

# What happens if I'm Sick, Injured, or have other Adverse Personal Circumstances, when an Assessment is due?

## *A Guide for Postgraduate Students*

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### ▶ **DOES THIS APPLY TO ME??**

- ✓ This guidance applies to ***all students on taught postgraduate courses.***

# General Principles

- If you **submit coursework, or attend an exam or test, despite your problems:**
  - you will be deemed to be declaring that you are fit to be assessed.  
*If you submit work, expect it to be marked solely on its merits.*
- If you **are not able to meet a submission deadline, or to attend an exam or test at the scheduled time:**
  - you should seek an **extension**, a **deferral** or an **interruption of studies** [see slides 3-13].
- If you **are not able to undertake an assessment in the normal way**
  - you should seek approval for **special/alternative assessment arrangements** [see slides 14-18].

# Extensions [1]

## What is an extension?

- ☺ An extension enables you to submit work after the published deadline, but in time for the marks to be presented to the Board of Examiners.
- ☺ Typically, an extension for coursework involves allowing you more time to submit the original work. An extension for a class test may require you to sit an alternative test that addresses the same learning outcomes.

## What type of work can I get an extension for?

- ☺ You can seek an extension if you think you have a good reason for:
  - ➔ submitting coursework after the published deadline;
  - ➔ not attending a class test [or similar event] at the published time.
- ☹ Extensions can not be given for:
  - ➔ formal examinations included in the University's official examination timetable
    - ☺ If you are unable to sit an exam alongside your colleagues, you need to ask for a deferral or special/alternative assessment arrangements.

## How should I ask for an extension?

☺ Submit an Extension Request Form.

Submit an Extension Request Form.

- Email the form to the appropriate email address shown on the form;
- the form can be downloaded from [www.hope.ac.uk/gateway/supportandwellbeing/studentadministration/understandingyourdegree/](http://www.hope.ac.uk/gateway/supportandwellbeing/studentadministration/understandingyourdegree/)

☺ Make sure to complete the form correctly [detailed guidance notes are attached to the form].

## When should I ask for an extension?

- ☺ **Before** the published coursework submission date or test date, if at all possible.

## What will happen if I just submit work late, without obtaining an extension?

- ☹ You will normally receive zero for the work [but the fact that you did submit will be taken into account by the examiners].

## What if I submit the form after the coursework submission date?

- ☺ You will need to indicate, on the form why you didn't submit the form on time.
- ☺ The request will only be granted if, in addition to there being genuine grounds for not submitting the work on time, there are also genuine grounds to explain your failure to seek an extension earlier.

## If I submit my request on time, will my extension be automatically granted?

☹ No.

- ➔ Your form will need to demonstrate that you had genuine problems.
- ➔ You will be expected to provide evidence to support your request [such as a medical note to confirm that you were ill].
  - You can self-certify illness for up to 7 days on one occasion per academic year.
  - Where evidence is needed, we understand that it can take some time so to arrive, so you might be provisionally granted an extension, subject to you providing the evidence in due course.
- ➔ Slide 19 shows examples of what might count as “genuine”; slide 20 shows examples of what might NOT count as “genuine”.

## If my request is granted, how much extra time will I get?

- The extra time will depend upon how long you are unable to study.
  - ➔ If you are ill for a day, you could get a day's extension.
  - ➔ If you are ill for a week, you could get a week's extension.
- Extensions are normally short, and **cannot** extend beyond the meeting of the Board of Examiners.
  - ➔ If your problems will prevent you from submitting in time for the work to be marked before the Board of Examiners meets, you should request a **deferral** [see next slide].

## How long will I have to wait for a decision?

- ☺ You will normally receive a reply within one working day.
- ☺ Ideally, the reply will tell you the outcome. However, the decision might take a little longer [and you might be called for an interview] if:
  - you submitted the form after the assessment was due;
  - you are requesting an extension of more than 3 weeks;
  - this is not your first request in the current academic year;
  - your reasons for wanting an extensions are unusual or unclear.

# Deferrals [1]

## What is a deferral?

- ☺ A deferral enables you to submit work after the Board of Examiners has met:
  - for Advent term modules, you will be given a date in May;
  - for Lent/Trinity term modules, you will be given a date in the August resit period;
  - for Dissertations, your deadline will be deferred to the next standard submission date [ie from January to May, from May to October or from October to January];
  - for placements, your deadline may depend upon when a further placement can be organised.
  
- ☺ Depending upon the type of assessment, you may either be given more time to submit the original work or given an alternative task that addresses the same learning outcomes
  
- ☺ In principle, a deferral can be given for **any type of assessed work**, including formal exams.

## When should I ask for an deferral?

- ✓ Wherever possible: before the date of the assessment.
- ✓ If you fall ill [etc] on the date of the assessment: contact the University before the start time of the exam or test, or before the final time that coursework could be accepted.
- ✓ If you cannot contact the University before the work was due: contact us no later than 3 working days after the work was due, AND explain why you were unable to make contact sooner.

### Who should I approach to ask for a deferral?

- ✓ Officially, deferrals can only be granted by the Board of Examiners, and the final decision will be published on results day.

*However, Boards act on advice from the following people, so you need to contact them.*

#### → Coursework:

- contact your Faculty or Departmental Office to briefly explain your problem and request permission from a Faculty Senior Academic Adviser to defer.

#### → Exams:

- If your request is only for exams: complete an Exam Deferral Request Form [available from the website] and email it to [exams@hope.ac.uk](mailto:exams@hope.ac.uk).
- If your request relates to coursework as well as exams: contact your Faculty or Departmental Office to briefly explain your problem and request permission from a Faculty Senior Academic Adviser to defer.

## Will my request be automatically granted?

- ☹ No. Deferrals are at the discretion of the Board.
  - ➔ The University will only approve deferral if it is satisfied that you had genuine problems.
  - ➔ Slide 19 shows examples of what might count as “genuine”; slide 20 shows examples of what might NOT count as “genuine”.
  
- ☺ You will normally need evidence to support your request [such as a medical certificate, or other appropriate documentation].
  - ✓ You may not self certificate for examinations; you must provide evidence from an independent professional;
  - ✓ Wherever possible, : submit the evidence at the same time that you submit your request.
  - ✓ In all cases, if self-certification is not allowed: submit the evidence no later than 2 weeks after the assessment date.
  - ✓ If you cannot submit the evidence yourself: ask someone trustworthy to so do [eg Network of Hope students can ask a Support Tutor to forward it].

# Interruptions [1]

## What is an interruption of study?

- An interruption of study is when you decide to take a break from your studies.
- Students normally decide to interrupt studies when they are unable to study due to adverse personal circumstances, and the problems are such that a deferral of assessment would not be appropriate.
- During your interruption, you **can** informally undertake reading or other study. However, you **cannot** attend your course or undertake formal assessments.

## How long can I interrupt for?

- Normally, your interruption would be expected to end at the beginning of the next academic session [e.g., if you interrupted in December 2016, you would be expected to resume your studies by September 2017].
- However:
  - you may, instead, return when the next modules begin;
  - if you are unable to return on schedule, it may be possible to extend your interruption.

## Who should I approach to ask for an interruption?

- Interrupting studies is a serious step, so, before you decide to interrupt, you need to discuss your position, either by asking your Faculty Office to make an appointment with a Faculty Senior Academic Adviser or, if you are in the Network of Hope, by talking to a Support Tutor.
- Faculty Senior Academic Advisers and Link/Support Tutors:
  - are able to authorise interruptions;
  - may be able to suggest a better option than interruption;
  - will, if they authorise your request, complete an Interruption of Studies Form with you, and send it to the Student Administration team for processing.
- If you are an international student on a student visa:
  - you must also make sure that the International Unit in the Gateway Building know how long you wish to interrupt for, and why [your interruption may affect your student visa].

# Special/Alternative Assessment Arrangements [1]

## What is a special assessment arrangement?

- Special assessment arrangements are modified forms of assessment tasks, used when a student is fit to be assessed *in principle*, but, due to a disability, illness, injury or other personal circumstances, the normal arrangements would be unsuitable.
- Special assessment arrangements are designed to:
  - ✓ enable you to demonstrate that you have met the relevant learning outcomes, and
  - ✓ put you on a par with other students.
- Some examples of special assessment arrangements are:
  - ✓ the provision of additional time for an exam or class test;
  - ✓ rest breaks in exams.

## Special/Alternative Assessment Arrangements [2]

### Who should I approach to ask for a special assessment arrangement ?

- The [Student Development and Wellbeing team](#)
  - ✓ Contact them via [sdw@hope.ac.uk](mailto:sdw@hope.ac.uk) or 0151 291 3427.
  - ✓ Depending upon the nature of your problem, they may be able to offer special arrangements for learning and teaching as well as assessment.

## What are alternative assessments?

- Alternative assessments are coursework assignments that replace timed examinations or class tests for disabled students. They are intended to enable disabled students to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding or skills where the student would otherwise be unable to do so because of their disability
- Alternative assessments are designed to:
  - ✓ enable you to demonstrate that you have met the relevant learning outcomes , and
  - ✓ put you on a par with other students.

## Who should I approach to ask for an alternative assessment?

- The Student Development and Wellbeing team
  - ✓ Contact them via [sdw@hope.ac.uk](mailto:sdw@hope.ac.uk) or 0151 291 3427.
  - ✓ Depending upon the nature of your problem, they may be able to offer special arrangements for learning and teaching as well as an alternative assessment.

## When should I ask for an special assessment arrangements or alternative assessments?

- If you have a permanent disability:
  - ✓ contact SDW at the earliest possible opportunity [ideally, you will have done this before you entered the University]
    - SDW will summarise your arrangements in a Learning Support Plan, made available to relevant academic staff, support staff and Student Administration.
  - ✓ bear in mind that special examination arrangements for each year are normally agreed by the end of January
    - we cannot guarantee that later requests will be considered, but the University will, in exceptional circumstances give consideration to reasonable requests.
  - ✓ no special/alternative arrangement will apply retrospectively, and no work submitted before the granting of a special assessment arrangement or alternative assessment will be reassessed.

## When should I ask for an special assessment arrangements or alternative assessments?

- If you are affected by a short-term injury or illness:
  - ✓ contact SDW as soon as possible to discuss whether you will be fit to undertake assessments in the normal way.

# What Types of Adverse Circumstances will normally enable me to get an Extension, Deferral or Interruption?

- Here are some examples of circumstances we will normally accept as long as you provide independent corroborative evidence:
  - ✓ Illness
    - if you were ill for more than 48 hours, the evidence must specify the dates on which you were unable to study.
  - ✓ illness of a family member, partner or dependent.
    - the University will need evidence of the impact on your ability to study.
  - ✓ Bereavement.
  - ✓ Childbirth, or inability to study due to pregnancy.
  - ✓ Unforeseen or exceptional employment demands.
  - ✓ Jury Service [only if you were unable to get a deferral].
    - the University will expect you ask for your Jury Service to be deferred.
  - ✓ Domestic disruption or other acute personal circumstances.
- The above examples are only a guide. For example, circumstances that justify a short coursework extension might be insufficient to justify deferring coursework submission until the summer resit period.

# What Types of Adverse Circumstances will NOT normally enable me to get an Extension, Deferral or Interruption?

- Here are some examples of circumstances we will normally not accept.
  - ☹️ Routine transport issues
    - as opposed to an unforeseeable emergency.
  - ☹️ Holidays
    - [unless the holiday had been booked before you started your course].
  - ☹️ Misunderstanding a coursework submission deadline or an exam timetable
    - [unless you can demonstrate that the University had issued inaccurate or confusing information].
  - ☹️ IT or Computer failures
    - if Moodle or Turnitin is unavailable, email your assignment to your tutor;
    - [if you were unable to study due to a University computer, failure you might get a short extension corresponding to the duration of that failure].
  - ☹️ Bunching of assessment deadlines.
  - ☹️ Circumstances that you have not disclosed.
  - ☹️ Withdrawal of facilities due to debt.

# Where do I find more information?

- ✓ This information is for Guidance Only.
- ✓ For further information, consult Assessment Guideline AG 2 [*Mitigating Circumstances Policy – Concessions for Students with an Illness, Disability or Other Adverse Personal Circumstances*], available at:  
[www.hope.ac.uk/gateway/supportandwellbeing/studentadministration/understandingyourdegree/assessmentofstudentsguidelines](http://www.hope.ac.uk/gateway/supportandwellbeing/studentadministration/understandingyourdegree/assessmentofstudentsguidelines)
- ✓ If you have any queries:
  - if you are based at Hope Park or the Creative Campus, contact your Departmental or Faculty Office and ask for an appointment to talk to a Senior Academic Adviser;
  - if you are in the Network of Hope, contact a Support Tutor in your College.