

# Students Guide: Extensions, Deferrals and Concessions

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## 1. Principles

If extenuating circumstances have a significant effect on your ability to complete an assignment, attend a compulsory seminar or sit an examination you may be provided with an additional opportunity to complete the task, without penalty, provided that you follow the procedures below.

Please note that handing in an assignment, attending a seminar or undertaking an examination acts as a declaration that you consider yourself to be fit to make a valid attempt at the assessment. No claim of extenuating circumstances will subsequently be accepted.

If you hand in a piece of coursework after submitting a request for a deferral, the request will be disregarded, and your work will be marked in the usual way.

## 2. Definitions

Extenuating circumstances are genuine circumstances beyond your control or ability to foresee, and which seriously impair your assessed work.

Extenuating circumstances do not excuse you from completing formal assessments. You still have to demonstrate that you have achieved the required learning outcomes to pass each module, and hence meet the course requirements for progression or certificate of completion, at a point in time when the extenuating circumstances no longer affect your performance.

Separate procedures apply to cases where an assessment is affected by exceptional circumstances for all students, such as disruption in an examination room. Such events are reported to the Assessment Board.

An extension is defined as permission to hand in a piece of assessed work after the published hand-in date, without incurring a penalty.

If you are granted an extension, this will normally be for a period of up to five working days following the published hand-in date and time. If your circumstances are such that an extension of up to five days would not be sufficient or if you feel that, despite

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being granted an extension, your performance in an assessment will be seriously impaired, you may formally apply for a deferral of the assessment (please see below).

Extensions may not be possible for certain types of assessment (e.g. attendance at a compulsory seminar or undertaking an examination).

A deferral is defined as permission to delay an attempt at a particular assessment until after the relevant assessment boards have met. A deferral normally involves a new, but equivalent, assessment task.

A concession is defined as permission to re-take the examination or assessment, with it being treated as a first attempt with the mark awarded not being capped. A concession will only be granted where you can provide evidence that your performance or attendance at an examination or assessment has been impaired by unforeseen illness or some other unforeseeable circumstance which was outside your control, during or immediately before an assessment or examination.

### 3. What are my options?

If, due to extenuating circumstances, you consider yourself to be unable to attempt an assessment, or to meet an assessment deadline, you may submit a request, in advance of the submission date, for

- an extension to an assignment deadline, or
- a deferred attempt at the assessment, to take place at an appropriate time after the meeting of the programme assessment board (i.e. after the end of the normal teaching period).

You should consult the ACL Administration team as soon as the extenuating circumstances become apparent. They will be able to advise you on the most appropriate course of action.

If you request a deferral of assessment, and that deferral is granted, you will be required to retake the assessment at 'the next opportunity'. You should be aware that you may be required to take a break from your studies. The financial and other consequences of such a decision should be fully explored prior to your request for a deferral.

If you have a long-standing condition or disability, which affects your capacity to perform to your full potential in certain circumstances, you should discuss this in the first instance with your Tutor. You will still have to demonstrate achievement of the required learning outcomes to pass each module, and hence meet the requirements for progression or certificate of completion. If the ACL Administration Teams is formally notified of your condition, either when you enrol or as soon as the problem is officially diagnosed, and supporting documentary evidence is provided, it may be possible to make special, discretionary arrangements for assessments. Alternatively you may be advised to interrupt your studies or follow a reduced programme of study.

If a reduced programme of study is agreed you will be required to defer the remaining modules.

Where you can provide evidence that your performance or attendance at an examination or assessment has been impaired by unforeseen illness or some other unforeseeable circumstance which was outside your control, during or immediately before an assessment or examination, you can apply for a concession to have your examination or assessment result or attempt disregarded. This means that your results are processed as if the assessment or examination has never been taken. If your concession application is granted and the Board of Examiners allows you to re-take the examination or assessment, it will be treated as a first sit and the mark awarded will not be capped. However, should your application for a concession be rejected and you are offered another opportunity to re-sit, the mark will be capped at the pass rate for the assessment in question.

## 4. How do I make a request for an extension to a coursework deadline?

If you are unable to submit coursework by the specified date because of extenuating circumstances, you should contact the ACLT Administrator **before** the deadline date to request an extension (Telephone: 0203 174 0967 or email: [enquiries@costslawyer.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@costslawyer.co.uk)). When emailing you must mark the email "Urgent: from [your name]: Extension Request".

All applications for an extension to the coursework deadline must be submitted in writing using the **Extension/Deferral Application form**. This is available from the ACL website, the OLE or the ACL Administration Team.

Supporting third-party evidence **must** be provided either at the time of application (please see **section 7** below). Requests submitted after the due date will not normally be accepted.

You must lodge the application form with the ACL Training Administrators and not with individual tutors. The application will be considered and you will be notified by email (normally within 48 hours) of the outcome. If the request is approved, you will be given a new submission date. Providing you hand in your assignment on or before the extension submission date, you will receive marks for the work as if it were submitted on time.

Work submitted after the extension hand-in date will receive a mark of 0% and will make you eligible for a resit.

## 5. How do I make a request for deferral of assessment?

If you want to request deferral of assessments you should discuss the matter, at the time, with ACL Administration Team (Telephone: 0203 174 0967 or email: [enquiries@costslawyer.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@costslawyer.co.uk)) so that the extenuating circumstances and

consequences of deferral can be fully considered. When emailing you must mark the email "Urgent: from [your name]: Deferral Request".

All applications for deferral of assessment must be made in writing, **before** the due date of the assessed activity, using the **Extension/Deferral Application form**. This is available from the ACL website, the OLE or the main ACLT Office.

In exceptional circumstances, such as on the day of an examination, you may call the ACLT if you are prevented from attending due circumstances such as an accident or personal injury. In such cases a form will be completed on your behalf but you will be required to provide independent evidence as soon as possible after the incident.

Requests for deferrals should always be made as close as possible to the time of the circumstances described and before the date of the assessment. Applications made after this period will not be accepted, except where you can show (as supported by third-party evidence) that extremely serious circumstances beyond your control prevented you from contacting the ACLT in this period. Where more than one assessment is affected, the submission must be made before the first assessment.

Your request must clearly state the dates when your circumstances occurred and which assessments are affected. The form asks you to describe the extenuating circumstances and how they have or would impair your performance in the assessment. The form **MUST** be fully completed and include all relevant facts at the time of application. (Please see **section 6** below).

Supporting third party evidence **must** be attached to the form. (Please see **section 7** below).

You will have 7 days from the point of application to submit your third party evidence.

If your extenuating circumstances are of an exceptionally sensitive or personal nature, you may request that only the Head of Operations considers your request. In such cases you must mark your email "Confidential: from [your name] ", addressed to the Head of Operations, and attach the form and evidence.

Your completed deferral application form, together with supporting third party evidence, should be submitted to ACLT admin, **before the assessment date**.

If your application for deferral is accepted this will be confirmed to you by email by the ACLT Administrator who will notify you of the assessment(s) that are deferred and the date(s) by which you must attempt the assessment again. You will be required to retake the assessment "at the next opportunity". If your application is refused you must attempt the assessment otherwise an absence will be recorded and you will forfeit your right to a resit, and may jeopardise your place on the course.

If extenuating circumstances affect a further assessment opportunity (e.g. at the special resit time), you must make another submission for the period concerned. This could simply confirm that your earlier circumstances have continued, but it **must** be accompanied by new third party evidence covering the new period.

## 6. How do I make an application for a Concession?

The application for a concession must be made in writing (either by letter or an email) and submitted to the ACL Administration Team no later than 10 working days after the assessment was due or you sat the examination. You are required to provide objective evidence of the circumstances which you consider to have affected your performance. You should aim to collect any medical or other evidence either on the day itself or as close to as possible to the examination or assessment date. The ACL Administration Team will then determine if a concession should be granted.

Please note that Concessions are subject to the following caveats:

- ☑ The granting of a concession will not automatically result in any increase in the marks.
- ☑ Where you could have been reasonably expected to apply for an extension or deferral, an application for concession will not usually be granted.
- ☑ Pre-existing or chronic medical conditions are not usually considered as valid mitigating circumstances in themselves since these are known of beforehand and can be addressed by means of a Learning Support Agreement or special arrangements including enhanced pastoral support. The onus is on students to disclose in advance of examinations or assessments any ongoing conditions they feel may impact on their performance and take the appropriate course of action to address the situation.

## 7. How much information do I need to provide?

You must include all relevant facts. **Your application may be rejected if you fail to complete the details concerning identification of the module(s) and assessed component(s) for which you are making an application.**

You must ensure that you provide the specific assessment dates. You must state the date from which the extenuating circumstances affected your work, and the date that you were able to resume your normal pattern of study. These dates should correspond with any information provided in your third-party evidence. **You must also make sure that you explain the impact that these circumstances have had on your performance.** Try to make your submission clear, but concise.

## 8. What evidence do I need to provide?

Requests for extensions, deferrals or concessions **must** be accompanied by supporting evidence, normally from an independent third party. You are advised to keep a copy of any evidence you submit. We realise that in some cases it may be difficult to do this, however lack of third-party evidence will mean that your request is unlikely to be granted.

Retrospective medical certificates and notes stating that you **claim** to have been unwell may not be accepted. Medical evidence must bear the GP's practice stamp, and/or be on appropriate letter-headed paper.

Please note that some doctors will charge a fee for providing you with medical certification. The ACLT is not liable to pay this fee on your behalf.

Examples of other third party evidence that might be acceptable in support of non-medical circumstances may include:

- ☑ A letter from a doctor or employer concerning bereavement, accompanied by a copy of the death certificate.
- ☑ A letter from a counsellor who you have been seeing.
- ☑ A letter from the Human Resources department of an organisation you are employed at verifying extenuating circumstances.

In **exceptional** circumstances a letter of support from your Tutor may be acceptable, if s/he knows your circumstances well, but other third party evidence should still normally accompany this.

**If you knowingly submit false or forged evidence, you will render yourself liable to disciplinary proceedings as set out in the ACLT General Regulations.**

## 9. What circumstances are not taken into account?

Circumstances arising from your own negligence or inability to organise your time will not be taken into account. You are expected to plan ahead and give yourself adequate time to complete your work. Extensions without penalty will only be granted for external factors beyond your control; extensions will not be granted merely because the work is incomplete - in these cases the work should be submitted to secure a resit attempt. You are advised to plan for last-minute problems by completing coursework **before** the stated deadline.

If you have days of religious observance, which coincide with your preparation for assessments, you must plan your work to take account of these.

Getting the date of a coursework submission wrong will not be taken into account where this is not beyond your control.

Minor ailments such as coughs, colds, headaches, stomach ache, hay fever etc. where symptoms may be relieved by over the counter medication are, by themselves, not normally considered as extenuating circumstances.

Other domestic or personal disruptions that are not normally considered to be acceptable include social activities, moving house, holidays, weddings etc. where normally you either have some control over the date, or may choose not to participate.

Loss or theft of assignment material is also not normally regarded as an acceptable reason; it is your responsibility to make appropriate backup copies. A police "theft report" is not proof of actual theft.

These examples are not intended to be exhaustive. An indicative summary of what may or may not be considered as acceptable evidence is shown below.

## 10. How extenuating circumstances are judged?

In considering your case, the ACLT will determine whether the extenuating circumstances cited by you are genuine circumstances beyond your control or ability to foresee and which are likely to seriously impair your assessed work. Account will be taken of:

- The severity of the problem
- The length of time it lasted
- The closeness in time of the circumstances to the assessment(s)
- The supporting evidence
- Whether all assessments might be equally affected

## 11. What action can the ACLT take?

Extenuating circumstances cannot be used as a reason to raise marks, waive pass requirements of individual modules, reduce the requirements for progression, or raise a classification mark.

If the ACLT decides that your request for a deferral is valid, you will be permitted to take the assessment "at the next opportunity".

The deferred assessment will be marked/graded as a first attempt if the claim relates to the first attempt – in which case the assessment will be awarded a mark/grade reflecting its full worth; or a resit if the claim relates to a resit – in which case the maximum mark/grade awarded for the module will be 50%.

If your request is turned down, you must attempt the assessment or an absence will be recorded for the assessment(s) concerned. This will count as a failed attempt, and may result in you failing the module overall. You will not be eligible to resit the failed assessment(s) in accordance with the ACLT regulations on reassessment.

The ACLT has the right to reject requests based on circumstances that do not relate in time to the assessment concerned, or are not supported by adequate third-party evidence.

If you do not make the deferred attempt at the appropriate time, an absence will be recorded for the assessment(s) concerned and this will count as a failed attempt. You will not be eligible for a resit attempt if you do not attempt the assessment.

## 12. Data Protection Act 1998

In submitting a request for an extension or deferral on the grounds of extenuating circumstances you are agreeing to the ACLT holding this personal data for the purpose of processing your request.

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## 13. Equalities Act 2010

If you are providing information about your disability to support a request for an extension or deferral, please note that this does not count as disclosure to the ACLT as these forms are intended for use only by staff to determine whether your request should be granted. You are strongly urged to disclose any disability, persistent medical condition or learning difficulty to the ACLT Administrator and Head of Education or nominee.

## 14. Appeal Procedure

Appeals against a decision to reject a request for an extension, deferral or concession will be considered by the ACLT Management Board.

### Annex 1 Acceptable/Not Acceptable Extenuating Circumstances

#### Normally acceptable

#### Notes

1. Recent (< 1 month) death of a close relative "Close" means parents (& guardians), children and siblings, and a spouse/partner. It may include in-laws, grandparents and grandchildren if it can be shown that the relationship was very close, but not normally

	aunts, uncles, cousins etc.
2. Illness or serious accident of the student	Illness or accident occurring at the time of an assessment, or the period immediately leading up to the formal assessment. It should be an incapacitating illness or an unexpected deterioration in an ongoing illness or medical condition. It also includes breaks and serious sprains Medical certification must be obtained; self-certification is never acceptable as evidence of extenuating circumstances. Medical evidence MUST bear the GP's practice stamp and/or be on appropriate headed paper.
3. Serious illness of a close relative	See notes above about the definition of "close".
4. Pregnancy	Please see the ACLT Policy
5. Serious personal disruption	Divorce, fire, burglary, serious court cases, etc. Unforeseen transport problems beyond your control or ability to foresee, severe weather conditions which make it impossible to attend. Supporting third-party evidence must be provided.
6. Pressure of work or change of employment circumstances	Unforeseen changes in patterns of employment (letter from employer must be provided).