

## Communication from Education Committee: Changes in relation Part 14 of the *Examination Regulations*.

This circular provides information on the new policy relating to Part 14 of the *Examination Regulations*, specifically extensions, late submissions, exam excusal, and withdraw and resubmit, approved by Taught Degrees Panel.

### Action required

- All divisions, departments/faculties, and colleges are asked to **note** the new policy which comes into effect from Michaelmas term 2020.
- Departments/faculties and colleges are particularly asked to **note** the continuation of provisions for self-certification and direct application for short extensions/excusal of late submission. This provision was introduced due to Covid-19 and has been retained for 2020-21, it will be reviewed at the end of the exams cycle.

If you have queries please contact Sophie Herzberg, Senior Policy Officer, Education Policy Support ([sophie.herzberg@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:sophie.herzberg@admin.ox.ac.uk)).

### Further information

1. In 2019-20 Taught Degrees Panel established a working group to review the provisions and processes related to Part 14 of the *Examination Regulations*, specifically focusing on extensions, late submissions, exam excusal and withdraw and resubmit. The working group included a wide range of college, department, student and central representation.
2. Part 14 of the Examination Regulations briefly documents the University's approach to considering requests for taught students to have an extended deadline for a submission, to have work submitted late excused (waiving the academic penalty and late fee), or to have their non-appearance in an examination excused. There has previously been no formal policy to cover this area, the lack of which has made it difficult for students and colleges to navigate the process. It has also made it difficult for the Proctors and their clerks, who are responsible for considering applications, to make robust decisions.
3. The Part 14 working group agreed principles on which the revised regulations should be based, and the Panel approved a consultation in Hilary term 2020 in order to allow departments, faculties and colleges to submit their views on the proposals. Following consideration of the consultation responses, the Panel approved the policy in Trinity term 2020, with further minor changes approved in Michaelmas term 2020. Minor regulation changes have been approved and the policy has been incorporated into the *Exams and Assessment Framework*. Key provisions are provided as Annex A for

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easy reference. A student guide will be published on the Oxford Students website in due course.

4. The key principles of the policy are as follows:
  - The maximum length of an extension granted for the same piece of work under Part 14 is 12 weeks, whether in a single application or multiple applications.
  - Applications for extensions can be submitted no more than 4 weeks before the deadline and no later than 14 days after the deadline.
  - The application period of 14 days for extensions requested after the deadline starts from the time and day of the deadline, not the notification of non-submission.
  - Exam board dates should not be taken into consideration in relation to extension requests, although students should be made aware when an extension may lead to a delay in publication of their results.
  - The late presentation fee should be abolished (this has been implemented from 2020-21)
  - Applications for excusal from examinations can be submitted no more than 4 weeks before the examination and no later than 14 days after the examination.
  - Applications for excusal should only be made where a student is unable to attend an examination – where preparation for an examination has been impacted the student should follow the MCE process.
  - If a request is rejected by the Proctors, students cannot submit further evidence in a new application asking for the same period of extension but further applications can be made for the same piece of work if an extension has previously been granted, provided that the candidate's circumstances have not resolved and additional time is required.
  - Students may withdraw and resubmit work on one occasion up to the deadline, without requiring permission from the Proctors.
  - If a student realises they have submitted the incorrect or incomplete work, they have up to 7 days after the deadline to request permission to submit the correct work.
  - If a student submits work to the incorrect location, the recipient is encouraged to inform the student, however it remains the student's responsibility to submit to the correct place.
  - The outcome of extension applications in relation to group work should apply to all members of the group.
  - Continuing Education will continue to process its' own applications but will follow the revised University guidelines with the some exceptions.
5. Detailed policy provisions regarding grounds and supporting evidence are provided in Annex J of the Examinations and Assessment Framework. These include the provisions for self-certification that were a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. These have been tightened slightly for 2020-21 and will be reviewed at the end of the exam cycle.

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6. A number of areas were identified for further exploration, which will be undertaken in 2020-21. These areas are:
  - Late submission requests (work submitted after the deadline) – further exploration of whether students should be required to submit the work along with the extension application;
  - Whether responsibility for extensions/late submission of practical work should be delegated to exam boards and provided for in examination conventions, with final approval by the Proctors;

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Extracts from the EAF:

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### 8.2 Extensions and late submission

For provisions for late submission of open-book examinations, see section 9 below.

[Part 14](#) of the Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations within the Examination Regulations makes provisions for candidates to be able to seek from the Proctors:

- extensions to deadlines for submitted work
- excusal for work that has been submitted after the deadline
- excusal for being unable to attend timed examination (see section 9 below)

The regulations allow candidates to make applications under Part 14 for an extended deadline or for a late submission to be excused due to *illness or other urgent cause that is unforeseeable, unavoidable and/or insurmountable*. All requests are considered on a case-by-case basis and applications will be considered on the basis of the evidence provided to support the additional time sought, taking into account the study time lost.

Neither college nor candidate is permitted to approach the examiners directly to request an extension of time and candidates must **not** be offered extensions informally by tutors, supervisors, or departmental staff.

The provisions under Part 14 are for acute circumstances. Candidates with disabilities, chronic ill health or complex personal circumstances may require more substantial adjustments to teaching and assessment than can be accommodated through Part 14. Requests for adjustments that fall outside the remit of Part 14 should be submitted to Education Committee for consideration ([edcapplications@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:edcapplications@admin.ox.ac.uk)) – further details can be found in Annex F of the Exams and Assessment Framework.

For information on the evidence requirements in relation to applications, including provisions for self-certification, under Part 14 see *Annex J: Grounds and supporting evidence for applications under Part 14*.

Candidates may apply directly to the Proctors if on the basis of self-certification, otherwise applications must be submitted via their college or department.

The Department of Continuing Education (OUDCE) has delegated permission from the Proctors to consider extension requests and exam excusals under Part 14. Students in OUDCE must submit their requests via an online form – further details are available from <https://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/about/late-submission-policy>.

Requests for OUDCE students follow the same policy as for the rest of the University, with the exception of extension requests after the deadline. OUDCE students have 14 calendar days after the deadline to submit the work, and a further 7 calendar days to submit an application for the extension, i.e. 21 calendar days in total.

#### 8.2.1 Timeframe for requesting an extension

Candidates may request an extension up to 4 weeks before and up to 14 calendar days after the submission deadline.

If an extension request is received later than 14 calendar days after the submission deadline, the Proctors cannot consider the request. An application can be made to Education Committee requesting dispensation from the requirement to make the application

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within 14 days of the deadline, but evidence must be provided as to why it was not possible for the candidate to make the request within 14 days. If a dispensation is granted, the original request for an extension will then be considered as a separate matter by Education Committee.

### *8.2.2 Length of extensions*

The maximum total length of extensions for the same piece of work is 12 weeks. This may be a result of single or multiple applications.

Candidates may apply for multiple sequential extensions for the same piece of work, however if an extension request is rejected by the Proctors, candidates cannot submit further evidence in a new application asking for the same period of extension. Further applications may be made for the same piece of work if an extension has previously been granted provided that the candidate's circumstances have not resolved and additional time is required. Additional evidence will be required even if the underlying grounds are the same.

If the extension being requested is greater than 12 weeks or will take the total length of extension beyond 12 weeks, the application cannot be considered by the Proctors and will be referred back to the college or department to consider what other action may be appropriate. This could include suspension, withdrawal, or an application to Education Committee for a major adjustment for disability. Advice can be sought from Education Policy Support on the options available.

### *8.2.3 Timeframe for requesting a late submission be excused*

Candidates may request that any late penalties applied to work submitted after the deadline be excused up to 14 calendar days after the submission deadline. The work must have already been submitted at the time the request is made, otherwise an extension should be requested instead.

Work submitted beyond 14 calendar days after the original deadline or any previously agreed extension is considered a technical fail (see 8.2.6 and 8.2.7), applications received after 14 days will be referred to Education committee under the process noted in 8.2.1.

### *8.2.4 Group submissions*

For group submissions, if an extension or late submission application is received on behalf of one member of the group, the outcome will be applied to all members. This means that if an extension is not granted, the late penalty will 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.

### *8.2.5 Appeals*

If a candidate is not satisfied with a Proctor's decision (including a decision made by OUDCE under delegated authority) they may submit an appeal to Education Committee.

### *8.2.6 Marking of work submitted late and late penalties*

Work submitted electronically for open book examinations within 5 minutes after the deadline should not be considered as late. Penalties for assessment deferred from Trinity term 2020 and taken in Michaelmas term 2020 are as detailed in the 2019/20 EAF.

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Examiners may mark work submitted up to fourteen days late after the notification of non-submission and release the mark. The examiners should impose an academic penalty according to the scale published in their examination conventions (see **Error! Reference source not found.**), *unless* the Proctors have notified the chair that the late submission has been excused.

The examiners should not mark work submitted fifteen or more days late after the notification of non-submission, unless instructions have been received from the Proctors that the candidate has made a successful application for an extension or late submission waiver, but should be recorded as a non-submission or 'technical fail'.

### 8.2.7 Consequences of non-submission

The following rules apply to candidates who fail to submit work for examination and so receive a 'technical fail' ([ER 14](#)).

- University Examinations in which honours are awarded (except Honour Moderations in Classics) (i.e. all or Part of the Second Public Examination): examiners should fail the candidate in the whole examination or Part of the examination.
- University Examinations in which honours are not awarded or Honour Moderations in Classics (i.e. First Public Examination, undergraduate and postgraduate certificates and diplomas, Masters): examiners should fail the candidate only in the assessment unit in question. If the assessment unit includes other assessment items (such as a written exam or group assignment) these should also be failed.

See **Error! Reference source not found.** for a tabular representation of the consequences of non-submission of an assessment unit which is not excused by the Proctors (a 'technical fail').

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### 8.2.8 Incomplete submissions or submissions in error

Candidates who have submitted incomplete work or the wrong file may withdraw and resubmit on one occasion before the submission deadline, without the permission of the Proctors.

Candidates who wish to request permission to withdraw and resubmit after the submission deadline must apply to the Proctors within 7 calendar days of the deadline. Permission will only be granted where

- the file is corrupt and unable to be accessed; or
- where the declaration of authorship is missing; or
- the wrong file has been submitted (e.g. a draft, other piece of work); and
- the candidate can demonstrate that the document they wish to submit in place has not been modified since the original submission deadline.

In cases where a corrupt or incorrect file is discovered by an examiner during the marking process the Proctors can grant permission for withdraw and resubmit, but this will only be approved if the candidate can demonstrate that the document they wish to submit in place has not been modified since the original submission deadline. The candidate will have to provide their replacement submission within 7 calendar days of being notified of the error.

It is a candidate's responsibility to ensure that they know the correct place to submit work, whether that be electronically or in hard copy. If a candidate submits to the incorrect location,

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the recipient is encouraged to notify the candidate as soon as possible but the responsibility remains with the candidate to forward the submission to the correct location.

If there is legitimate confusion over submission location due to an error (e.g. one location stated in the Examination Regulations and another in the course handbook), this should be dealt with as a dispensation from the regulations granted by Education Committee.

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### 9.6 Absence of a candidate from a timed examination

If a candidate is unable to attend a timed examination, they may make an application to the Proctors for permission for that non-attendance to be excused on the grounds of 'illness or other urgent cause that is unforeseeable, unavoidable and/or insurmountable' ([ER 14](#)).

Applications may be made up to four weeks in advance of the examination or up to 14 days after the non-appearance. In all cases, the applications will be considered on the basis of the evidence provided. Applications must be made via a candidate's college or department.

Applications for excusal cannot be considered if a candidate has attended any part of the examination. For open-book examinations, applications can only be considered if the student has not downloaded or accessed the paper. Colleges should apply to the Proctors with this information using the standard exam excusal process within 14 days of the date of the examination.

For information on the evidence requirements in relation to applications under Part 14 see *Annex J: Grounds and supporting evidence for applications under Part 14*.

## Annex J: Grounds and supporting evidence for applications under Part 14

1. Applications under [Part 14 of the Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations](#) should be submitted with appropriate evidence to show that a candidate's circumstances fall under the definition of 'illness or other urgent cause that is unforeseeable, unavoidable and/or insurmountable'.
2. Any evidence must give a clear indication of the time period during which the candidate was impacted by the circumstances, be dated and provided in English.

### Acute illness, injury or exacerbation of a chronic condition

3. 'Acute illness' is a term that can cover a very wide range of severity of situations, including what might be consider 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.

#### *Medical evidence*

4. Medical evidence should be contemporaneous and should confirm the diagnosis and observable symptoms rather than be a report of what the students has told the medical

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practitioner. The evidence should confirm the period of illness, rather than attempt to determine how much additional time the candidate needs to complete the work.

5. It is expected that medical certificates should normally be provided by a doctor, but certificates from college nurses are also sufficient for short extensions of up to one week or short extensions in relation to a flare up of an existing condition.
6. Any documents from a hospital related to injuries or accidents should provide dates of the accident and a discharge summary, further medical evidence may be required for any ongoing effects or recovery period.
7. Details of a scheduled hospital appointment may be considered acceptable evidence for an extension or excusal, if it can be shown that it would not be possible or reasonable to rearrange the appointment.
8. Statements of fitness to work will only be considered valid evidence for a request if the statement includes details about the dates affected and the impact on the student.

### *Circumstances under which a student can self-certify*

9. A candidate may 'self-certify' in support of an extension or late submission application in the following circumstances:
  - For acute short term illnesses (such as migraine, norovirus, gastroenteritis, flu, or diarrhoea), up to 7 days per submission.
  - For covid-19 (either due to illness or to other substantial impacts), up to 14 days per submission.
10. In these circumstances a candidate may apply directly to the Proctors for the extension or late submission excusal, rather than needing to make a request through their college or department.
11. In relation to covid-19, candidates who are self-isolating but otherwise well and not impacted by other adverse circumstances (such as additional caring responsibilities due to household isolation) would be expected to submit assessed work and complete online open book exams as usual.

### *Chronic conditions*

12. For candidates with disabilities or chronic illnesses that fluctuate, the entitlement to request an extension of up to 7 days may be recorded in their Student Support Plan as an appropriate support mechanism in the event of an exacerbation of their condition. Where this is the case an application can be made directly to the Proctors. Repeat applications or applications for longer than 7 days will require further medical evidence.

## **'Urgent cause' other than illness**

### *Bereavement*

13. For bereavements, candidates should provide as evidence a supporting statement explaining the relationship to the deceased and the impact on their ability to complete the relevant assignment or attend the relevant examination. Additional evidence may be

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supplied, including a death certificate, an order of service, or a published obituary. Evidence of travel arrangements may be provided if a funeral took place abroad.

### *Maternity, paternity or adoption leave*

14. Candidates who have chosen not to suspend for reasons of maternity, paternity or adoption and who require an extension or excusal from attendance at an exam may submit an application using a birth certificate (for a short extension), evidence from a doctor or midwife, or other evidence showing the period of maternity, paternity or adoption leave. Applications on these grounds are subject to the same application time limits and maximum period of extension available.

### *Work commitments*

15. Full-time students cannot request extensions or excusal on the grounds of work-related commitments. This includes volunteering, internships and interviews.
16. 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 normally be provided by the employer. For 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*

17. 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 requirement to participate in legal proceedings*

18. 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*

19. As the date of a religious observance is known in advance it is not covered by Part 14 (as it isn't an 'urgent cause'). There are other mechanisms through which candidates 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.

### *Significant adverse personal or family circumstances*

20. Significant adverse personal or family circumstances may impact a candidates' ability to undertake assessment and in cases where the circumstances are exceptional, unexpected and time-limited an application for an extension or to be excused from attending an exam may be appropriate. Applications should be supported by appropriate evidence such as a statement from the candidate describing the impact of the circumstance on their ability to work/attend the exam. Application could also be supported by a statement from an appropriate independent person. This could include a

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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 the candidate's control*

21. There are some circumstances in which academic or administrative difficulties may be considered adequate grounds for an extension where these have been outside of the candidate's control. Independent evidence would need to be provided to support the application. Administrative or technical difficulties in relation to submitting work electronically are not considered valid grounds for extensions or excusals.

### **Circumstances not considered valid grounds for applications under Part 14**

22. The following 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 **Error! Reference source not found.** 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.