
Document title: Assessment Extensions and Deferrals – September 2021

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Office/department responsible: Registry

Approved by: Prof. Mahmoud Allam – President of The Knowledge Hub Universities

A. Basis of the procedure

1. In order to obtain an award, a student must demonstrate achievement of the intended learning outcomes of the course leading to that award to **at least** a threshold level. Occasionally a student might have a genuine reason for needing extra time to meet an assessment deadline (extension) or might need to delay submission until the next submission period (deferral). This document describes both processes.
2. Declaration of Fitness to Sit
The handing in of a piece of coursework or completion of an examination attendance slip will act as a declaration that the student deems her/himself fit to make a valid attempt at the assessment (with the rare exception of a student taken ill during an examination). No claim for extenuating circumstances will be subsequently accepted.
3. Application for extension or deferral
If a student considers her/himself to be unable to attempt an assessment, or to meet an assessment deadline due to extenuating circumstances, s/he may submit a request for:
 - i) an extension of a coursework deadline, or
 - ii) a deferred attempt at the assessment, to take place at an appropriate time after the relevant meeting of the Programme Assessment Board (PAB).

The request must be accompanied by appropriate, normally third party, evidence which demonstrates how the circumstances described have affected the student. If the request is accepted, an extension to the coursework submission deadline will be granted or a deferred attempt will be allowed. If the request is rejected, an absence mark will be recorded for the assessment not submitted.

If a student hands-in a piece of coursework or attempts an examination after submitting a request for an extension or deferral, the request will be disregarded.

A deferral is granted until the next assessment period e.g., a deferral from one PAB until the next one.

4. Appeal against rejection
Students will be able to appeal a decision to reject a request for an extension or deferral, but they will only exceptionally be permitted to appeal a PAB decision on the grounds of extenuating circumstances, where the evidence points to the circumstances having been so severe as to have prevented the student from making an informed decision at the time as to whether to attempt an assessment or to apply for a deferral.

B. Consideration of Requests for Extensions

Students submit requests for a coursework extension through the link to the extension/deferral form (<https://forms.office.com/r/Ue7Vd8vwdh>) which is automatically directed to the Registry Office. The maximum length of an extension is normally two weeks. In exceptional circumstances, longer extensions for individual coursework exercises may be granted where this can be done without compromising the integrity of the assessment.

Work tendered for submission after the **original** hand-in date will receive a mark of 0%. Similarly, work submitted after the extension hand-in date will receive a mark of 0%.

NB: the week should be taken to mean 5 working days (i.e. Sunday to Thursday excluding days of official University closure).

C. Consideration of Requests for Deferral

1. The Registrar will consider requests for deferrals to coursework deadlines and examinations on the grounds of extenuating circumstances. Requests from the student should be made by email using the attached form. After consideration, the student will be notified of the decision in writing. The normal means of communicating the decision shall be via the student's TKH email account. The decision will also be communicated to
 - i) the Module Leader(s)
 - ii) the Course Director;
 - iii) the secretary to the appropriate PAB.

Where a deferral has been granted, the secretary shall ensure that a deferred grade is input against the relevant component of assessment on the student records system.

D. Appeal Procedure

1.
 - a) A student may submit an appeal on one occasion only:
 - i) if there is significant new evidence relating to the initial request, which was not considered at the time of the original application or
 - ii) if there is a specific allegation of irregularity in the conduct of the approval process itself. If approved, the maximum extension period will still stand (two weeks from the original submission deadline).
 - b) Additional evidence must satisfy the following criteria:
 - i) the new evidence only became available after the first request for deferral/extension was considered.
 - ii) the new evidence adds a significant new dimension to the deferral/extension request.
 - c) The appeal must be made to the Registrar office in writing within seven working days of the release of the original deferral rejection and within five working days of the release of the original extension rejection.
 - d) The Registrar (or nominee) will investigate the circumstances and decide whether an appeal can be heard. The decision in this respect is final.
 - e) If the decision can be considered, the Registrar and Branch Director will investigate the circumstances and decide whether to grant the appeal in relation to a deferral. The decision is final. If the appeal is granted in relation to a deferral, the total evidence presented will be reconsidered. The decision in relation to an appeal is final.

2. The UK Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (“OIA”) operates an independent student complaints scheme pursuant to the Higher Education Act 2004. Students or former students may take their complaint relating to a request for an appeal under Coventry University’s Deferral Panel procedures to the OIA once all TKH processes have been exhausted. The OIA must receive a completed Scheme Application Form within 12 months of the date of Completion of Procedures Letter.

E. Questions and Answers

Q

Can requests for extensions be made after the due date for submission?

A

Requests submitted after the due date will not normally be accepted, unless the student can show that circumstances beyond their control prevented them from contacting the University before the deadline date. In some circumstances it may be appropriate for the student to submit the coursework extension application and then provide the supporting evidence to the Registry office when they are next able to come into the University. Requests submitted verbally are not valid.

Q

What if a student is expecting to hand the work in on time, but experiences extenuating circumstances at the very last minute preventing them from submitting the work?

A

The student should be advised to submit the work at the earliest opportunity and complete and submit a request for an extension in the normal way. If the request for an extension is granted the student will receive full marks, otherwise it will be considered a late submission and will receive a mark of zero.

Q

Can a student submit medical evidence from a herbalist or anybody else who provides alternative treatments?

A

Normally such evidence will only be accepted in addition to evidence from a registered doctor. All medical information is also reviewed by the TKH Doctor.

Q

What if a student submits evidence which is not in English?

A

The student should be advised that it is their responsibility to obtain a certified translation for Registry. We are able to consider third party documentation received in Arabic but the preference is for documentation in English. Documentation in other languages will be discarded.

Q

Having been granted an extension on the submission date for a piece of coursework, can a student subsequently request a further extension to the hand-in date?

A

The maximum extension period allowed is two weeks. As long as the extension period does not exceed two weeks, if a student requests a one-week extension and at the end of that week decides that they need another one week extension, this can be granted. If, having been granted a total of two weeks, a student finds that s/he is unable to meet the extension hand-in date, or further extenuating

circumstances prevail, the student should request a deferral of assessment.

Q

What if the extenuating circumstances affect a further assessment opportunity (e.g. at resit time)?

A

The student will need to make another submission for the period concerned. This second request may simply confirm that the earlier circumstances have continued, but it must be accompanied by third party evidence covering the new period.

Q

A student misses a class test due to extenuating circumstances: can they be offered the opportunity to take a similar test sometime before the end of the module?

A

If there is another offering of the class test scheduled before the end of the module, the student should have the opportunity to take the assessment then, rather than have to wait until resit time.

Q

How should a Panel handle a case where a student commences a course with difficult circumstances (e.g. sole carer) or personal illness?

A

If a student commences a course despite difficult circumstances or personal illness and thought s/he could cope, then they cannot really expect deferral based on the on-going situation. However, if the situation takes an unexpected turn for the worse, then there may be legitimate grounds for requesting a deferral. Each case should be dealt with on merit.

Q

What if the student wants to request a deferral in both the coursework and examination?

A

Requests for deferral in both coursework and examination for the same module will NOT always be considered as one request – this will depend on when the coursework submission and the exam take place. It may be the case that an incident which led to a student being unable to take an examination (e.g. broken arm the week before), would not have impacted upon their ability to submit coursework with a deadline several months earlier.

Q

What if the student has permanent or long-term condition or situation?

A

The deferral process is not an appropriate measure in respect of permanent or long-term conditions or situations. Students experiencing long-term difficulties arising from changes to their personal, medical or work circumstances may be advised to temporarily withdraw from the programme.

Indicative Summary of acceptable/not acceptable extenuating circumstances	
Normally acceptable	Notes
1. Recent (< 1 month) death or serious illness of a close relative	"Close" means parents (& guardians), children and siblings, and a spouse/partner. It may include in-laws, grandparents and grandchildren if it can be shown that the relationship was very close, but not normally aunts, uncles, cousins etc.
2. Illness or serious accident of the student	Illness or accident occurring at the time of an assessment, or the period immediately leading up to the formal assessment. It should be an incapacitating illness or an unexpected deterioration in an ongoing illness or medical condition. It also includes breaks and serious sprains of the normal writing hand/arm. Medical certification must be obtained; self-certification is never acceptable as evidence of extenuating circumstances.
3. Serious personal disruption	Divorce, fire, burglary, serious court cases, etc. Unforeseen transport problems beyond your control or ability to foresee, severe weather conditions which make it impossible to attend. Supporting third-party evidence must be provided.
4. Special Needs	Special needs that have been declared to the University but have not been provided for in the delivery or assessment of the module.
Possibly acceptable	Notes
1. Pregnancy	This depends on the stage of the pregnancy and the imminence of childbirth. It may include the period immediately following childbirth. Pregnancy of a wife/partner would be acceptable in appropriate cases (imminent childbirth, medical complications etc). Pregnancy of relatives other than spouses/partners is not normally acceptable.
2. Sprains	This depends on the severity of the sprain, whether it is in the normal writing hand/arm, whether it affects the ability to sit for long periods or causes other distracting discomfort. Or, a sprain that affects a Performing Arts student's ability to complete a practical/performed assessment.
3. Study related	Unforeseen failure of University's computer network facilities; however you must be able to demonstrate that you have taken reasonable steps to ensure that the assessment was prepared in good time.

Not normally acceptable	Notes
1. Social activities	Hectic social life, parties, visits by/to friends, sporting fixtures.
2. Minor ailments and other conditions	Coughs, colds, headaches, stomachache, hay fever etc (where symptoms may be relieved by over the counter medication). Long-standing medical conditions for which special arrangements could have been made or treatment anticipated and taken. Accidents/illness affecting relatives or friends (unless serious or the student is the sole carer).
3. Examination stress	Examination stress, stress in practice placement, anxiety etc will not, by itself, be considered as an extenuating circumstance. It is expected that individuals in higher education will develop the ability to deal with this and produce satisfactory work whilst meeting deadlines.
4. Non-serious domestic or personal disruptions which could have been anticipated or planned	Moving house, holidays, weddings, religious festivals or other events where the student either has control over the date or may choose not to participate. Change of job or "normal" job pressure (exceptional crises at work might be acceptable), failed travel arrangements, illness or death of pets, oversleeping, misreading examinations timetable or other assessment details, taking the wrong examination.
5. Study-related	<p>Computer difficulties, losing work not backed up on computer disk, deadline congestion, examination congestion, missing books, examination rescheduling, delays in printing, photocopying and/or binding of assessed work.</p> <p>Incorrect submission of online assessments eg. to the draft section or to the wrong module.</p>
6. Examination conditions	<p>Disruption in the examination room: poor lighting, ventilation or heating, excessive noise, illness or behaviour of other students, noise from invigilators.</p> <p>Normally such conditions will have been reported to the Registrar by the invigilators, who will pass reports on to the Subject Assessment Board.</p>
7. Ignorance of a process	Students are expected to seek the information they require from University staff or the Student Portal. They should read their Student Handbook carefully, as well as all other information relating to their course and modules.

Extension and/or Deferral Application Process

If you wish to apply for an extension this is done by completing an online form. To use the form you will need to be signed in using your TKH account. Please click this link to use the form:

<https://forms.office.com/r/Ue7Vd8vwdh>

When applying please note:

- A deferral may mean that you will complete a brand-new assessment task at the next submission period. This may mean that you may not be able to progress or graduate and may result in you finishing your studies later than originally planned
- When you submit a final piece of coursework, or complete an exam attendance slip, it means that you consider yourself well enough to do the assessment.
- We will not normally accept an extension or deferral request after the assessment deadline. If you are submitting after the deadline then you must state, why you were unable to apply on or before the deadline and provide evidence to support if appropriate. If you do not, then your application will be rejected.
- If you requested an extension and you have not had confirmation that your application has been approved, you should submit your assessment on the requested extended deadline date. If your application is valid and you have supplied the correct evidence, your application will be approved, and your work will be accepted and marked as on time.
- Any student who knowingly submits false or forged evidence at any stage of an extension or deferral application forfeits their right to consideration of the case and renders themselves liable to disciplinary proceedings. The University reserves the right to check the authenticity of evidence submitted and by signing/submitting electronically the extension/deferral form you are agreeing to this.
- If you consider it necessary to send personal evidence in relation to a family member or other person, which for examples include information relating to their health such as medical certificates, or other "Sensitive Information" you are required to obtain their consent to our use of this information. All personal information provided by a family member or other third party will be processed in accordance with the Extension and Deferral Request. It is important to note that if we do not receive permission to use the specific information listed above, this will be returned directly to you.