

Applications for Examination Allowances for the Foundation Year course

Guidance Notes for Staff and Students 2023-24

These guidance notes are intended to complement the relevant University Ordinances as they relate to applications submitted to the Committee in 2023-24.

They do not themselves constitute a set of regulations, nor should they be taken to imply that, given a particular set of circumstances, the Committee will automatically reach a particular decision.

The relevant Ordinances can be found online in Chapter III (Examinations) of Statutes and Ordinances. (<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/so/>)

Contents

1. [Introduction](#)
2. [The Foundation Year Assessment](#)
3. [How to make an Application](#)
4. [Warnings](#)
5. [How the Committee considers Applications](#)
6. [Academic Transcripts](#)
7. [Review Procedure](#)
8. [Key Contacts](#)

1. Introduction

1.1 The Examination Access and Mitigation Committee

The Examination Access and Mitigation Committee (EAMC) is a committee of the General Board which meets monthly throughout the year to consider applications for examination allowances and related matters. There is also a large volume of student casework undertaken under delegated authority, much of which involves the expert opinion of its Medical Advisers.

The EAMC has the following overarching aims:

- To endeavour to ensure parity of treatment between applicants to the Committee who share similar circumstances, whilst recognising that each case is individual.
- To be mindful of the interests of students **taking the same examination** *but* who are not applicants to the Committee.
- To ensure that, particularly in relation to disregarding terms and repeating a period of study, an applicant is **neither** advantaged **nor disadvantaged** in comparison with other students.

1.2 Eligibility

The EAMC considers applications for examination allowances from Colleges on behalf of and directly from students on all degree awarding courses that are not postgraduate Research. They also consider applications for students on the Foundation Year.

Guidance notes differ between Undergraduate, Postgraduate course and the Foundation Year. These guidance notes relate to the Foundation Year only.

Guidance notes for other programmes can be found online here [Examination Access and Mitigation Committee | Student Registry \(cam.ac.uk\)](#)

1.3 Purpose of the EAMC

The purpose of the EAMC is to consider the cases of students relating to applications for;

- (a) Examination access arrangements (including adjusted modes of assessment);
- (b) Coursework extensions of more than seven days;
- (c) Disregarding terms;
- (d) Examination allowances
- (e) Consideration of non-standard combinations of papers;

2. The Foundation Year Assessment

Successful completion of the Foundation Year results in the award of the Certificate of Higher Education in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. The regulations for this award can be found in the University's Statutes and Ordinances¹.

To qualify for the Certificate, students must complete and pass the following:

- a) a synoptic written examination of three hours' duration;
- b) written work, consisting of three essays of no less than 2,000 words and no more than 3,000 words in length;
- c) an extended project, of no less than 4,500 words and no more than 6,000 words in length, based on a subject area of interest to the candidate.

Subject to approval from the Board of Examiners, there will be one re-sit opportunity for the examination component (a) and/or submission of one component (b) in July for the following reason:

- candidates that do not pass the course overall.

Subject to approval from EAMC, there will be one re-sit opportunity for the examination component (a) in July for the following reasons:

- candidates whose performance in the first sitting was affected by illness or grave cause.
- candidates who were unable to undertake the first sitting due to illness or grave cause. A re-sit in such instances would be the student's first sitting.

The process of intermission exists to allow students who have been affected by illness or grave cause earlier in the year to take a break from their study and in some cases, repeat terms prior to assessment in the following year.

Students who do not pass the course overall will be determined after the July Foundation Year Exam Board meeting.

An application for a re-sit must be made as an examination allowance and can only be taken where that allowance is approved by the EAMC.

Where a student is permitted to re-sit the examination component (a) following completion of a first sitting, and/or submit a summative essay (b), this second sitting / second submission

¹ [S&O 2023 pg. 575](#)

will be treated in all cases as a first sitting / first submission and therefore the mark(s) received would supersede any previous mark received (even if the first mark were higher).

Students who did not attain 65% after the first sitting due to illness or grave cause would be deemed to have met the requirements for progression to Tripos if they were to obtain 65% following a re-sit. Students who were permitted to take the resit of the examination (a) and/or submit a summative essay (b) because they did not pass the course overall are not eligible to progress to Tripos regardless of whether their resit mark would mean they subsequently obtained 65% overall.

Students who were permitted to take the resit because their final grade was below the 40% Pass threshold are not eligible to progress to Tripos regardless of whether their resit mark would mean they subsequently obtained 65% overall.

Where a student is permitted to sit the exam component (a) as a first sitting in July, there will be no further opportunity for a re-sit.

If the candidate passes the course overall but doesn't perform as well on the coursework components (assessments & project) of the course, counting for 60% overall, they cannot retake the examination. Students that pass the course overall will not be offered any re-sit opportunity to simply improve their mark. This includes students who have attained between 40% and 65% and passed the course but may not have met the requirements for progression to Tripos. There is also no mitigation available for students to be re-examined on the coursework components (assessments & project) of the course.

3. How to make an application

3.1 General information

An application for a re-sit can be made to the EAMC from a College on the student's behalf (via Tutor or wellbeing advisor) or via direct application from a student.

These guidance notes offer detail to support completion of applications for an allowance and students are encouraged to read them to ensure that any application submitted is complete. When submitting a direct application, students are encouraged to seek guidance from their College Tutor, welfare advisor or tutorial office, all of which have extensive experience in gathering the evidence required, compiling, and submitting applications.

Where a direct application is received from a student, the University will inform the student's College that an application has been made, along with the outcome, so that they can prepare for and / or implement any changes arising from the outcome and, where relevant, any

subsequent appeal. However, the information provided in the application by the student will not be shared.

Students are also encouraged to make their College aware of any direct application submitted, as failure to keep the College informed, including where the Review procedure is initiated, may affect future provision (e.g. accommodation) should the allowance be awarded.

In the case of direct applications, students should be aware that Colleges have systems to support students through academic and non-academic issues and students are encouraged to speak to their College to access that support and share any application for allowance.

Where a direct application is made by a student which is then declined by the Committee, the College will not be able to submit a subsequent application on the student's behalf for the same allowance. If necessary, the Review procedure should be followed instead.

Guidance notes must be read and understood prior to applying. If an application is declined on the grounds of it being incomplete or similar, a further application will not normally be considered by the Committee. If necessary, the Review procedure should be followed instead. Sections in the guidance on evidence requirements should be carefully read and ensure that applications submitted meet those requirements.

For all students, study should be the primary focus of attendance. Engagement with extracurricular activities is not prohibited and the University encourages students to have a positive work / life balance. However, it is advised that 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 must be complete, i.e. they must include all the required documentation, and a tutorial signature. If applications are incomplete, they may be returned, which could delay the Committee's consideration. The application may also include any additional information which the College wishes to submit.

Where an application is submitted by the College on the student's behalf, the student may, if they wish, seek to have their own statement or other supporting evidence included. It is in all parties' interests that any such statement is clear and concise. The Committee regards it as essential that the student should be fully aware of all the documentation being submitted by the College.

Applications must also state where a student has been involved in any other University process that affected their exam marks or Class, or are currently involved in any other process that could affect their exam marks or Class, e.g. Academic Misconduct or the Examination Review Procedure. Where this applies, further detail should be provided in the

application form, which details the specific process and the outcome following this, if known. The Committee requires this information to consider applications fully.

Where academic misconduct has been identified and / or marks have been adjusted because of this process or another, it is unlikely that an allowance will be awarded. This is to protect academic integrity and scholarly conduct of the Cambridge education.

An application must include all of the following:

- a completed and signed application form;
- a statement from the College or student
- a completed declaration form, the student giving permission for medical evidence to be disclosed to medical members of the Committee;
- evidence of medical circumstances or other grave cause;
- the full student support document (SSD), where appropriate, to include the disability information and document sections
- any supervision reports available. For courses where supervision reports are not routinely available (e.g. the LL.M.), the College should supply whatever testimony of the student's industry and ability it can. Supervision reports should be provided in chronological order, **most recent first**;
- the profile of marks obtained in any examination attended and in any other formal component of assessment completed throughout the year. It will assist the Committee if the examination timetable and relevant marking and classing criteria are included.

The kinds of circumstances that the EAMC will typically accept under the examination allowances process, and the kinds of circumstances they will typically exclude can be found in [Appendix A](#).

Applications with the goal of improving marks through a re-sit exam will not be considered where the student appears on a list of successful candidates, except under the circumstances outlined above or where the application concerns circumstances pertaining to a student's disability which changed or worsened over the examination in a way that was not predicted, such that any reasonable adjustments made in advance were insufficient.

Completed applications should be sent to the Secretary of the EAMC at eamc@admin.cam.ac.uk. Please note that in fairness to all students and to allow members sufficient time to read the papers, the submission deadline for each meeting of the Committee is strictly observed. Details of meetings and submission deadlines can be found [here](#).

Upon receipt of an application, the Foundation Year Exam Board may be contacted to provide further information. This further information may include details of marks awarded to the student or details on the student's performance to date.

Any student seeking a review of a decision of the Committee should apply via the mechanism available online [here](#).

3.2 Allowances that the Committee cannot apply

The Committee can only apply the examination allowance of re-sit for the Foundation Year and cannot work outside of this remit, including:

- Change the mark for a paper by either adding extra marks or removing marks.
- Award or instruct a Chair of Examiners to change an overall Pass based on how a student might have performed.
- Change or move grade boundaries for an individual student or cohort.

3.3 Evidence

Evidence is required of the mitigating circumstances and that they affected those paper(s) to which the application is made, and not the whole examination. Evidence is also required that the student's academic performance was not as expected in the affected part of the examination, so supervision reports should be submitted. Additionally, for these applications, the student's examination timetable should be included in the application.

Applications received must include academic evidence that the examination outcome would have been different but for the exceptional circumstances and where that evidence suggests:

3.4 Medical Evidence

If the reason for the application is for medical reasons, evidence must be included with the application. The following should be noted;

- The medical evidence should include the nature and severity of the illness; it should state how the condition is likely to have affected the student's examination preparation and / or performance or academic progress. The evidence should be precise and self-explanatory and where available, should offer a clear diagnosis from a medical professional.
- Medical evidence for existing and long term conditions should ideally be obtained **prior** to completion of the examination.
- If a student has an existing or long term condition but has no medical history available, the Committee are unlikely to give the same weight to any evidence which pre-dates an examination.
- Where a student's referral to a specialist medical advisor has been delayed for reasons outside the student's control, this should be made clear.
- If a student is afflicted with a short term or unexpected illness, then evidence should be obtained as soon as possible after the incident. It is expected that the student would see their College nurse and their tutor, and ideally, their GP where practicable. Evidence would then be expected from those sources. Evidence dated and received several weeks after an incident is unlikely to be given the same weight by the

Committee and a full explanation as to why it could not be obtained at the time, or immediately after, should be included in the application.

- Evidence supplied should be complete and relevant.
- Evidence should not be redacted. Where evidence has been redacted, the Committee will be unable to consider the application.
- Evidence must be submitted by the deadline of the Committee meeting at which the College or student would like the application to be considered. The Committee expects to receive evidence from a medically qualified practitioner, for example a doctor's report, preferably from a doctor based in Cambridge. Where appropriate, it will additionally consider evidence from an accredited counsellor. If there is a disability element to the application, the Committee would normally expect to see reference to consultation with the ADRC. In the case of short-term debilitation, the Committee will consider evidence from a College nurse. Statements by College nurses will generally suffice in instances of 'routine' illness and acute medical problems with measurable and visible symptoms
- Evidence is required, as opposed to merely a declaration that the student was debilitated. Supporting letters from relatives or friends, irrespective of whether they are medically qualified, or anecdotal sources of information do not constitute medical evidence and are not acceptable to the Committee.
- The amount of evidence required will vary from case to case. For example, hospital admission will need a shorter explanation than will a less obvious or less serious condition where background information and details of the candidate's medical history may be required.
- Medical evidence should be provided in English. Where a translation has been provided, this should be carried out by an independent third party and not the student.

Strict confidentiality is observed regarding medical evidence. Medical evidence is disclosed only to the medical members of the Committee (although it is accepted that it will also be seen by the Secretary and Assistant Secretary to the Committee and by College staff, if collating the application). Other members of the Committee do not see this part of the application unless the student explicitly asks that they should do so. The student is required to submit a form giving permission for their medical evidence to be disclosed to the medical members of the Committee.

3.5 Evidence of other grave cause

Mitigating circumstances which are not medical may be considered. A grave cause may have a variety of characteristics but will include being (i) unanticipated and (ii) entirely beyond the student's control. In cases relating to grave cause, the Committee would expect to receive evidence from an appropriate professional; the evidence should be independent and should corroborate the College's application. The Committee is not able to consider

evidence from a relative, friend or anyone with a close personal connection to the student or family. All evidence submitted should be complete, relevant, and contemporaneous.

3.6 College Statement

Where an application is made to the EAMC from a College on the student's behalf, it is expected that the student's Senior Tutor or Tutor would normally provide a statement about the application. The College may wish to draw attention to any matters which it would like the Committee to take into consideration. There may be instances in which an additional statement by a DoS is helpful. The Committee pays close attention to the care with which College statements are prepared.

3.7 Deadlines

Applications for allowances should be made as soon as possible, and no later than three months from the date of publication of the outcome of the examination. Applications received after this date will not normally be considered.

4. Warnings

Please see the Guidance Notes on Warnings [here](#).

During the examination period, a College may wish to alert the Committee that a student has experienced a problem. This is called a "warning" and is submitted by the College via CamSIS. No action is taken at the submission stage.

If the College subsequently makes an application to the Committee on behalf of the student, the fact that there was a warning will be disclosed to the Committee. If the College does not make an application, no action is taken on the warning.

Warnings are not disclosed to Chairs of Examiners nor their Examination Boards. This is to ensure that warnings, and the circumstances they describe, are considered consistently by one Committee which has an overview of custom and practice across the University. Examination Boards only consider the academic work presented and mark and class on that basis. If a College then considers that the outcome is not representative of the student's proved ability, the normal procedures for applying to the Committee should be followed.

5. How the EAMC considers applications

5.1 General overview

Members of the Committee normally receive applications seven days before the scheduled meeting. Where necessary a second circulation of applications will be issued, but only in the most exceptional circumstances will the Committee feel able to consider tabled applications.

Prior to the Committee meeting, the Secretary may contact the Chair of Examiners for further information, e.g. information on grade boundaries.

Medical evidence is only sent to medical members of the Committee. If a College has previously submitted a warning about a student during the examination, this fact is now disclosed to Committee members.

In considering the application, the Committee takes into account the evidence submitted, the student's academic performance throughout the year and where applicable during the examination in question, and points raised in the College's statement, any statement from the student and any previous applications that have been made to the EAMC.

Where the medical evidence is considered by the medical members to be weak or unconvincing, the Committee may defer a decision until further appropriate evidence is obtained, or it may propose an allowance other than the one requested, or it may decline the application.

Where the academic evidence, primarily from supervision reports, is considered to be insufficient to support the allowance requested, the Committee may propose an allowance other than the one requested or it may decline the application.

Where a student who has already been granted one examination allowance applies for a second or further allowance, each application will be considered on its own merits. In awarding multiple allowances, the EAMC will have particular regard for maintaining equality of educational outcomes between students in different circumstances.

Where the Committee gives a student permission to disregard terms, this is not considered an examination allowance in this particular context.

5.2 Matters dealt with by delegated authority

Some matters may be dealt with by authority delegated to the Chair and / or Secretary.

In very exceptional circumstances i.e. where a decision cannot reasonably wait until the next scheduled meeting of the Committee and where the case is not straightforward, the Committee may be prepared to consider an application by circulation. If, however, in such circumstances any member of the Committee wishes the application to be considered at a scheduled meeting, then the application will need to await that meeting.

5.3 Outcomes

Once the Committee have made a decision, for those applications made from a College on the student's behalf, an outcome letter will be sent via email to the student's Tutor and College. The College are advised to share a copy of this outcome letter with the student and students will be

notified when an outcome letter has been sent following an application submitted on their behalf.

For those applications made direct from a student, the outcome letter will be sent via email to the student. Where an outcome from the Committee results in a change to the student's academic record, the outcome letter will also be shared with the student's College.

Where an outcome does not result in a change to a student's academic record, only the outcome (not the outcome letter) will be shared with a student's College.

Outcome letters will be issued within ten working days of the Committee meeting at which the application was considered.

6. Academic Transcripts

Allowances made to students do not negate academic achievement. Students should be made aware of this when applying for an allowance.

7. 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 keep records of when it communicates the Committee's decision to the student. 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.

8. Key contacts

Complex queries	Jenny.green@admin.cam.ac.uk
General / preliminary queries	eamc@admin.cam.ac.uk
Making an application to the Committee	eamc@admin.cam.ac.uk
Course related queries	fycourse@admin.cam.ac.uk

Appendix A

Examples of circumstances likely to be accepted	Examples of circumstances unlikely to be accepted
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Serious short-term illness or injury• Worsening of an ongoing illness or disability, including mental health conditions• Symptoms of an infectious disease that could be harmful if passed on to others• Death or significant illness of a close family member or friend• Unexpected caring responsibilities for a family member or dependant• Significant personal or family crises leading to acute stress• Witnessing or experiencing a traumatic incident• A crime which has had a substantial impact on the student• Accommodation crisis such as eviction or the home becoming uninhabitable• An emergency or crisis that prevents the student from attending an exam or accessing an online assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Holidays, house moves or other events that were planned or could reasonably have been expected• Minor illness such as common colds or hay fever, unless the symptoms are particularly severe• Assessments that are scheduled close together• Misreading the exam timetable• Poor time management• Minor transport disruption• Computer or printer failure where the student should have backed-up their work• Normal exam stress• Minor life events, unless the circumstances have had a disproportionate impact

In all cases, evidence is required to be submitted. Details of the evidence requirements can be found in section 3 – [How to make an application](#).