

Considering requests for extensions in submission of summative coursework



Summary			
The document provides guidance to staff in schools when considering requests for extensions for the submission of summative coursework from students.			
Scope - This document applies to:			
Coursework extension requests in undergraduate programmes; although the guidance may apply to taught postgraduate programmes, at the discretion of the school.			
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Guidance for Schools on Considering Requests for Extensions in the Submission of Summative Coursework

Please see the [University policy on student absence and circumstances](#) in relation to the submission of summative coursework. This guidance primarily relates to undergraduate programmes, but may be applied in taught postgraduate programmes, at the discretion of the school.

1. Process for requesting extensions to summative coursework deadlines

1.1 The process by which an extension to a deadline for the submission of summative coursework may be requested should be determined as follows:

- i. A formal institutional-level process and form for requesting an extension is required for coursework that contributes more than 25% to the unit mark and is set well in advance of the deadline. Evidence of the reason for the extension is required.
- ii. The process for students to report and schools to consider any circumstances that affect the submission of coursework that contributes 25% or less to the unit mark is at the discretion of the school, which may manage requests on a case-by-case basis or adopt the process outlined in (i). Evidence should only be required for exceptional cases where multiple extensions are being or have been requested.

Schools should inform students of the process or processes that are in place to request an extension to submit coursework in its units.

1.2 Students should not use the process as a mechanism for notifying or disclosing to the University, for the first time, any inherent difficulties or circumstances that are affecting them. If a student discloses a particular issue (e.g. a disability) in their request for an extension, a designated person in the school, (e.g. the relevant Senior Tutor), should follow the issue up with the student, providing advice and sign-posting them to support as necessary (e.g. to Disability Services). Additionally, students should use the extenuating circumstances process to alert their board of examiners to any wider impact of a circumstance on their performance in assessment.

2. Submission of a request

2.1 Students should make a formal request for an extension to the school that owns the unit, with evidence if required. A request for an extension to the deadline for coursework that contributes more than 25% of the unit mark should be made via the completion and submission of the University's extension request form [link to be added].

2.2 Students must submit the request before the original deadline for submission, except in exceptional circumstances (see section 4). Schools may choose to specify an exact time/date that a request must be received by, to allow time to consider the request and respond to the student before the original submission deadline.

2.3 The student does not have to submit evidence at the same time as the request but must provide evidence by a date set by the school - within seven days of the receipt of the form is suggested. Any agreed extension is subject to receipt of that evidence.

3. Considering requests

3.1 Schools should have in place a team that is responsible for considering requests; this role will normally be undertaken by the school office, in consultation with academic members of staff.

- 3.2 In determining whether to provide an extension, the team should consider whether the reason provided (i.e. the circumstance experienced or being experienced by the student):
- is directly affecting or affected the ability of the student to submit the coursework by the deadline;
 - is having or has had a significant impact on study between the time the coursework being set and the deadline, which reasonably prevents the student from completing and submitting their coursework by that deadline;
 - could not have been foreseen.
- 3.3 A circumstance may relate to a student's physical health, mental wellbeing and/or be of a circumstantial/ personal nature.

Evidence

- 3.4 Evidence of the reason for the extension request is required for coursework that contributes more than 25% to the unit mark. For coursework that contributes 25% or less to the unit mark - no evidence is required, but schools reserve the right to request evidence in exceptional circumstances where multiple extensions are being or have been requested.
- 3.5 Evidence may take various forms; but must be independent and sufficiently detailed to support the narrative provided by the student. Evidence of a medical condition may include a copy of a prescription or a NHS 111 report. Where an illness has not or cannot be assessed by a doctor, a medical note is not sufficient evidence of the impact of the circumstance.
- 3.6 Evidence should be contemporaneous; however, students may refer to previously submitted evidence of chronic conditions or persistent circumstances and/or submit 'non-contemporaneous' evidence where it is still relevant to the reason for the extension request.

Circumstances with a minimal impact; extension will not be granted

- 3.7 Deadlines are set such that students, in planning their work, are expected to be able to work around or factor in the potential for short disruptions to their study. Extensions will not be granted for reasons/circumstances that are perceived as having a minimal effect on a student's ability to submit coursework in relation to the time the coursework has been set and the deadline, unless it can be shown and evidenced that the circumstance has had a significant and disproportionate effect on the ability of the student to submit the coursework by the deadline.
- 3.8 As a guide, a 'short disruption' is deemed to be where a full-time student has experienced a circumstance that prevents them from studying for seven days or less where the coursework has been set at least seven weeks in advance of the submission deadline (pro-rata for students who study part-time).

Examples of circumstances that are considered to normally have a minimal impact include:

- Common (or 'day-to-day') illnesses such as a common cold, headache or migraine
- Acute medical episode that does not have any long-term effects, such as gastroenteritis
- Being involved in a road traffic incident that does not cause any injury
- Circumstances that are foreseeable or preventable, such as travel or personal computer problems
- Paid or voluntary employment commitments
- Proximity to other assessment deadlines

- Non-diagnosed occasional anxiety or stress
- Chronic conditions, including mental health, for which a reasonable adjustment has already been made, unless the condition has worsened, or the adjustment is considered insufficient

Circumstances with a significant impact; extension will be granted

3.9 Some circumstances will significantly disrupt a student's study for a period of time (as a proportion of time between the coursework being set and the submission deadline) and therefore their ability to submit work by the deadline. It is reasonable to grant an extension to a submission deadline as appropriate mitigation for reasons/circumstances that are perceived as having a significant effect. Examples include:

- Sustained common illness, such as a lower respiratory tract infection (e.g. pneumonia)
- Acute medical condition with long-term effects, such as a bone fracture, that impairs the student's ability to study
- Chronic medical condition, such as glandular fever, for which a reasonable adjustment has yet to be applied or where the condition has recently worsened
- Physical trauma where a student has been admitted to hospital
- Emerging mental health difficulties, such as generalised anxiety disorder or clinical depression, which are yet to be managed by professional support
- Being the victim of a crime, which is likely to have a significant emotional impact
- Recent bereavement or serious illness of a person with whom the student has a close relationship
- Interruption or unexpected changes in caring responsibilities
- Jury service

3.10 The circumstances listed in 3.8 and 3.9 are provided purely as a guide, since, by their nature, any one circumstance may range in its complexity and in its effects on an individual student.

3.11 In cases where teaching or study of a cohort of students or individual student has been disrupted by an event outside of their control, such as staff undertaking industrial action, a school, in consultation with the faculty, may separately determine that appropriate mitigation is to provide an extension to a submission deadline for the affected students. In such cases, the student(s) should be informed of the decision and neither the submission of a formal request nor evidence is required.

Disability

3.12 A disability / learning difficulty that impacts upon a student's ability to submit by the deadline should be considered separately from this process: a disabled student would normally only seek an extension if the effect of their disability has worsened or if any existing reasonable adjustments are insufficient.

Length of extension

3.13 Where it is agreed that appropriate mitigation for a circumstance is to provide an extension, the agreed length of that extension should broadly be commensurate with the period of time that the student was impacted by the circumstance.

- 3.14 An extension of around seven days will normally be granted to ensure that a student's learning is not held up; however, where a circumstance has had a serious impact upon a student, then a longer extension of up to a maximum of 21 days may be agreed.
- 3.15 Where a circumstance demands an extension beyond 21 days, consideration should be given to a suspension of studies or permitting the student to attempt the assessment without penalty at a later date.

Informing student of the outcome

- 3.16 Schools should consider the request and provide a formal response to the student, ideally before the original coursework submission deadline.

4. Students who miss the deadline for requesting an extension

- 4.1 Where no extension has been granted, students should be encouraged to submit their work as soon as possible. Late coursework is subject to a penalty in the form of a reduction in their mark for the assessment, in accordance with faculty policy [note: an institutional policy on penalties has been agreed for implementation from 2019/20].
- 4.2 Students may experience a circumstance but not be aware of the severity of its impact upon their studies at the time. This includes where they have already submitted the work. In such cases, students may exceptionally bring the attention of the Board of Examiners to the circumstance and present evidence under the extenuating circumstances process.
- 4.3 Additionally, whilst students should inform their school of any absence, particularly where it means they will be unable to submit a coursework by the set deadline, there may be exceptional cases where a student experiences a distressing circumstance and they, for good reason, do not inform the school by the deadline. Such cases should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, where it may be appropriate to either consider it as an extenuating circumstance or grant a retrospective extension after the deadline – depending on the academic requirement to complete the coursework and the ability of the student to complete the coursework within a defined timeframe.

5. Confidentiality

- 5.1 Information provided in the form or any extension request should be confidential to the process. If the information provided in the form raises any serious concerns about a student's mental and/or physical health or safety, Schools should raise them with the Student Wellbeing Service.
- 5.2 If a circumstance is personally sensitive, and distressing to a student and they do not want to disclose the details of the circumstance on the form or by submitting evidence, then they should be advised to contact the school office to arrange for them to talk to an appropriate staff member, who can raise their situation on their behalf, confidentially, and without revealing the details.