



# UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Education Quality and  
Policy Office

## Policy cover sheet

<b>Policy name</b>	Extensions to dissertations and coursework for undergraduate and certain postgraduate courses
<b>Purpose</b>	To ensure a clear and consistent method for students to apply for extensions to submitted work.
<b>Owner</b>	Examinations and Assessment Committee
<b>Contact</b>	educationalpolicy@admin.cam.ac.uk
<b>Approved by</b>	General Board's Education Committee
<b>Approval date</b>	June 2023
<b>With effect from</b>	June 2023
<b>Next review due</b>	June 2025
<b>Version</b>	1.0 final

## Background and drivers

- 1 In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of mitigation measures for assessments were announced by the University which included short-term coursework extensions of up to 14 days arranged locally in Faculties and Departments. Students did not need to submit medical evidence to support applications made on medical grounds and applications for longer coursework extensions continued to be considered by the Exams Access and Mitigation Committee (EAMC).
- 2 It is not known how many short extensions were granted locally.
- 3 Students on certain PGT courses<sup>1</sup> who need a short extension, which would not impact on the dates on which marks can be considered by the Exam Board and Degree Committee, can apply locally. Longer extensions are applied for via CamSIS. This arrangement precedes the pandemic related mitigation.
- 4 The current process for short extensions is done via the EAMC under delegated authority and in consultation with the Chair or Senior Examiner. Departments are holding information locally on outcomes of extension requests. No central system is available to support this. The current process usually takes 2-3 days, but can take longer. Requests for longer extensions are considered by the EAMC at a scheduled meeting.
- 5 In 2021-22, 437 coursework extensions were considered by the EAMC. This number includes those considered under delegated authority and those at a meeting. Appendix A shows the breakdown of those considered by delegated authority only, by department. Departments would be maintaining records of these extensions awarded for their own purposes. Any change to the current process should allow departments to streamline their process and remove risk of retention of sensitive personal data.
- 6 The [OIA Good Practice Framework: Requests for additional consideration](#) recommends self-certification of medical grounds for short extensions (ch. 49– 54).
- 7 The purpose of this policy is to implement a consistent and transparent process to students across departments.

## Policy on managing extensions to coursework

- 1 The current arrangement for certain PGT courses<sup>1</sup> will continue.
- 2 For other PGT courses and UG courses, Faculties and Departments are required to grant extensions of up to 7 days locally, without requiring an application to be submitted to the EAMC. Students may request a period less than seven days which should be managed within the policy. Extensions can be requested for any reason (medical or non-medical) and students can self-certify directly to Faculties and departments with no requirement for evidence to be provided.
- 3 Self-certification is in-line with arrangements in most workplaces, where employees are generally allowed to report their own absences and to self-certify short periods of illness.
- 4 Applications for longer than 7 days should continue to be made to the EAMC. Current guidance notes for applications to the EAMC can be found [here](#).
- 5 Faculties and Departments should review deadline applications regularly to ensure that any requests for extensions can be accommodated within the usual marking windows.
- 6 Faculties and Departments should identify instances where extensions are only possible for less than 7 days, for example, where the current deadline is 5 days before an Examiners meeting. In these cases, a maximum number of extension days should be considered, and these must be clearly communicated to students at the start of the academic year and visible through Course Handbooks or similar. If a request for an extension exceeds that period, an application to the EAMC is required and the student may be required to submit an application to the EAMC, and an allowance may be required.

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<sup>1</sup> MPhil by Advanced Study, MEd, MRes and CPGS

- 7 Faculties and Departments should identify instances where an extension is not possible, for example, due to clashes with Exam Board meetings, and these must be clearly communicated to students at the start of the academic year through Course Handbooks or similar. Where a student is not able to meet the published deadline, and an extension is not possible, the student may be required to submit an application to the EAMC, and an allowance may be required.
- 8 Guidance notes for students will be issued by the EAMC annually. These will highlight the implications of self-certifying extensions and the subsequent impact on teaching and other assessments as well as the need to engage with their College for ongoing support, where the reason for the extension is on-going.
- 9 The reason for the extension is not required to be shared by the student and departments should not collect this data unless they can demonstrate a legitimate requirement and data retention policy.
- 10 When completing the self-certification, students will be required to confirm that they have informed their Tutor of the extension. This practice ensures that the College are aware of the extension and where appropriate, wellbeing support can be considered. This confirmation should be included in the application by uploading a copy of an email sent (possible using existing MS Form functionality). If Departments had concerns about additional support needs from this extension, they should contact the student's Tutor directly.
- 11 Faculties and departments should ensure that they have clear mechanisms for managing the extension process for up to 7 days that are easily accessible to students and visible to all College staff who might advise students. A template MS form is available upon request from the EAMC.
- 12 Where possible, self-certification extensions should be submitted before the deadline. Where this is not possible, it should be made at the point of submission of the work.
- 13 Where a course has a number of units which require coursework or submission of work by a specific date (e.g. records of practical work, lab sessions), the Department should consider and communicate clearly how many instances of self-certification can be submitted, before referral to the EAMC. This is to ensure that the process can operate fairly and minimises the risk that it is misused.
- 14 Students who exceed any Faculty and Department limit on self-certified extensions can make an application to the EAMC via their College.
- 15 Where penalties are applied for late submission, these should only be applied after the 7-day self-certification window, providing the student has completed the self-certification form. Where a student has not completed the self-certification form, then penalties should be applied from the original date of submission.