

Extensions to dissertations and coursework. Guidance Notes for Students and Colleges.

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BACKGROUND

In June 2023, the General Board’s Education Committee approved a change in policy for managing extensions for dissertations and coursework, to allow Faculties and Departments to manage short extensions without the need to apply via the Exam Access and Mitigation Committee (EAMC). The policy also allows students to self-certify. This brought the process in line with expectations published in the [OIA Good Practice Framework: Requests for additional consideration](#) (ch. 49-54).

The final policy can be found online [here](#) and in summary, allows students to self-certify for short extensions (up to 7 days) where the course allows. For extensions longer than 7 days, or where the course restricts self-certification, an application is required to be submitted to the EAMC. It is expected that Faculties and Departments will make their policy clearly available to students and staff.

This guidance is issued to support students and colleges in making applications for extensions, including where self-certification is not possible.

The current [processes](#) for certain PGT¹ courses will continue.

¹ MPhil by Advanced Study, MEd, MRes and CPGS

POINTS FOR STUDENTS TO CONSIDER

When considering applying for an extension, either a self-declared extension through a Department or Faculty process, or a longer extension via the EAMC, students should seriously consider:

- The impact of an extension on their other commitments. This might include other pieces of work that have deadlines that would be impacted by this extension, attendance at lectures or lab work, or revision for upcoming examinations. Many of those dates cannot be moved, and multiple extensions may not be approved. An examination allowance is unlikely to be approved where extensions were awarded which impacted other work or preparation.
- For all students, study should be the primary focus of attendance. Engagement with extra-curricular activities is not prohibited and the University encourages students to have a healthy work/life balance. However, participation in extra-curricular activities should not prevent a student from meaningful engagement with their studies and/or impact the student's ability to perform academically. Applications to the EAMC to extend deadlines due to extracurricular activities or commitments are unlikely to be approved.

SELF-CERTIFICATION PROCESS IN DEPARTMENTS

The policy as published now enables students to receive a short extension, of up to seven calendar days, without the requirement for evidence to be submitted.

Faculties and Departments are required to develop a mechanism for students to apply for an extension and details of how to apply should be published in course handbooks (or similar). This information should also include any restrictions to the policy or other criteria specific to the programme. Some examples might include:

- Pieces of work that cannot qualify for a seven-day extension due to marking deadlines.
- A limit on the number of applications for extensions that might be made before an application to the EAMC is required.
- Any processes for extensions for other submitted work, such as lab reports, project work etc.

Whilst an application is required, it is not for Faculties and Departments to make a 'decision' on straightforward applications for extensions, and an application can only be rejected where it falls outside of the published policy. In these cases, the Department will respond to the application indicating why it cannot be automatically approved. Such examples might include:

- Student has not included evidence that they have informed their Tutor of the extension.
- Application made for a period longer than the policy allows.

Students can apply for an extension for any reason (medical or non-medical) and they are not obliged to disclose the reason to the Faculty or Department. Additionally, no evidence of the reason for the extension is required and should not be requested.

WHEN TO APPLY TO THE EAMC

Where an extension is needed for longer than seven days, an application should be made to the EAMC via the College. All applications are considered on a case-by-case basis and decisions on specific cases do not set any precedent for other applications.

Points to note:

- Applications for an extension beyond seven days, or where the Faculty or Department policy cannot consider the extension, must be supported by evidence and reasons for the extension.
- Extensions should allow for the work to be examined in time for the relevant meeting of the Board of Examiners. It is very unlikely that extensions beyond the final Exam Board would be approved.
- Colleges must apply to the EAMC for an extension beyond seven days and should not approach the Chair of Senior Examiner directly.
- The Committee only considers applications made through the College on the student's behalf, as any extension requiring a longer period should trigger welfare support in College. The Committee regards it essential that the student is fully aware of all the documentation submitted by the College.
- Applications must be complete, i.e., include all the required documentation and a tutorial signature.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Applications should include:

- Evidence that there has been an unexpected development in the student's circumstances. Applications based on existing disabilities, or a long-term ongoing condition are unlikely to succeed as the expectation is that appropriate arrangements should already be in place.
- The student may include their own statement or other supporting evidence. It is in all parties' interest that any such statement is clear and concise.
- Evidence must be:
 - Relevant – relating to the time period in question.
 - Contemporary – produced close to the time period affected.
 - Specific – where possible, it should explicitly relate to the impact the circumstances had on the student.

APPLICATIONS

An application should include the following:

- A completed and signed application form.
- Evidence of medical circumstances or other grave cause.
- A signed student declaration form.

Applications should be submitted to eamc@admin.cam.ac.uk as early as possible once it is known an application is needed and by the published deadlines for consideration at a Committee meeting.

Approval of applications for extensions beyond seven days is not guaranteed and it is expected that the self-certifying process will accommodate most students. Where a longer extension is requested, there is no guarantee that this will be approved and students should continue to work to the original deadline until an outcome has been determined.

HOW APPLICATIONS WILL BE CONSIDERED

Applications may be considered at a scheduled meeting of the Committee and there may be a delay whilst the next scheduled meeting occurs.

There may be some circumstances where the case can be considered by authority delegated to the Chair and / or Secretary, however this should not be relied upon and applications should be submitted in line with the EAMC meeting schedule.

Once an application has been considered, either at a meeting of the EAMC or by delegated authority, an outcome will be sent to the College for forwarding to the student. If the student is dissatisfied with the outcome, they can submit a request for a Review.

REVIEW PROCEDURE

Details of the Review Procedure and form can be found [online](#) and requests for review should be submitted on the Review Request form within 14 days of the formal decision being issued. Requests for Review are encouraged to be submitted as soon as possible and not left until the day of the deadline. It is particularly important for this purpose that the College keeps records of when it communicates the Committee's decisions to the students. In instances where the Committee has declined an application or offers an alternative to the allowance sought, it is essential that the decision is conveyed to the student as soon as possible.

The review will essentially be of a procedural nature i.e. the Reviewer will consider whether in reaching its decision(s) the Committee has observed the relevant Ordinances and these Notes of Guidance and whether or not it has come to a reasonable decision in that context. The Review Procedure is the final stage before the student may take their case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

KEY CONTACTS

Self-declaration (Department / Faculty)	Each department should publish their process for extension requests to students. It is advised that this is done in Course Handbooks (or similar). In cases of doubt, Faculty Administrators will be able to advise students.
Making an application to the EAMC	eamc@admin.cam.ac.uk
Complex queries	Jenny.green@admin.cam.ac.uk