

Extensions to dissertations and coursework. Guidance Notes for Faculties and Departments.

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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 include the Exam Access and Mitigation Committee (EAMC). This 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 Faculties and Departments were alerted to this change via the Key Issues bulletin published 20 July 2023. This guidance is issued to support Faculties and Departments in their implementation of this policy.

The term ‘application’ is used throughout the guidance, although the policy does not allow for rejection of standard applications and Faculties and Departments can only reject an extension where the application falls outside of the University or Department published policy.

KEY POINTS FROM THE POLICY

The key points from the policy are:

- The current [processes](#) for certain PGT¹ courses will continue.
- Faculties and Departments are now required to grant extensions to students of up to 7 days locally, without requiring an application to the EAMC². 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.
- Students can submit an application for an extension for any reason (medical or non-medical) and they can self-certify with no requirement for evidence to be provided.
- Reasons for short extensions should not be collected unless a clear, legitimate requirement can be demonstrated, and a data retention policy is in place.

¹ MPhil by Advanced Study, MEd, MRes and CPGS

² See also points 6 and 7 of the published policy.

- When submitting the application, a student must provide evidence that they have informed their Tutor. This would usually be a copy of an email sent although other evidence would be acceptable. If a student does not submit this evidence, then they should be contacted and the extension is not valid until the evidence is provided.
- Faculties and Departments should ensure that there are clear mechanisms for managing the extension process that are easily accessible to students and visible to all College and teaching staff who might advise students.
- Applications for longer than 7 days should continue to be made to the EAMC.
- Faculties and Departments can identify exceptions to the seven-calendar day policy for instances such as (*list is not exhaustive*):
 - where extensions are only possible for *less than 7 days*, for example, where the current deadline is 5 days before an Examiners meeting.
 - where an extension is not possible, for example, due to clashes with Exam Board meetings.
 - 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). In these circumstances, departments should consider and communicate clearly how many instances of self-certification can be submitted in an academic year before referral to the EAMC. In these cases, a maximum number of extension days should be considered.
An example may be where a course requires submission of 8 pieces of coursework throughout the year. A local policy may determine that a student can only have self-certified extensions for 3 pieces of work and if a student requires more, an application is required to the EAMC, even if the extension for the 4th piece is for 7 days or less.

These must be clearly communicated to students at the start of the academic year through Course Handbooks or similar and be available to colleagues who advise students.

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.

TEMPLATE FORM

As identified in the policy, a template form can be seen [here](#). The template can be 'saved as' and fields added or amended as required.

The benefit of using the MS Forms functionality is that it allows the data to be collected in a standard format and can be opened in Excel. However, there is no requirement to use the template, and Faculties and Departments can develop their own systems.

ACTIONS FOR FACULTIES AND DEPARTMENTS

Now that the policy is confirmed, Faculties and Departments should:

- Consider their application process and create a mechanism for students to apply for an extension. Any process must be accessible and easy to navigate to.
- Review applications made regularly to ensure that any extensions can be accommodated within the usual working windows and queries resolved swiftly.
- Update online content that references extensions and any entries in course handbooks.
- Consider any restrictions to the policy appropriate to your course, such as the number of times that an application can be made for an extension³, or any pieces of work that cannot be considered for an application⁴ and ensure that these are clearly presented to students.
- Develop a process for 'rejecting' applications that exceed seven calendar days, ensuring that those applicants are swiftly directed back to their College where an application can be made to the EAMC.
- Ensure that all the teaching staff within the department are familiar with the change in policy and can direct students to it.
- Queries or deviations from the published policy should be sent to eamc@admin.cam.ac.uk in the first instance.

³ See point 13 of the policy

⁴ See points 6 & 7 of the policy