Contact: eamc@admin.cam.ac.uk

Guidance 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

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 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 or a 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 the permitted self-certification period, or where the course restricts or does not permit self-certification, this process can be used.

In cases where a student knows they would like to apply for an extension which exceeds the permitted self-certification period, they must still apply for this prior to applying to the EAMC for a further extension.

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. Where the student has been substantially impacted by illness or grave cause, a break from studies (intermission) may be necessary, as the student can return at a later date to engage with study when not impacted by the illness or grave cause. If a student decides against intermission and the student subsequently fails or performs poorly in exams, then there is no option to compensate or remedy this result.

2.2 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, 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.

Where the College has requested an extension to the submission deadline, **until an outcome has been sent by the EAMC, the original deadline stands and the student should adhere to the original deadline wherever possible (even if this means submitting partially completed work).**

If work is submitted after the original deadline, the student may initially receive late penalty marks, which may be removed if an extension is granted in due course. Similarly, if a student submitted partially completed work on the original deadline, and is subsequently approved to receive an extension, they may submit a revised document on the requested deadline.

Colleges are encouraged to inform the Department that the student has submitted an extension request (there is no administrative capacity for the administrators supporting the EAMC to do this as the application is received). The EAMC, if the application is approved, will inform the Department of the new extension deadline.

Where an extension is requested but it is not possible for the student to receive an outcome in advance of the requested deadline (for example, it's a short extension request or the application needs to be considered at a full meeting of the Committee, which may be a few weeks away), the student/College should contact the Department about the submission of a revised version of their work on or before the requested deadline in case the application is subsequently approved (though there can be no guarantee that it will be).

Unless requested in the application form, and approved, the submission time for the extended deadline will be the same as the original submission, e.g. if the deadline was on x date at 5pm, the new date will also have a deadline of 5pm on that date.

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.

Where the circumstances meet the criteria set out at a)-e) 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 viral illness that affected the student for a few days around the submission deadline, therefore preventing them meeting the original deadline;
- 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 around the time of submission;
- significant illness or death of a close family member (for example, parents or siblings) or friend shortly before the submission deadline;
- illness of a family member or dependent that leads to unexpected caring responsibilities during the submission period 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 submission period that is so substantial, it prevents the student from progressing with work;
- 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 submission period in question, and therefore, the event would not have had an impact on the student's ability to complete their work, without additional evidence of the substantial impact on the student's mental health ;
- assessments that are scheduled close together;
- misreading the submission deadline;
- 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 – students are recommended to back up all of their work onto a cloud-based system, rather than on their hard drive;
- 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.

2.4 Evidencing illness or grave cause

The criteria in section 2.2, requires contemporaneous evidence from an independent, appropriately qualified source in order for an extension to be granted.

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 coursework preparation and/or submission. 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 submission 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 coursework.

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 start of the coursework. Only

unanticipated worsening or changing of the condition close in time to the submission deadline will 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.

3. How to make an application

3.1 General information

Applications for extensions are submitted by email to 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.

3.2 Deadlines

The application for an extension must be submitted to the EAMC prior to the original submission deadline. Where an application is made at least 72 hours in advance of the submission deadline, the EAMC will attempt to provide a decision prior to the deadline if the matter is straightforward.

Late applications
If an application is received late (following the submission deadline) then there must be a valid and evidenced reason for lateness. In this circumstance, the Secretary will consider whether the reason given is valid and evidenced (for example, the student was unexpectedly hospitalised on the day of the submission and not discharged until the following day, the application was received on this date, alongside the discharge record). It is not appropriate to submit a request for an extension based on the provisional or formal coursework mark.

If the criteria are met, then the application will be considered in the usual way. If the criteria are not met the application will be declined at that point. This decision will be eligible for review under the Procedure for the Review of Decisions of University Bodies, see *Section 5*.

Consequences of not applying for an extension
Where the student has not submitted coursework because of illness or grave cause, then an application for an extension must be made unless the student intermits. It is highly unlikely any other remedy will be available, as exam allowances are not granted where an extension would have provided a remedy and the student was capable of applying for one. Without an extension, the student will have the impact of the non-submission on their academic record.

3.3 Application requirements

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

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.

3.4 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.

4. The consideration process for extension applications

4.1 The Examination Access and Mitigation Committee (the 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.

4.2 General overview

Students can expect an application to be considered either, as soon as possible under Delegated Authority, or at the meeting following the meeting deadline.

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, and any previous applications that have been made to the Committee.

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.

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

5. Reviewing extension decisions

Where a student is dissatisfied with the decision in relation to the 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 should be directed to eamc@admin.cam.ac.uk.