

Support processes for students whose assessments are impacted upon by personal circumstances

Code of practice and guidance

Student and Academic Services

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1. Support processes for personal circumstances

It is each student's responsibility to undertake the required assessments for their programme of study on the dates set by the University. However, the University recognises that students may encounter personal difficulties or circumstances outside of their control that affect their ability to attempt or complete assessment(s). This code of practice provides details of the following processes designed to support students in those situations.

- Five working day extensions
- Missed assessments process
- Exceptional removal of a mark process

1.1 Who is eligible to use the processes?

All undergraduate and postgraduate taught students based at UWE Bristol campuses and at UK partner institutions, as well as postgraduate researchers taking taught modules as part of their programme.

- University Centre Hartpury students should email the Student Advice team at student.advisors@hartpury.ac.uk to check local arrangements.
- Students studying at an international partner institution where UWE Bristol regulations apply need to contact their local administration office or email partnerships.sat@uwe.ac.uk.
- Students studying on one of the postgraduate Diploma programmes – Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC), Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL) or Legal Practice Course (LPC) – should refer to the relevant Blackboard pages.

1.2 Acceptable reasons for using the processes

Acceptable reasons for using the support processes for personal circumstances	Example of appropriate evidence
Serious personal accident, injury or illness (including mental health) of self, close family member or significant other.	Medical certification, hospital letters, hospital appointments, copy of prescription or medication, letter from a counsellor.

Acceptable reasons for using the support processes for personal circumstances	Example of appropriate evidence
Death or anniversary of death of close family member / significant other	Death certificate, order of service, newspaper announcement or corroboration from a member of the student's family. Where appropriate, additional information on the location of a funeral, and any requirements for religious observance may be helpful.
Serious personal disruption: major household problem, fire, burglary, requirement to appear in court victim of a crime, court attendance, relationship breakdown, unanticipated or non-negotiable commitment to duties associated with an elected office, membership of a voluntary organisation or service with reserve forces.	Independent (third party) evidence of serious personal disruption e.g. emergency services, letter of corroboration from the relevant organisation, solicitor's letter, letter from courts or member of the student's family, counsellor, victim support, etc.
Unplanned or unexpected circumstances during pregnancy or for a parent with a baby under six months old: in cases where the student needs additional support beyond that outlined in their pregnancy support plan.	Medical certification (doctor's note, hospital letters, hospital appointments).
Impact of natural disaster: severe weather that prevents attendance or submission, civil disruption or other major hazard (including major breakdown in transport system).	A letter from the police or other authority depending on the nature of the incidence confirming its nature and severity; evidence of flight cancellations, evidence of local conditions (e.g. travel web pages), evidence of road closures.
Major, unplanned and verified changes in work commitments.	Employer letter providing evidence of significant change of employment circumstances.
Highly contagious illness: for example swine flu/norovirus/gastroenteritis where the medical advice is to stay at home and not visit a doctor.	An application may be submitted without evidence if it is not possible to obtain any.
Students who are the primary carer for a disabled person and something unexpected has affected their ability to submit.	Medical certification (doctor's note, hospital letters, hospital appointments). Independent evidence of serious personal disruption e.g. letter of corroboration from the relevant organisation, counsellor, social worker, etc.

Acceptable reasons for using the support processes for personal circumstances	Example of appropriate evidence
<p>Religious observance Scheduled examinations only: where a student misses an examination due to participation in collective worship, abstinence or a ritual.</p> <p>Applications may not be made for any other form of assessment</p>	<p>One or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a letter from a religious leader (giving their title and role) explaining the nature of the obligation and how it impacts on the student; • a personal statement by the student explaining the nature of the obligation and the way in which it impacts on their examination timetable supported by independent evidence such as a published timetable of festivals or events showing the date, time and nature of the observance.
<p>Participation in activities at a national / international level: May be interpreted as including, but not necessarily confined to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sporting events; • artistic fields, the fields of dance, art and design, drama, fashion, literature and writing, moving image and writing; • representing the armed forces. <p>Applies to required absence from the University on the date that the assessment was due to be submitted or the assessment sat.</p>	<p>Official correspondence from the relevant body confirming the requirement to be available on specified dates.</p>
<p>Unique career enhancing opportunity: this should be linked to practice based learning and/or contribute to regional development and entrepreneurialism. It should be relevant to the programme of study and supported by the programme team, and apply to required absence from the University on the date that the assessment was due to be submitted or the assessment sat.</p>	<p>Official correspondence from the relevant employer/programme team confirming the requirement to be available on specified dates.</p>
<p>Verifiable University-wide, site-wide, nationally or internationally wide failures of equipment.</p>	<p>As appropriate to the situation.</p>

1.3 Disposal of supporting evidence

To comply with General Data Protection Regulations supporting evidence will be deleted after a decision has been made about a student's application. However, a record of the type of evidence received will be recorded so if a student makes a subsequent application for the same reasons they would not be required to provide any further documentation.

1.4 Unacceptable reasons for using the processes

- **Colds or known conditions such as hay fever.** Sore throats, sprains (other than in the writing hand/arm).
- **Normal examination stress or anxiety experienced during revision or the assessment period:** unless corroborated by medical evidence as a chronic condition and the student is undergoing treatment.
- **Stress in practice placement.**
- **Non-serious domestic, social or personal disruptions:** moving house, change of job, holidays, weddings, normal job pressure, failed travel arrangements, financial difficulties, oversleeping.
- **Study related circumstances:** equipment failure including computing/printer difficulties (unless they occur in the examination itself), failure to have taken back up copies for work stolen or corrupted, bunching of deadlines/examinations, missing books, poor time management, misreading the examination timetable, taking the wrong examination.
- **Cultural adjustment/assimilation.**
- **Difficulty with the English language.**
- **Different teaching methods in the United Kingdom to a home university.**
- **Anxiety caused by visa issues.**
- **Examination conditions:** disruption in the examination room, excessive noise, behaviour of other students. Normally such conditions will have been reported to the invigilators who will pass the reports onto the faculty to be dealt with as appropriate.

2. Five working day extensions for coursework

2.1 Overview

Students are expected to plan their workload to avoid being impacted upon by a minor illness or other cause. However, they may apply for a five working day extension if a **significant** and **serious** event that prevents submission arises shortly before the published hand-in deadline for an individual coursework assignment.

The maximum period of five working days is required to avoid delaying the provision of feedback to the rest of the cohort, to allow for sufficient marking time and to facilitate the efficient processing of student work, particularly prior to examination boards.

Dates when the University is closed do not count as working days. For example, the University is closed on public holidays so these do not count as working days.

Points to note:

- as the work is submitted after the deadline a student will receive their mark later than the rest of the cohort;
- it is not expected that a student would require repeated changes to deadlines;
- repeated requests for extensions to deadlines would normally activate a detailed review of a disabled student's current support, or to consider whether a student who does not have reasonable adjustments in place, requires them;
- it must be possible to provide parity for all students registered on the module. Granting an extension must not disadvantage other students, or unduly advantage the student who is applying for the extension;
- a student is permitted to submit the work earlier than the expiry date of the extension period if they wish;
- there should be no further extension upon an already granted extension;
- in the case of students with disabilities, if they do not fit the criteria or require an adjustment to their deadline of longer than 5 working days they should be referred to the Disability Service.

2.2 The process for applying for a five working day extension

A student making a request for an extension must be directed in all cases to an Information Point. Extensions may not be agreed between an individual tutor and the student.

If an extension to a deadline is granted the assessed work will be marked as if on time.

The extension request must normally be submitted at least two full working days (48 hours) before the deadline.

An extension request will normally only be considered if:

- a. the request is submitted within the permitted timescale;
- b. relevant third party documentary evidence is attached to the request.

If upon discussion with the student it is discovered that it is not realistic for them to submit, or they chose not to submit, they will still be eligible to use the missed assessments process if appropriate.

Work granted an approved extension must be submitted before 14:00 on the revised deadline date. Students will still have a 24-hour window after the revised deadline in which to submit the work, but will then receive a mark penalty.

2.3 Assessment types and extensions

Due to the type and timing of some forms of assessment it will not be possible for an extension to be given or the maximum extension may be less than five working days. Where the nature of the assessed work is such that an extension cannot be granted, or where the student cannot undertake the task at a different time from the other students without gaining an unfair advantage, and they do not submit or undertake the assessed work, a 'non-submission' will be recorded. The student will still be eligible to use the missed assessments process if appropriate.

A. Five working day extensions are normally available for the following assessment types	B. Five working day extensions are <u>not</u> normally available for the following assessment types
<p>An individual piece of work, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • coursework; • an individual presentation; • an individual viva. 	<p>Group work, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • jointly assessed group work; • a group presentation; • group design review; • a group report for which the same mark is assigned to all contributors.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a poster; • an individual poster presentation. 	<p>Assessments limited by logistical constraints, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assessments to be completed whilst on a field trip; • assessments with a submission date which falls after the Friday before the relevant Field Board; • assessments submitted for marking in a studio by a group of staff at a fixed time (including work for an end of term degree show).
<p>Work associated with practice but only if it is a portfolio or a written submission which includes professional practice evidence (but is not the practice element of a professional practice module).</p>	<p>Practice elements of professional practice modules.</p>
<p>Write up of laboratory work if it is submitted as an individual piece of coursework, but this may need a discussion with the supervisor.</p>	<p>Practical / skills based work, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an assessment taking place within a laboratory; • Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs)

	<p>Where assessments are set up as timed assignments, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • multiple choice questions; • computer based exams; • tests; • timed essays.
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Extensions may not be granted for examinations, **any** resit work or for assessments contributing to the Graduate Diploma in Law.

2.4 Late five working day extension requests

Requests made after the assignment deadline will normally not be considered. If an incident occurs during the two full working days (48 hours) before the deadline and the student provides independent documentary evidence of a situation that demonstrates why they could not meet the deadline then a late request may be considered. An example of such a situation may be an emergency event on the evening before/morning of the hand in. This would normally be a student being unexpectedly confined to hospital for medical treatment. However, there is no guarantee that such a request can be considered.

2.5 Requests that are not accepted

A student will be expected to submit their work by the original deadline (or within the 24-hour window) if an application for an extension request is not accepted. However, a student may still be eligible to submit a separate missed assessments application if they are unable to submit the work.

Missed assessments process

3.1 Overview

A student may use the missed assessments process if they do not submit an assessment or do not attend an examination or other controlled conditions assessment such as a presentation. Students must ensure they have read regulation F1 before submitting an application for a missed assessment.

If a student has chosen to submit an assessment or attend an exam, they have made a judgement they were fit to do so and so cannot apply under the missed assessments process.

Applications accepted for missed assessments will subsequently be rejected if a student goes onto submit their work after making an application.

3.2 Using the missed assessments process

Students are strongly advised to obtain guidance or advice from Information Points or Student Support Advisers prior to submitting their form. Such advice will be limited to the procedures to be followed and the required evidence. The responsibility lies with the student to make the final decision. Staff should avoid attempting to judge the likely outcome of an application submitted under the process.

The Students' Union Advice Centre provides independent advice and assistance with applications for all students: <https://www.thestudentsunion.co.uk/advice-centre/>

Where a student is studying with an academic partner, they should contact their local administration office for guidance.

Applications should be made online via the UWE website. Students who are not able to apply using the online form should contact an Information Point as soon as possible.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the form is completed and that all relevant information is made available to the University. A verbal notification regarding personal difficulties is not sufficient.

When filling out the form, students must ensure they record exactly which assessments have been affected and link this to the modules they relate to. **They must clearly state why the circumstances adversely affected their ability to attend or to submit the assessment, and the reasons given must be linked to the dates of the assessment**

All the following pieces of information are essential:

- personal details - name, student number, award title;
- details of how the circumstances affected the student's studies / assessment and relevant dates and details;
- documentary evidence

Electronic submission is authentication of the signature and confirmation of the date.

A student's application will not be carried forward between assessment opportunities. A new form will need to be submitted which demonstrates that the circumstances are continuing and affecting the student's ability to submit or attend assessments.

3.3 Final deadlines for submission of applications

A missed assessments application should be made in advance of an assessment (see section F1 of the academic regulations). However, if the student's situation prevents this, it must be made as close as possible to the deadline of the affected assessment(s).

There are final deadlines for applying once module teaching and assessment has been completed at the end of each term. These deadlines are published on the [missed assessments process web page](#).

For students studying at international partner institutions where these regulations apply, their local administration offices will be able to provide the final deadline information prior to each examining board period.

Please note: these deadlines do not apply to students studying BPTC/GDL/LPC law programmes.

If a student encounters any problems that might prevent them from applying by the relevant deadline, they should contact an Information Point as soon as possible.

3.4 Making decisions on applications

The University operates a process that has full-delegated authority from Faculty Award Boards to make decisions whether to accept or reject applications.

Professional Services staff will consider cases following the submission of the application. Depending on the nature of the circumstances and evidence provided, the staff member may be able to consider the application or will consult with an academic reviewer before a decision is made.

Confidentiality

All cases and evidence provided must be treated as confidential and a panel may decide to assess cases anonymously.

If a student subsequently appeals or makes a complaint any relevant paperwork may be accessed as part of the investigation.

If a missed assessment application is accepted then the Exam Board may:

- allow a student to resit/retake a failed module where the regulations would not normally permit it. If a retake is permitted the student will need to do all assessments again and a module fee may apply.
- permit the mark from a resit or retake to be uncapped (unless previously capped).
- accept failure to pass a module/s when recommending an award. For further information see the [Exam Board Code of Practice](#).
- recommend an aegrotat award (an unclassified award granted to a student who is unable for reasons of illness or similar incapacity to complete or be assessed).

Acceptance of an application does **not** permit the following:

- an adjustment to the marks for individual modules;
- to allow students who have passed a module to retake it;
- to waive the fees for a retake unless in very exceptional cases which are markedly different from the usual run of cases (see the [fee waiver policy](#) for further information);
- to allow marks for elements of assessment within a failed component to be carried forward;

3.5 Notification of decisions

The decisions to accept or reject missed assessments applications will be recorded and entered onto the Student Record system. Students will be notified of the outcome via email and any subsequent Award Board action will be available on myUWE following the publication of results.

4 Exceptional removal of a mark process

4.1 Overview

Exceptionally, a student may apply to have their mark for an assessment removed **after** attempting the assessment. This is permitted on only two grounds.

1. The student's circumstances affected their judgement to the extent they were unable to determine that they should not have done the assessment.

Please refer to the table in Section 1.2 which details acceptable reasons for using the personal circumstances processes.

2. The student attended an examination but was taken ill during the event and was unable to complete the assessment.

If a student leaves an exam due to illness, it is their responsibility to inform the responsible person/s.

4.2 Using the exceptional removal of a mark process

Students are strongly advised to obtain guidance or advice from Information Points or Student Support Advisers prior to submitting their form. Such advice will be limited to the procedures to be followed and the required evidence. The responsibility lies with the student

to make the final decision. Staff should avoid attempting to judge the likely outcome of an application submitted under the process.

The Students' Union Advice Centre provides independent advice and assistance with applications for all students: <https://www.thestudentsunion.co.uk/advice-centre/>

Where a student is studying with an academic partner, they should contact their local administration office for guidance.

Applications should be made online via the UWE website. Students who are not able to apply using the online form should contact an Information Point as soon as possible.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the form is completed and that all relevant information is made available to the University. A verbal notification regarding personal difficulties is not sufficient.

When filling out the form, students must ensure they record exactly which assessments have been affected and link this to the modules they relate to. **They must clearly explain how their performance was affected by either of the grounds listed in 4.1.**

All the following pieces of information are essential:

- personal details - name, student number, award title;
- details of how the circumstances affected the student's studies / assessment and relevant dates and details;
- documentary evidence

Electronic submission is authentication of the signature and confirmation of the date.

4.3 Final deadlines for submission of applications

Applications for the exceptional removal of a mark should be made by the student **as soon as possible** after the assessment.

Where this is not possible, there are final deadlines for applying once module teaching and assessment has been completed at the end of each term. These deadlines are published on the [exceptional removal of a mark process web page](#).

For students studying at international partner institutions where these regulations apply, their local administration offices will be able to provide the final deadline information prior to each examining board period.

Please note: these deadlines do not apply to students studying BPTC/GDL/LPC law programmes.

If a student encounters any problems that might prevent them from applying by the relevant deadline, they should contact an [Information Point](#) as soon as possible.

4.4 Making decisions on applications

Exceptional removal of a mark applications will be considered by designated staff or a review group specially convened to make decisions on cases. The group is constituted of staff from across the University to ensure that that each case is treated equitably. The membership of the group will include at least one member of academic staff.

If an application for the removal of a mark is accepted, the mark will be removed and replaced by a non-submission.

This means that the Exam Board may:

- allow a student to resit/retake a failed module where the regulations would not normally permit it. If a retake is permitted the student will need to do all assessments again and a module fee may apply.
- permit the mark from a resit or retake to be uncapped (unless previously capped).
- accept failure to pass a module/s when recommending an award. For further information see the [Exam Board Code of Practice](#).
- recommend an aegrotat award (an unclassified award granted to a student who is unable for reasons of illness or similar incapacity to complete or be assessed).

Acceptance of an application does **not** permit the following:

- an adjustment to the marks for individual modules;
- to allow students who have passed a module to retake it;
- to waive the fees for a retake unless in very exceptional cases which are markedly different from the usual run of cases (see the [fee waiver policy](#) for further information);
- to allow marks for elements of assessment within a failed component to be carried forward;
- if a mark is removed for an assessment where an assessment offence has been committed, the record of the assessment offence will remain.

If an application for the removal of a mark is not accepted, the mark achieved will be retained for that sit/attempt.

4.5 Notification of decisions

Students will be notified of the decision to accept or reject via email and any subsequent Award Board action will be available on myUWE following the publication of results.

5. Late applications

Applications for missed assessments or exceptional removal of marks received after the final deadlines will not be considered unless a student can demonstrate that circumstances beyond their control prevented the disclosure of the relevant factors. Late applications must be received no later than ten working days after the formal notification of the examining board's decision.

In exceptional circumstances, where a student can demonstrate, with the support of independent documentary evidence, that they could not reasonably have been expected to have complied with the University's regulations owing to the specific nature of the issues involved, an application submitted beyond this time frame may be reviewed.

If the student has already provided evidence of a fluctuating condition this may be accepted as the reason for the late application. The University is on notice that the student may be unwell during the year so we do not require updated medical evidence for each episode.

Where appropriate, if the late application is upheld after the relevant examining board has met, the Chair of the Examining Board will be notified and a sub-Award Board convened to reconsider the student's academic profile.