

## Graduate School of the Environment

### Extension and Mitigation Policy and Procedures

Version 4.1 January 2026

#### 1. Introduction and Scope

- 1.1. It is each student's responsibility to undertake the required assessments for their programme of study on or by the dates set by the Graduate School. However, we recognise that students may encounter personal difficulties or circumstances outside of their control that affect their ability to attempt or complete assessments. This policy provides details of processes to support students in these circumstances
- 1.2. This document describes the procedure for requesting extensions to published coursework submission deadlines (a separate procedure is available to students wishing to apply for mitigation - see Section 3).
- 1.3. This policy and application form is for use by students enrolled on all programmes validated either by Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) or University of East London (UEL).
- 1.4. Any form of application that is incomplete or not correctly submitted will follow normal CAT policies and procedures for late submission of assessment.
- 1.5. Students will be able to apply for a 7 day extension where a student needs a brief period of extra support or extra time to submit an assessment or mitigation where the extra support is more extensive.

#### 2. Coursework Extensions

- 2.1. Where illness or other verifiable cause will prevent a student from completing an assessment, consideration will be given to allowing a 7 day extension upon receipt of a completed application form.
- 2.2. Applications for a 7 day coursework extension should be made by **no later than 72 hours before a published deadline**. Applications received within 72 hours of the deadline **may** still be considered. However applications submitted **after the submission deadline has passed cannot be considered** unless there are special mitigating circumstances that prevented the student from applying.
- 2.3. In one academic year, a student normally has two opportunities to request a 7 day assessment extension for the assessment(s) on a module (a maximum of two modules per term). This applies to both full and part time modes of study.
  - Term 1 Modules with teaching beginning between September to December inc.

- Term 2 Modules with teaching beginning from January to April inc.
- Term 3 Modules with teaching beginning from May to July inc.

Beyond 2 requests per term we would normally be expecting students to apply for mitigation.

- 2.4. A student cannot apply for a 7 day extension for a reassessment.
- 2.5. As dissertations and final design projects can span multiple terms and have a high credit weighting of 60 or 120 credits, a student cannot apply for a self-certified extension for the Dissertation or the Final Design Project.
- 2.6. 7 day assessment extensions are primarily suitable for written assignments. Assignments ineligible for a 7 day assessment extension include live presentations, group work, or mathematical assignments, where students may gain unfair access to questions or answers. If you are uncertain if your assignment is eligible for a 7 day assessment extension, seek advice from the module leader.
- 2.7. Any student wishing to engage with a 7 day extension or extenuation can only do so by submitting an application. The link to the 7 day Extension Request Form and the Mitigation Application Form can be found within these guidelines.
- 2.8. An extension will extend an assessment deadline up to a maximum of 7 calendar days. No further extension to that assessment deadline will be permitted.
- 2.9. Work submitted up to 7 days late without an agreed extension request, will be capped at the pass mark 50%. Work submitted after the 7 calendar days deadline will receive a zero grade (**non submission**) and fail.
- 2.10. Applications for a 7-day extension do not need to be supported by third-party evidence. However, the student is required to provide a concise summary of their current circumstances and what has led to the specific 7-day extension request.
- 2.11. Where a student with Additional Learning Needs has approved ALN additional assessment time provision for written assignments in place through an approved Student Access Agreement, they may also apply for an additional 7-day extension (as described in paragraphs 2.1-2.3) should additional circumstances they are encountering require it.
- 2.12. Applications for coursework extensions must be made via the completion and submission of a 'Coursework Extension Request Form' submitted electronically. This can be found in the Students Forms Hub via the following link: [Forms Hub](#)  
Please contact the Student Support Team if you would prefer to submit an application via another format or required any additional information about applying for an extension.
- 2.13. The applicant will be informed by email when an extension request has been received, and if the application is approved the published submission date will be put back by the 7 calendar days extension that has been agreed. The 7-day extension will be applied equally to part time and full time students as the extension pertains to the module and not the mode of attendance.

- 2.14. Coursework should be submitted through the usual submission route (normally via Turnitin on Moodle for UEL students or Speedgrader on Canvas for LJMU). Work that is submitted late and without an authorised extension request will be subject to the normal assessment rules and regulations of LJMU or UEL, subject to your degree and validating partner. Subsequent resubmission will be capped at 50%.
- 2.15. For students with approved extensions, draft submissions will not be considered by academic staff within the extension period.
- 2.16. In circumstances where an extension of up to 7 working days is unlikely to be sufficient, students may apply for mitigation (see next section).
- 2.17. Where students submit assessments after the published deadline, there may be a delay on receiving feedback beyond the published feedback date.

### **3. Research Degrees M.Res**

- 3.1. The deadlines and processes in Section 3 relate to the Research stage of Post Graduate Research i.e. the 120 MRes credit research project. Students on the taught stage of their course adhere to the deadlines as per the rest of this policy.
- 3.2. Applications for Mitigating Circumstances relating to late submission (extension) must normally be submitted no later than 3 months prior to a student's thesis submission date.
- 3.3. Applications for an extension on the Postgraduate Research thesis will also need to follow the validating University processes. Extensions will not normally be granted for a period longer than 6 months.
- 3.4. Applications will be expected to show that some unexpected/unavoidable circumstances have arisen which have significantly and adversely affected the progress of the research, and against which precautions could not reasonably have been taken.
- 3.5. Postgraduate Research students applying for an extension need to ensure that applying for an extension does not detrimentally impact continuing in their studies.
- 3.6. If you are an overseas student on a student visa, an extension to your maximum enrolment period may have implications for your immigration status. Please check with Student Support before applying for an extension.

### **4. Mitigation due to unforeseen personal circumstances**

- 4.1. A student may make an application for mitigation where timely, severe, acute and unforeseeable circumstances occur that prevent them from attempting a summative assessment task and where the offer of a 7 day extension is insufficient or inappropriate and which are not already taken into account by Reasonable Adjustments previously agreed for Additional Learning Needs.
- 4.2. Students who attempt and submit a summative assessment task declare themselves 'fit to attempt' that assessment task and applications for the consideration of Mitigation are not normally permitted for that assessment. However, in exceptional circumstances a

student may apply to defer an assessment attempt when there is clear evidence that they were not in a fit state to decide whether they were fit to attempt the assessment.

- 4.3. The Graduate School defines relevant personal circumstances as:
  - 4.3.1. Unforeseeable - in that you could have no prior knowledge of the event concerned.
  - 4.3.2. Unpreventable - in that you could do nothing reasonably in your power to prevent such an event.
  - 4.3.3. Relevant - You must be able to link the event or circumstance, and its impact, to the period for which the application is being made.
  - 4.3.4. Corroborated - An application for mitigation must meet the normal requirements for independent documentary evidence (see [Supporting Evidence section 4](#)).
  - 4.3.5. Significant - expected to have a serious impact on your academic performance.
- 4.4. Ongoing long term circumstances are not usually unforeseeable within the timeframe of the module. In these circumstances a student should contact student support to discuss their situation, where options such as consideration of additional learning needs or intermission/leave of absence may be discussed in the first instance.
- 4.5. CAT's intention is to respond to students sympathetically and to support them in addressing the assessment shortfall. CAT can only do this if it is aware of the situation, and it is therefore the student's responsibility to inform CAT of such circumstances as soon as possible after they occur. Documentary evidence will be required to support claims made under mitigation procedures.
- 4.6. Applications for mitigation can be made at any time but should normally be made by no later than **1 calendar week or 5 working days after the submission deadline whichever is longest**. Applications received after this period of time may still be considered up until the release of assessment marks; however applications submitted after this deadline has passed cannot be considered unless there are special ongoing mitigating circumstances that prevented the student from applying. Ongoing mitigating circumstances need to be made clear within the provided evidence.
- 4.7. Students waiting to hear the outcome of an evidenced mitigation can still submit work up to 7 days after the original submission date if wished. In these circumstances if the mitigation is granted then the student is still eligible for mitigation and can resubmit the work again at the next assessment date without penalty.
- 4.8. Mitigation requests are considered anonymously by a review panel. Therefore each request should include supporting documentation and not refer to previous mitigation requests as evidence.
- 4.9. Where a mitigation request is granted, the submission deadline will usually be the next available resubmission point.
- 4.10. If multiple module deadlines are on the same date an application should be made for each assessment, but both can use the same evidence.
- 4.11. If a mitigation request is rejected, then either the original assessment mark (if submitted) will stand or if no submission has been received the assessment will be

considered as a non-submission and receive a 0 mark. If a resubmission is then required, the assessment mark will be capped as per the assessment policy.

- 4.12. The mitigation policy and application form is available from the GSE forms hub at the following link [Forms Hub](#)

Please contact the Student Support team if you would prefer to apply via another format or require any additional information about applying for extenuating circumstances.

- 4.13. **A student can apply for either a 7 day extension or mitigation. There cannot be a dual application for both.**
- 4.14. If a student has an extension granted, but thereafter feels they are unable to engage with an assessment(s), in exceptional circumstances they are eligible to apply for Mitigation. In such circumstances, the extension is rescinded upon confirmation of extenuation being granted. If Mitigation is not granted the extension remains.
- 4.15. Where a student has submitted an extension and the Graduate School feels that there may be a need for more support or the student to engage with extenuation, a recommendation will be made to the extenuation panel and/or relevant support services.
- 4.16. There are no termly limits on the number of requests for mitigation. However, under normal circumstances the number of separate requests to extend a single assessment deadline under the mitigation process is two.
- 4.17. Note, students can submit draft incomplete versions of their coursework at any time during the module, eg to check for plagiarism. **If mitigation is granted any draft work submitted prior to the revised submission date will not normally be assessed. If the revised submission date is reached and no final work has been submitted by that point, then the latest draft version will be used for assessment purposes.**

## 5. Supporting Evidence for Mitigation Applications

- 5.1. In all cases it is a requirement to provide us with independent, third party evidence to support a Mitigation request confirming the reason(s) why you are applying e.g. a fit-note or medical letter in the case of illness lasting more than one week; or a letter from employer if due to unexpected work commitments etc. Ideally any supporting evidence should be on headed paper or be official documentation.
- 5.2. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the application is submitted and that all relevant information is made available to the Mitigation Panel. A verbal notification regarding Personal Circumstances is not sufficient. When filling out an application form, a student must ensure they record exactly which assessments have been affected and unambiguously link this to the modules they relate to. They must clearly state why the circumstances adversely affected their ability to submit the assessment, and the reasons given must be linked to the dates of the assessment.
- 5.3. The following table is non exhaustive and provided for guidance only, and lists some common circumstances where requesting mitigation is / is not considered acceptable:

### Acceptable reasons

### Examples of evidence requirements

- If you are taken ill during an assessment period, or caring for someone taken ill during that period;
- Sudden, unexpected incident related to pregnancy e.g. miscarriage
- If you are involved in an accident or serious incident that prevents you meeting an assignment deadline
- If you experience an immediate family bereavement or illness that prevents you meeting an assignment deadline;
- Serious personal problems such as relationship issues;
- Victim of serious crime or trauma. Involvement in a natural disaster or terrorist incident.
- Unexpected professional or financial problems;
- Delays in obtaining ethical approval and/or risk assessment or delays in accessing support.
- Independent verifiable evidence is required in all other circumstances and the Student Support team will be happy to provide advice if needed.
- In the case of personal illness, a 5 day self-certificate is permissible. Longer extensions will require medical evidence such as a doctor's note, prescription or discharge letter.
- Retrospective disclosure to CAT of a Pregnancy supported by evidence from doctor/midwife/ nurse/hospital.
- Written report from police or medical evidence.
- Death certificate, order of service
- Solicitor's letter, letter from GP.
- Written report from police or other legal authority e.g. solicitor.
- Crime reference number
- Financial statements
- Letter from employer. NB Not if self employed
- In these circumstances Student Support will also be an acceptable source of evidence.

### **Non-acceptable reasons**

- Minor illnesses e.g. coughs, colds or hay fever
- Computer failure or printing failure at home, lost assignments;
- Holidays, house moves or other events that were planned or could reasonably have been expected.
- Unverifiable travel difficulties;
- Not realising deadline is imminent or poor time management;
- Wanting 'to get it perfect';
- Normal assessment stress;
- Minor life events, unless the circumstances have had a disproportionate effect;
- Any other event that could have reasonably been expected or any anticipated commitments (weddings, changes in employment, sporting competitions etc.) interfering with completion of course work.

### **Unacceptable Evidence**

- Screenshots from smartphones
- Photos of an injury, images of medication, generic appointment letters.

- Screenshots of websites where there is no identifiable link to the applicant
  - Emails of support from CAT staff in the absence of primary verifiable evidence. NB Additional Learning Needs (ALN) related evidence provided by staff may be used where unforeseen circumstances are relevant
  - routine medical tests
  - medical evidence in relation to other people without their consent
  - Evidence not written in English – see 4.6 below
- 5.4. If you have experienced sexual violence, you do not need to tell us what happened, but there may be other forms of evidence you can provide. Some examples of this include a supporting letter from a Sexual Assault Referral Centre, an Independent Sexual Violence Adviser, or a voluntary organisation, such as Rape Crisis, Women's Aid, Victim Support, The Survivors Trust or Male Survivors Partnership.
- 5.5. Supporting evidence can be uploaded directly if using the online application form, or alternatively please email or post your supporting documents to the Student Support Office.
- 5.6. All supporting evidence will be treated in accordance with our Data Protection policies, further details of which can be found in our [Privacy Notice](#). See [section 9 Confidentiality and Anonymity](#) for more details.
- 5.7. Evidence should be provided in English. If the original evidence is in another language this should be provided along with a translation.
- 5.8. Occasionally the panel will request additional verifiable evidence to support the application. In these circumstances the panel will only review your application on one further occasion. Should you miss the deadline for resubmitting evidence then the panel will not accept further evidence.

## 6. Notification of decisions

- 6.1. The decision to accept or reject a mitigation application will be recorded on the Graduate School's Student Record system. Students will be notified of the outcome via email in a timely manner. An authorised extension request will still have access to the full range of marks. The exception to this is that normally a request for a reassessment is not allowed. In this case the usual rules for capping deferrals or reassessment marks apply.
- 6.2. If an extension is not appropriate, then the Module Leader has the option of setting an alternative assessment if a student is unable to complete an assessment task in a timely manner; or if the extension would disadvantage other students, or unduly advantage the student who is applying for the extension. Any alternative assessment should be of an equivalent level and standard to the original assessment. It must assess the same learning outcomes as the original assessment. CAT expects that an appropriate alternative to the standard assessment is available for students who are unable to undertake the standard assessment due to a long-term illness, disability, or personal circumstances.

## 7. Appeals

- 7.1. There will be no appeal against the decision of the Mitigation Panel other than on the grounds that special mitigating circumstances may apply or that there has been a material administrative error in handling the application. Disagreement with the decision of the Panel is not in itself grounds for appeal.
- 7.2. Students must lodge the appeal with the Student Support Office within 10 working days of notification of the outcome. Please contact the Student Support team in the first instance should you wish to appeal a decision.
- 7.3. If an appeal is upheld, the Mitigation Panel may be required to reconvene to reconsider its decision. Where the decision(s) of the Panel is modified, the Board of Examiners may also be required to reconsider the student's profile in the light of any change(s) made by the Panel.

## **8. IT Failure**

- 8.1. As mentioned in section 5.2 computer or printer failure is not normally considered as an acceptable reason for exceptional circumstances.
- 8.2. If a student experiences a network or hardware fault at the point of submission, they should take a date-stamped screenshot or photograph of any error message prior to the deadline and submit a copy of the assignment with the screenshot to the Student Support Office. They should then submit their assignment as soon as possible through the usual route once the fault is resolved and send a copy of the captured error message to the School for consideration. The assignment submitted must also carry the pre-deadline date stamp and not have been further worked on subsequent to this.
- 8.3. Students are reminded to make regular backups of the work they are undertaking to minimise the impact of any IT failure – preferably to remote storage such as the OneDrive cloud storage platform available to you through your Office365 account; failure to back up work regularly and leaving completion or submission of work so late that students cannot find another suitable computer or printer to complete/submit their work, are not normally be accepted as grounds for mitigation.
- 8.4. Students might wish to consider submitting part completed work so that there is some record of achievement should there be an IT failure – this is not a requirement but is good practice and would provide evidence of work completed, as part of any consideration.

## **9. Additional Key Information**

- 9.1. In the event of national emergency such as the COVID-19 pandemic which has longer term mitigation that applies to the whole student body, temporary amendments may be made to adapt this policy in line with guidance from LJMU and/or UEL. In these circumstances all students will be contacted with any changes that are implemented
- 9.2. A 7 day extension should not be used as a last-minute attempt to engage with an assessment. A student should engage with their academic tutors and discuss any issues

or challenges they may be facing as part of a discussion around support, where extension may be one option available to them.

- 9.3. A student should not submit a 7 day request to alleviate conflicting assessment deadlines, especially if it has been created due to another assessment having an extension granted. Students are expected to manage their own workloads and time management to avoid being impacted upon by a minor illness or other insignificant cause.
- 9.4. It is not expected that a student would require repeated changes to deadlines. Repeated requests for extensions to deadlines would normally activate a detailed review of a disabled student's current support, or to consider whether a student who does not have reasonable adjustments in place requires them.
- 9.5. Where a student has submitted a 7-day extension request and the school feels that there may be a need for more support, or that the student would be better to engage with Mitigation, a recommendation will be made to the Mitigation Panel and/or relevant support services.
- 9.6. If, owing to work, family or other personal or professional commitments, you find that you do not have sufficient time for your studies, and the Mitigation Policy is not suitable, you may apply for intermission/leave of absence. An intermission or leave of absence can be requested for a period of up to a year with the approval of the relevant Programme Leader, and during this period no modules may be studied. Details of intermission/leave of absence can be found in the Student Welfare and Support Guide and Student Withdrawal Policy – Section 5. It should be noted that if a student takes intermission/leave of absence, and they are being funded by Student Finance England / Wales or other funders, we recommend contacting that the student contacts the relevant body with details of their change in circumstances. In these circumstances please contact CAT's Student Finance team for further advice.
- 9.7. A student's application will not be carried forward between assessment opportunities, e.g. from term 1 or 2 to term 3 or from one year's assessment period to the next. A new application will need to be submitted which demonstrates that the circumstances are ongoing and affecting the student's ability to submit or attend subsequent assessments. In extreme circumstances, CAT reserves the right to defer any assessment item.
- 9.8. In the absence of either an extension, mitigation or intermission/leave of absence being approved for an assignment, then the normal regulations regarding late submission of coursework will be implemented.
- 9.9. The mitigation panel meets typically on a monthly basis, therefore there may be some time between submission of your application and a response. Also the panel may reject your mitigation application. Therefore you should still complete the assessment as soon as possible rather than await the panel outcome.

## **10. Confidentiality and Anonymity**

- 10.1. All applications and evidence will be held securely and treated confidentially and will only be viewed by those directly involved in the decision-making process.

- 10.2. The documentation for the mitigation panel will have had any personal identifying information removed to maintain confidentiality. Hence each application should be self-contained to be considered on its own merits. Therefore, it should not be assumed that the panel has any access to previous application information.
- 10.3. Following the meeting of the Board of Examiners and any subsequent appeals period, the form and supporting evidence will be disposed of in line with the CATs Data Policy NOTE: the appeals period includes the opportunity for the student to submit to Stages 1 and 2 of the internal appeals process and to progress to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) following the completion of Stage 2. Students have up to one year from the completion of internal procedures to submit their complaint to the OIA. Thus, applications and evidence will be subject to disposal only after the timeframe for application to the OIA has elapsed.

## 11. Updates to Policy v 3.2 dated October 2025

Minor typographical and spelling errors corrected.

Section 3 MRes degree section added.

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By Academic Council

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