

Problems submitting work or attending an exam

If you run into problems submitting assessed work or attending an exam, the University has a process under [Part 14](#) of the 'Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations' within the *Examination Regulations* for students to be able to:

- ask for an extension in advance of a deadline for a piece of submitted work
- ask for a piece of work submitted late to be marked without any penalty
- ask in advance to be excused from attending an exam
- ask to be excused from missing an exam

The official policy in this area is set out in the [Examinations and Assessment Framework](#).

This is a guide for students thinking about making an application.

You should discuss your circumstances with your college or departmental officers as soon as you are aware that you may have problems meeting a deadline or attending an exam.

Your college or department is responsible for submitting a request on your behalf unless you are submitting a self-certified request.

What circumstances are covered by the regulations?

Students can make applications under Part 14 due to

'illness or other urgent cause that is unforeseeable, unavoidable and/or insurmountable'

This means that applications under Part 14 are only for **acute circumstances**.

Which office considers applications?

The Proctors consider applications under Part 14 for all award-bearing courses, with the exception of courses in the Department for Continuing Education which processes extension applications and withdrawal and resubmission requests for its students.

Some variations to the process for Continuing Education students are outlined at: <https://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/about/late-submission-policy>.

I need an extension or other adjustment, but I don't think my circumstances would fall under 'illness or other urgent cause that is unforeseeable, unavoidable and/or insurmountable' – what should I do?

Extensions are designed to make up for short periods of lost time due to acute circumstances. Students with disabilities, chronic ill health or complex personal circumstances may require more substantial changes to teaching and assessment than can be accommodated through Part 14. These might include adjustments to your pace of study, personalised deadlines or undertaking assessment in a different format.

If you feel that you require lengthy extensions or other adjustments due to a disability, chronic ill health or complex personal circumstances, it is likely that there are other University processes better placed to help you. In the first instance you should discuss your circumstances with your college or department. If required, the college or department can then submit a request to Education Committee for adjustments to your course.

The earlier you can have these conversations, the better we will be able to put in arrangements that support you to succeed on your course.

If you have a disability or chronic condition you can still request extensions via the Proctors in relation to acute situations that could affect any student (e.g. acute illness, bereavement etc.). You can also request an extension or excusal in relation to your disability if you have a fluctuating condition which means that your ability to study has been particularly disrupted for a short period of time.

Extensions

When can I apply for an extension?

You can request an extension up to **4 weeks before and up to 14 days after a deadline**. Wherever possible you should submit an extension request in good time before a deadline.

Applying before the deadline

Extensions under Part 14 are for **acute circumstances** – if you are unwell more than 4 weeks before the deadline, normally it would be expected that you should be able to ‘catch up’ and still be able to submit on time. If you get closer to the deadline and feel you will not be able to submit, you can request an extension at that point.

Applying after the deadline

You have 14 days from your original deadline in which to make a request, if you have not made one before the deadline. You may have already submitted your work (always submit as soon as possible if you are finished), or you may request further time.

If you don't submit by the deadline you will receive an email reminder, this is a courtesy, it is your responsibility to know your own deadlines and to either request an extension if you have valid reason or submit the work within 14 days if you are unable to meet the deadline.

It is expected that almost all students who are having problems submitting on time will be able to make contact with their department or college either before the deadline or shortly after. The Proctors cannot therefore consider extension requests submitted more than 14 days after the submission deadline.

If you have evidence as to why it was not possible to make an application before the 14 day cut off you may be able to apply to Education Committee, via your college or department, to dispense you from this requirement. A separate decision would then be made on your original extension application.

How long an extension can I ask for?

The amount of time you should ask for must relate to the study time you have lost through ‘illness or other urgent cause’ and has to be supported by the evidence you can provide. You will only be granted the amount of time lost, not the time you would necessarily like to be able to complete the work. The maximum total length of extensions that can be granted for the same piece of work is 12 weeks.

You can request up to 12 weeks in a single application, or the total limit will also apply to multiple sequential applications (e.g. initially requesting 4 weeks, then requesting a further 4 weeks, etc.).

Multiple applications can be made on the same underlying grounds (i.e. the same medical condition), but further evidence must be provided on each occasion to explain why more time is needed. An additional request for extra time **cannot** be granted on the same medical evidence provided for the original extension.

What happens if my extension request is turned down?

If your extension request is rejected, you should submit your work by the original deadline. If the work is submitted after the deadline, you will be subject to a late penalty – the details of penalties can be found in the examination conventions for your programme.

If you submit the work more than 14 days after the deadline, you will receive a fail for non-submission of work.

My application for an extension was rejected but I now have further evidence – can I apply again?

You must ensure that all relevant evidence is provided with your original application. If a request has been rejected, you cannot submit further evidence asking for the same period of extension.

You may appeal the decision of the Proctors and provide the new evidence, but you must also provide a reason as to why the evidence could not have been provided in the original application. Further information on how to appeal a decision of the Proctors can be found at: <https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/appeals>.

I have already been granted an extension for a piece of coursework but I am still struggling and don't feel I will be able to meet the extended deadline – can I apply for a further extension?

Provided that the total length of the extension would not exceed 12 weeks, you can apply for a further extension for the same piece of work. You must provide further evidence as to why you need more time - even if the underlying grounds are the same.

I need an extension longer than 12 weeks – what can I do?

Applications for extensions longer than 12 weeks cannot be considered under Part 14 as it only covers acute circumstances. If you feel that you need longer than a 12 week extension, it may be that other actions are more appropriate.

Other options open to you may include suspension (if you are currently unable to study but should be able to return once recovered), withdrawal (if it is unclear whether you will be well enough to return to study), or an application to Education Committee for a major adjustment.

You should discuss with your college or department, so that you can work out which option may be most appropriate for your situation. Remember that your deadline stands unless other arrangements have been made, so talk to your college or department as soon as you realise that you aren't going to be able to submit.

What if I need extension for a group assignment?

If you or a member of your group need an extension for a group assignment then the person with the acute circumstances needs to apply and provide evidence for an extension. The extension will then apply for all members of the group. If the extension is not granted, and the work is submitted late, the late penalty will also apply to all members of the group. Where

the completion of the assignment has been affected by ill health or complex personal circumstances of a single member, the mitigating circumstances process should be followed.

I have been granted an extension which I have been informed takes the deadline beyond the date of the final exam board – when can I expect to receive my results?

Extensions are granted on the basis of need. This may mean that your results cannot be considered at the final exam board and therefore there may be a delay in the publication of results. Exactly what this delay is will depend on the exam board – the Proctors can grant permission for boards to consider late results by correspondence, or the board may decide to review the results at their next meeting. Your department should be able to provide you with more information as to when you may receive your results.

Is there a fee for submitting late?

The late presentation fee has been abolished from Michaelmas term 2020. You may be subject to an academic penalty for late submission, as per the examination conventions for your course, but there will not be a financial penalty.

Excusal from examinations

I know that I can't attend my exam, when can I apply for excusal?

If you can't attend an exam due to 'illness or other urgent cause that is unforeseeable, unavoidable and/or insurmountable' you may submit an application for excusal from an examination up to 4 weeks before. You should also discuss with your college or department the impact of missing an exam and when you might be able to take the outstanding assessment.

I didn't attend my exam, what can I do?

If you were prevented from attending an exam due to 'illness or other urgent cause that is unforeseeable, unavoidable and/or insurmountable' you may submit an application for excusal from an examination up to 14 days after the exam. You should also discuss with your college or department the impact of missing an exam and when you might be able to take the outstanding assessment.

I attended part of a written exam but was unwell and left early – can I apply for excusal?

No - applications for excusal cannot be considered if you attended any part of the examination or if you downloaded an exam paper. You should submit a Mitigating Circumstances Notice to the Examiners (MCE) to inform them of your circumstances – see ['Problems with completing your assessment'](#) for further information.

My revision has been severely affected by illness/complex circumstances – can I apply for excusal from an exam?

No - in these cases you should take the exam as scheduled and submit an Mitigating Circumstances Notice to the Examiners (MCE) to have the impact of your circumstances on

your performance taken into account (see [‘Problems with completing your assessment’](#) for further information).

Withdrawal and resubmission of work

I have realised that I submitted a draft instead of the final version – can I resubmit the correct version?

It is your responsibility to submit the correct document/file. However, you may withdraw and resubmit work on one occasion before the submission deadline, without the permission of the Proctors. In these circumstances you should contact your department to find out how to do so.

If you wish to withdraw and resubmit after the deadline, you must apply to the Proctors within 7 days of the deadline (students in Continuing Education should apply to the department). In most cases, permission to withdraw and resubmit will only be permitted if

- The file submitted is corrupt and cannot be accessed; or
- The declaration of authorship is missing; or
- You have submitted the incorrect file (e.g. a draft, other piece of work); and
- You can demonstrate that the document you wish to submit in its place has not been modified since the original submission deadline.

I have realised that I submitted work to the incorrect location – what should I do?

It is your responsibility to ensure that you know where you should submit work, whether that be electronically or in hard copy. If you realise, or are made aware, that you have submitted to the wrong location, it is your responsibility to forward the submission to the correct location. If this is after the deadline, it may result in you being given a penalty by the exam board.

If there is legitimate confusion over submission location due to an error, such as contradictory information in regulations and handbooks, this should be dealt with as a dispensation from the regulations granted by Education Committee, not by the Proctors. You should discuss with your college or department, who will be able to submit an application on your behalf.

Evidence to support your request

All applications under Part 14 should be submitted with appropriate evidence to show that your circumstances fall under the definition of ‘illness or other urgent cause that is unforeseeable, unavoidable and/or insurmountable’.

Any evidence must give a clear indication of the time period during which you were impacted by the circumstances, be dated and provided in English.

Acute illness, injury or exacerbation of a chronic condition

'Acute illness' is a term that can cover a very wide range of severity of situations, including what might be considered a 'minor illness'. Applications under Part 14 will only be considered in relation to an acute, debilitating illness that would reasonably be considered to necessitate an absence from work for an employed person.

All applications relating to acute illness, injury or exacerbation of a chronic condition require medical evidence.

What kind of medical evidence do I need?

Medical evidence for any request in relation to an acute illness or exacerbation of a chronic condition must be:

- in English – you can provide your own translation of medical evidence, but an official translation may be requested.
- contemporary – the medical opinion must have been sought at the time of illness.

The medical evidence should confirm the diagnosis and observable symptoms, and confirm the period of illness, rather than attempt to determine how much additional time you need to complete the work.

Medical certificates should normally be provided by a doctor, but certificates from **college nurses** are generally sufficient for short extensions of up to one week or short extensions in relation to a flare up of an existing condition. However, cases are considered on a case-by-case basis, and if the certificate confirms your diagnosis and observable symptoms, a certificate from a college nurse may be appropriate.

If you have been **injured**, you should provide any documents you have from the hospital which can confirm the date of the accident and a discharge summary. The evidence should be able to demonstrate the full amount of time lost, including the likely period of treatment and recovery after the accident. A letter from the hospital may only be able to confirm the time lost during the stay in hospital – if your ability to complete a piece of work or attend an exam has been affected by ongoing treatment and recovery from the accident, a medical certificate from a doctor may also be required.

Normally **statements of fitness to work do not include enough detail** to be able to support a request for an extension or excusal. If the statement includes details about the dates affected and the impact on you, rather than just stating that you are now fit to return to work following a period of illness, it may be considered enough to support a request.

In what circumstances can I self-certify?

Self-certification was introduced in 2019-20 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. You will continue to be able to self-certify in place of medical evidence in limited circumstances in 2020-21 – a review of the process will then take place. It covers both extensions/late submissions and exam excusal.

If you have been affected by a short-term illness (such as migraine, norovirus, gastroenteritis, flu, or diarrhoea), you can self-certify for up to 7 days. Any further extension beyond this will require medical evidence from a doctor.

If you have been affected by Covid-19 (either due to illness or to other impacts), you can self-certify for up to 14 days. If you require an extension longer than 14 days, you must get medical or other evidence to support the request. If you are required to self-isolate but are well and not affected by any other adverse circumstances (e.g. caring responsibilities if isolating as a household) then you would normally be expected to submit assessed work on time.

Self-certification is also permitted for students with disabilities or chronic illnesses, where this has been recommended as an appropriate support mechanism in your Student Support Plan (SSP) by the Disability Advisory Service. The SSP may be submitted as evidence for extensions of up to 7 days.

I have a scheduled hospital appointment on the day of an exam – what evidence do I need to provide for excusal?

The details of the appointment would need to be provided, and it would be necessary to show that it would not be possible or reasonable for the appointment to be rearranged. This may include where you have been waiting for an appointment for a long period – whilst it may be technically possible to rearrange the appointment, it would not be considered reasonable to make you rearrange if the next appointment available would cause a delay.

‘Urgent cause’ other than illness

Bereavement

Normally extensions of up to two weeks can be granted based on the death of a family member or close relative. You should provide a supporting statement explaining your relationship to the deceased and the impact of the bereavement on your ability to complete the assignment or attend the examination. This can be supported by additional evidence such as a death certificate, an order of service, a published obituary or a statement from an independent person. If the funeral took place abroad, evidence of travel arrangements can be provided.

If you require an extension longer than 2 weeks due to the wider impact of a bereavement, such as losing time due to ongoing responsibilities for the deceased’s estates, then an application should include a statement from an appropriate independent person (such as a solicitor), in addition to the above evidence.

If your ability to work has been affected by ongoing grief or if the bereavement has had a detrimental impact on your mental health, a longer extension can be requested but must be supported by a medical certificate.

Maternity, paternity or adoption leave

Whilst it would normally be expected that a student would suspend for maternity leave, there are instances when it may be appropriate for you to stay on course and you may need an extension to submitted work deadlines or to be excused from attending an exam. For example, if you have completed all teaching and examinations except for a final dissertation – suspension would not necessarily be the best option for you. In such cases, you may apply for an extension using a birth certificate (for a short extension), evidence from a doctor or midwife, or evidence showing the period of maternity.

Students can also apply for extensions due to paternity or adoption leave using a birth certificate, evidence from a doctor or midwife or evidence showing the period of paternity or adoption leave.

Work commitments

Full-time students cannot request extensions or excusal on the grounds of work-related commitments. This includes volunteering, internships and interviews.

Part-time students may apply for extensions or excusal only if related to exceptional, unexpected and time-limited additional commitments. Part-time students are expected to balance their work and studies. Evidence should be provided in support of the application by your line manager. If you are self-employed or otherwise do not have a line manager (e.g. CEO) you should provide a statement explaining the circumstances and any relevant evidence which is available, for example, contractual agreements or other such documents.

Victim of crime

Applications should be supported by independent evidence of the crime and a statement explaining the impact of the crime on your ability to work/attend an examination. If relevant, medical evidence can be provided to support this.

Jury service or a requirement to participate in legal proceedings

Applications should be supported by appropriate evidence such as a jury service letter, a letter from the court or a letter from your solicitor. All evidence should include the dates of the relevant legal proceedings.

Religious observance

As the date of a religious observance is known in advance it is not covered by Part 14. There are other mechanisms through which students can ask in advance for adjustments to assessment to accommodate religious observance (such as the exam adjustment process or dispensations).

However, if religious observance causes or is related to illness or other urgent cause, an application to the Proctors may be appropriate. For example, if you were fasting due to religious observance and this causes you to become unwell, you may be able to apply to the Proctors with the appropriate medical evidence.

Significant adverse personal or family circumstances

Significant adverse personal or family circumstances may impact your ability to undertake assessment and in cases where the circumstances are exceptional, unexpected and time-limited you may be able to apply for an extension or to be excused from attending an exam.

You should provide a statement describing the impact of the circumstance on your ability to work/attend the exam. It is appreciated that in some cases providing evidence may be difficult, but you should supply any evidence you have available, and can include a statement from an appropriate independent person. This could include a solicitor, chaplain or similar, therapist or counsellor, family member's doctor, but should not include family members or friends.

Academic or administrative difficulties outside of your control

There are some circumstances in which academic or administrative difficulties may be considered adequate grounds for an extension. This could be issues with supervision (although this would have to be significant issues), delays in processing CUREC applications, or delays affecting your ability to conduct experiments or acquire data. Such applications would need to show that the circumstances were out of your control e.g. CUREC application submitted in a timely manner, and should be supported by a statement from your supervisor or DGS.

Administrative or technical difficulties in relation to submitting work electronically are not considered valid grounds for extensions or excusals. This is because you are expected to anticipate potential last minute technical issues, and therefore not leave submission until very close to the deadline. Only if a University system failed (e.g. the WebLearn submission portal), would an application be considered.

What circumstances are not considered valid grounds for applications under Part 14?

- Delays in postage of submitted work or reliance on third parties to deliver submitted work. You should ensure plenty of time to submit work by the deadline.
- Difficulties experienced submitting work electronically including, but not limited to: failure of hardware, failure of internet connection, failure of software, and lost or stolen files. You should ensure plenty of time to submit your work by the deadline and ensure you have backed up your work, including both physical backups and online.
- Social obligations and similar avoidable/adjustable events, foreseeable or routine commitments. This may include, but is not limited to: holidays, weddings, parties, routine medical appointments, moving house, changing job.
- Other commitments including: normal work commitments, voluntary commitments, extracurricular activities, regular caring commitments, job interviews, internships, sporting commitments etc.
- Failed travel arrangements or inadequate travel planning (including leaving insufficient time to apply for a visa).
- Financial difficulties.
- Long-term ill health or disability which has not been subject to exacerbation (see the [Exams and Assessment Framework](#) Annex F: Major adjustments to course and assessment requirements for more information on the appropriate route to follow for students requiring adjustments on these grounds).
- Poor planning or time management, clustered deadlines, misreading of the examination timetable (including misunderstanding of time zones), misreading assessment requirements or location of submission.
- Failure to familiarise yourself with the course information (Examination Regulations, examination conventions, course handbook) or other key information such as the Student Handbook.

