Easter Term shall begin on 10 April and shall consist of 70 days ending on 18 June, provided that in any year in which full Easter Term begins on or after 22 April the Easter Term shall begin on 17 April and end on 25 June.
- Full Term shall consist of three-fourths of the whole term, reckoned from the first day of Full Term as hereinafter determined.

In all cases, the application will need to demonstrate that the applicant has been resident as much as practicable during Full Term in the term applied for. If the student commenced residence later than the commencement of Full Term in the term applied for, the reason

must be stated in the application. Any application for the allowance of a second term should give the reason, even if this is the same as that of the prior application.

1.5 What is illness or grave cause?

An allowance of a term can only be granted where a student has not been resident for the required number of days as a result of illness or grave cause.

Illness or grave cause is:

a) serious;
b) unanticipated;
c) entirely beyond the student's control;
d) evidenced by contemporaneous evidence from an independent, appropriately qualified source

1.6 Examples of illness or grave cause

Where the circumstances meet the criteria set out at 1.3 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;

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;
- poor time management;
- minor transport disruption.

1.7 Evidencing illness or grave cause

As outlined in the criteria in section 1.5, contemporaneous evidence from an independent, appropriately qualified source must be provided in order to be granted a conditional allowance of a term.

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 ability to be resident in Cambridge. 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 time out of residence 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 causing the periods of non-residency.

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. 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, and a nurse is qualified to report medical symptoms.

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.

2 How to make an application

2.1 General information

Applications for conditional allowance of a term are submitted by email to EAMC@admin.cam.ac.uk by a College on the student's behalf (via Tutor or wellbeing advisor).

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, including Student Declaration (found at the bottom of the application form);
- a statement(s) from the College and/or student;
- 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.
- All available supervision reports for the academical year within which the requested term to be 'allowed' falls.

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 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.

2.2 College and student statements

Where an application is made from 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.

3. The consideration process for conditional allowance of a term applications

3.1 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 applications 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.

3.2 General overview

The Committee receives copies of applications a week before the meeting. Prior to the meeting, the Secretary may contact the Department/Faculty or College for further information.

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

3.3 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.

3.4 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.

4. 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.

5. Questions and further information

Any queries should be directed to eamc@admin.cam.ac.uk.