

## UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

### POLICY AND PROCEDURES ON EXTENSIONS AND PENALTIES FOR UNAUTHORISED LATE SUBMISSIONS OF COURSEWORK

This Policy and Procedures on Extensions and Penalties for Unauthorised Late Submissions of Coursework was approved by Senate on 5 June 2024.

The University places a high value on the health and wellbeing of its students and is committed to supporting students during their studies. The University is keen to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to support students in planning their work sensibly and to limit the consequences for students when genuine exceptional circumstances do occur that affect their ability to submit their coursework by the deadline. This policy aims to provide a consistent approach across the University to the consideration of requests for extensions to coursework submission deadlines and the penalty to be applied to unauthorised late submission of coursework by students. The policy is underpinned by a commitment to supporting students in their studies, while recognising the respective responsibilities of students and staff.

This Policy applies to all students studying on any undergraduate and postgraduate taught course regardless of mode of study or delivery<sup>1</sup>.

#### 1. EXTENSIONS FOR COURSEWORK DEADLINES

##### 1.1 What are the responsibilities and expectations?

- 1.1.1 The University expects students to be responsible for their own workload planning and to complete and submit coursework by the due date.
- 1.1.2 Students should note that extensions to coursework submission deadlines may prevent progression to the next academic year and, if towards the end of their studies, may delay graduation.
- 1.1.3 Submitting an extension request does not automatically mean that the extension has been approved. Until the outcome has been confirmed in writing, students should continue working on the assumption that the request has not been approved.
- 1.1.4 Schools are responsible for:
  - Clarifying which assessments will not be eligible for extension requests.
  - Responding to all extension requests as soon as possible and communicating the outcome to the student by email, both in case of the request being approved and in case of it being denied.
  - Ensuring that the School guidance clarifies how extension requests are processed, when students will be notified of the decision, and who has sight of any sensitive information shared by the student.

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<sup>1</sup> This Policy does not apply to postgraduate research students (they should consult the [PGR Handbook](#) for this information).

## 1.2 What are the grounds for applying and granting an extension?

1.2.1 Students who experience illness, accident, or exceptional circumstances that affect their ability to submit coursework by the deadline may apply for an extension. The following list of circumstances may be considered as mitigation for an extension, however each application will be judged on its own merit. The list should be considered indicative and is not exhaustive.

- Illness (whether physical or mental) shortly before a coursework deadline that has a notable impact on ability to complete the assessment;
- Bereavement;
- Sudden illness or emergency involving a close family member, including unforeseen caring commitments;
- Unexpected and exceptional personal circumstances (for example, a serious or traumatic event, being the victim of a crime, etc.);
- Exceptional, unforeseen and unavoidable changes in work commitments;
- Previously agreed upon inclusion adjustments for extensions to deadlines<sup>2</sup>.

1.2.2 The following list of circumstances will not normally be considered as mitigation for an extension:

- A minor illness or injury which would not reasonably have had a significant adverse impact on a student's ability to complete the assessment on time;
- Circumstances which were foreseeable or preventable;
- Holidays;
- Regular and planned work commitments;
- Poor planning and time-management<sup>3</sup>;
- Proximity to other assessment deadlines;
- Minor IT/Computer problems (students should regularly back up their work and make use of library and IT resources)

1.2.3 Students should note that extensions are not available for some assessments such as exams, whether online or on campus, and may not be available for other assessments<sup>4</sup> (e.g. class tests, group projects, practicals, timed assessments, live presentations). Assessments where extensions cannot be granted are detailed in the course information. Where an extension cannot be granted and a student was unable to complete an assignment due to exceptional circumstances, the school will provide guidance on reassessment procedures, in line with

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<sup>2</sup> Students should note that, even if they have adjustments for extensions to deadlines, they should still notify the School when they need an extension by submitting an extension request. However, they are not required to provide evidence or an explanation.

<sup>3</sup> Students experiencing extenuating circumstances and disabled students, including students who are neurodivergent and those with health conditions which may impact their time-management and planning, should contact Student Support to explore the provision of inclusion adjustments such as the adjustment for extensions to deadlines.

<sup>4</sup> Instances where extensions are not available should be agreed with the School Director of Education (or nominee) and a record of assessments where extensions are not available, and why, should be kept by the relevant Education Committee.

Sections 5 and 6 of the [undergraduate](#) and [postgraduate taught](#) Codes of Practice on Assessment.

- 1.2.4 In the case of group assignments, at the School's discretion, it may be possible to grant an extension if all members of a group need this. However, it is normally not possible to grant extensions for individual group members. If a student is unable to submit a group assignment in time, they may be provided with an alternative assignment or be required to take a resit, as outlined in the course information.

### **1.3 What is the timeframe for applying for an extension?**

- 1.3.1 Students will normally be allowed to apply for an extension for a specific piece of coursework during the following timeframe:

- (a) No more than seven calendar days in advance<sup>5</sup>, and
- (b) No later than the due date of the assignment for which the extension is being requested, unless there are extenuating circumstances which have prevented the student from making the application in advance (See 1.3.2).

- 1.3.2 Schools will endeavour to respond to all extension requests before the due date, however this may not be possible if requests are submitted too close to the deadline (See also Section 1.8 on how requests are processed by the School).

- 1.3.3 Students should note that, if an extension request is submitted late and rejected, a penalty for late submission may apply, in accordance with Section 2 of this Policy (Policy on the Penalty for Unauthorised Late Submission of Coursework).

### **1.4 How long can extensions be for?**

- 1.4.1 Agreed extensions will be for the shortest reasonable time to allow the student to complete their assignment while minimising impact on their subsequent studies:

- (a) Extensions will not exceed seven calendar days as a standard<sup>6</sup>;
- (b) Students with adjustments may apply for an additional extension of up to seven calendar days if needed;
- (c) Longer extensions may be possible, at the discretion of the School, only in exceptional circumstances;
- (d) Extension cannot be longer than the feedback due date for that assessment, except in specific situations, e.g. when feedback for individual assignments is not common to all students.

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<sup>5</sup> With the exception of students competing in high performance sports, for whom the [Policy and Procedures on Academic Flexibility](#) applies.

<sup>6</sup> However, there may be some assessments where shorter maximum extensions to deadlines may be applied (e.g. weekly class tests). Course guidance will clarify where this is the case.

## **1.5 How should students apply for an extension?**

- 1.5.1 Students should apply for extensions via the Student Report and Request Tool on the [Student Hub](#) or, where a student is unable to access the Student Hub, the extension request should be sent directly to the School concerned. In some instances, an alternative tool may be used. Where this is the case, students should follow the procedures outlined in the course documentation.

## **1.6 When is supporting evidence required?**

- 1.6.1 Supporting evidence is required for students in UG programme years 3-5 and in PGT programmes.
- 1.6.2 Students with inclusion adjustments for extensions to deadlines are required to submit an extension request. However, in line with the adjustment, they are not required to provide evidence or an explanation for their application. Students should note that they have the adjustment on their extension requests.

## **1.7 What is considered supporting evidence?**

- 1.7.1 In line with Section 2.4 of the [Policy and Procedures on Student Absence](#), appropriate supporting evidence may include (this is not an exhaustive list):
- i. Written evidence from a clinical practitioner who has been providing health assessment/care, including a secondary (e.g., hospital clinic, specialist doctor), tertiary (e.g., highly specialised national or regional centre) or community care service, or a private surgery/clinic, etc<sup>7</sup>;
  - ii. A letter/email from a support service (including services within the University, e.g. Student Advice & Support Team or University Counselling Service, but also an external counsellor), if they have an ongoing relationship with the student and are already aware of the student's circumstances, detailing how the student's circumstances impacted on their ability to prepare for and submit the assessment by the required deadline;
  - iii. A description of the cause, provided by the student, including the impact that it has had on their ability to prepare for and submit the assessment by the required deadline.
  - iv. Other evidence acknowledged by the University to be of a significant nature, such as a police report, notification of a death, etc.
- 1.7.2 Where appropriate, documentation submitted as supporting evidence should be in English. Any documentation not in English must be translated into English and verified.
- 1.7.3 Schools will decide on whether the evidence is satisfactory but may request additional information if required.

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<sup>7</sup> In case of illness, students should refer to the [Know Who To Turn To](#) and [Pharmacy First](#) guidance for advice on which service they should use.

1.7.4 Where a student believes their medical condition or personal circumstance to be of a particularly sensitive nature the Student Advice & Support Team can liaise with Schools on their behalf. See section 1.11.1.

## **1.8 How are extension requests processed by Schools?**

1.8.1 School guidance will specify how extension requests are processed within the School and the timeframe for communicating the outcome to the student. Please note that requests will be processed during normal working hours.

1.8.2 The student will be informed of the outcome in writing. If approved, the new agreed date will be communicated to them at the same time. If rejected, the student will be reminded that penalties will apply for late submissions without permission/authorisation as outlined in Section 2 of this Policy.

## **1.9 When is the grade and feedback received?**

1.9.1 Students should be aware that work submitted later than the original deadline as a result of an approved extension may not receive feedback at the same time as those who submitted by the original deadline. However, it will be marked in line with the [Institutional Framework for the Provision of Feedback on Assessment](#).

## **1.10 Repeated requests for extensions**

1.10.1 If a School receives multiple requests for coursework extensions from a student this may indicate that the student is struggling across multiple courses and require some additional advice and support from the School and Student Support. In this situation, the student, School and Student Support may consider it beneficial to have further discussions in line with the [Support for Study Policy](#).<sup>8</sup>

1.10.2 Receiving an extension for one course or assessment may impact on other assessments, but it cannot be used as reason for requesting other extensions.

## **1.11 What support is available?**

1.11.1 The Student Advice & Support Team ([student.support@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:student.support@abdn.ac.uk)) can provide students with support in applying for an extension and, with the students' permission, can liaise with School(s) on their behalf<sup>9</sup>. Where a student believes their medical condition or personal circumstance to be of a particularly sensitive nature, or where the Team is already aware of a student's specific circumstances, students are encouraged to contact the Student Advice & Support Team directly. The University recognises that, for very personal or private

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<sup>8</sup> Students with adjustments already in place may be exempt.

<sup>9</sup> In certain circumstances, it may also be appropriate for a personal tutor (or equivalent) to liaise with a School on a student's behalf. Such circumstances can include instances where a student has been in regular contact with a personal tutor (or equivalent) over a period of time such that the student's personal circumstances are well-known to the personal tutor.

issues/events, students may be reluctant to disclose the information to their School. In some cases, it may be possible for the Student Advice & Support Team to confirm to School(s) that they have sight of the relevant personal information and that the evidence is satisfactory.

1.11.2 In addition, the University has a range of other support services available to support students, as detailed below:

- The Student Learning Service ([sls@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:sls@abdn.ac.uk)) can provide academic and study support.
- Digital & Information Services can provide help and support with finding academic information resources ([library@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:library@abdn.ac.uk)) for your coursework and troubleshoot IT problems ([myit.abdn.ac.uk](http://myit.abdn.ac.uk)).
- The Toolkit provides a range of resources, including on time management (<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/toolkit/skills/time-management/>).
- Schools can provide academic guidance for their students and can also be contacted for advice on available support. Relevant school contacts include the School admin office, Course Coordinators, lecturers or tutors.
- The Counselling Service ([counselling@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:counselling@abdn.ac.uk)) is open to all students of the University.
- The Multi-faith Chaplaincy ([chaplaincy@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:chaplaincy@abdn.ac.uk)) is a place of welcome for all and serves as a spiritual and social centre for students and staff.
- The Personal Tutor, PGT Pastoral Support Leads or Regents can help direct students to the appropriate support service, as needed.
- The Students' Union (AUSA) ([ausa@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:ausa@abdn.ac.uk)) represents and serves students' interests and works to make their time in Aberdeen as happy and enjoyable as possible.
- Students' Union Advice (SU Advice) ([ausaadvice@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:ausaadvice@abdn.ac.uk)) offers independent and impartial advice, support, and advocacy for students going through academic appeals, complaints and misconduct allegations.
- Registry Officers can provide guidance to students who have concerns about their programme of study.
- The Student Immigration Compliance Team ([immigration@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:immigration@abdn.ac.uk)) can provide information and advice on Student visa responsibilities.
- A full list of Support and Wellbeing services offered at the University is available on the website (<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/students/support/index.php>).

## 2. PENALTIES FOR UNAUTHORISED LATE SUBMISSION OF COURSEWORK

- 2.1 Late submission refers to submission of work after the published deadline without an agreed extension, and in the absence of mitigating circumstances. Where a student has agreed extensions, either due to their [inclusion adjustments](#) or because of accepted [mitigating circumstances](#), their work is deemed to be submitted late when it is submitted beyond that agreed extension.
- 2.2 Any assessed coursework that is submitted beyond the deadline, without an agreed extension, will be recorded as late and a penalty will be applied. For work submitted late, markers should grade the work as normal and award the CGS that is appropriate for the piece of work. The course coordinator will then exact a penalty according to the number of

calendar days the assignment is late (includes weekends and University and local/national holidays). The penalty exacted for unauthorised late submission of work will be as follows:

- Up to 24 hours late, the grade will be deducted by 2 CGS points;
- For each subsequent day, up to a maximum of seven calendar days total, the grade will be deducted by a further CGS point for each day, or part of a day, up to a maximum of seven days late;
- Over seven days late, a grade of G3 will be awarded.

- 2.3 For work that is up to seven calendar days late, if the assignment was graded above a passing grade but the penalty awarded takes the grade below the pass mark, the student will be awarded the minimum passing grade, i.e. D3.
- 2.4 If the assignment is submitted after feedback on that work has already been provided to the class, that assignment cannot be graded and so the assignment should be given G3. However, formative feedback should be given to such a student.
- 2.5 When applying penalties as detailed in 2.2, the normal maximum application of penalties up to seven calendar days may not apply to all types of assessment, and shorter deadlines may be more appropriate. For example, if there are time- sensitive marking and feedback requirements, such as weekly tests where feedback is required from one test before the next week's test, a maximum late submission deadline of seven days cannot apply. In these cases, there must be a clear indication in the course documentation of the maximum late submission deadline for those assessments.
- 2.6 Where an assignment is expected to be submitted in hard copy, rather than being submitted online, a student may encounter circumstances, such as travel disruption, that prevent them submitting the hard copy on time. Under these circumstances, the course coordinator will accept an emailed copy/scan of the assignment in lieu of the hard copy, along with an explanation for why the hard copy cannot be submitted on time. In such cases, where it is clear that the work would have been submitted on time were it not for these circumstances, no late penalty will be applied.

## **ANNEX 1: Putting the Policy into practice**

The following scenarios illustrate how the Policy is put into practice and how penalties may be applied.

### **Scenario 1**

Student A has a deadline for an assignment that is 12 noon on Monday. They submit their assignment at 5pm on Tuesday without having asked for any extension. The assignment is graded as normal and receives a grade of B2. However, as the assignment is considered to be two days late it is subject to a three CGS point deduction (two CGS points for the first 24 hours and one further CGS point for the subsequent 24 hours) and so the grade that is reported to the student and which contributes to the overall course grade is C2. Had student A submitted their assignment before noon on Tuesday they would only be one day late and subject to two CGS points deduction.

### **Scenario 2**

Student B is doing a course where fortnightly lab tests are required to be submitted by Friday 5pm. Generic feedback on those tests is provided to the class on the following Monday at noon. Student B asked for an extension because they were unwell on Friday. The student was allowed a one-day extension and was required to submit their test by 5pm on Saturday. However, the test was not submitted until Monday at 3pm. As Student B has submitted after the generic feedback has been provided to the class, their test will receive a grade of zero (G3). Had the student submitted their test at 11 am on Monday they would have had the test graded and received a three GCS point deduction (being two days late from the extended deadline agreed).

### **Scenario 3**

Student C is completing their PGT dissertation (worth 60 credits) which is meant to be submitted by 5pm on Monday. However, they do not submit until Wednesday at 11pm without having asked for any extension. The dissertation is graded as normal and receives a grade of D1. However, as the dissertation was submitted three days late (two full days and one part day, which counts as a full-day in terms of penalty applied), the grade for the dissertation should be reduced by four CGS points which would bring it down to E2. As this grade is below the passing grade, the grade returned to the student is D3, the minimum passing grade.

### **Scenario 4**

Student D has an inclusion adjustment, which allows them to apply for an extension, if required, without needing to provide evidence or an explanation. The normal deadline for an in-course essay was 5 pm on Friday but the student requests an extension and is allowed to submit by 5 pm on the following Friday. Student D submitted their essay at 10 am on the Saturday after their extended deadline. The essay is marked as normal, receiving a grade of B1, but because it was submitted one day beyond the deadline, taking into account the extension provided, the grade is reduced by two CGS points and is therefore graded at B3.

### **Scenario 5**

Student E has informed the course coordinator of a short-term health issue that has affected their ability to study in the lead-up to submission of their dissertation. They have provided medical certificates as proof of their condition and these have been accepted by the School mitigating circumstances committee who have given the student an extra seven calendar days to submit their dissertation. Student E submits their dissertation four days beyond the normal published deadline.

Because the student informed the School of their health issues in advance and submitted before the extended deadline, no penalty should be applied to their grade. Had the student submitted their dissertation eight days beyond the normal published deadline, i.e. one day beyond their authorised extended deadline, the grade awarded would have been reduced by two CGS points.

### **Scenario 6**

Student F has submitted a lab report two days after the published deadline. After submitting it they contact the School's mitigating circumstances committee claiming to have been sick over the past week. Because this information was given after the deadline and there is no reason why the student could not have informed the School's mitigating circumstances committee in advance that they would not be able to submit on time, the grade for the lab report is reduced by three CGS points. Had the student been hospitalised or otherwise unable to access the internet to inform the School's mitigating circumstances committee of their difficulties it is likely that their grade would not have been reduced as the student's mitigating circumstances would have been accepted.