REVIEW OF EXTENSIONS AND LATE SUBMISSION OF STUDENT WORK UPDATE

This paper provides a summary of the outcome of the Board of Studies and SU consultation in relation to the review of the approach to extensions and late submission of student work. It outlines the main considerations and proposed next steps.

Recommended Actions

Educational Quality Committee is asked to note the progress update and proposed next steps.
REVIEW OF EXTENSIONS AND LATE SUBMISSION OF STUDENT WORK
SUMMARY OF BOARD OF STUDIES AND SU CONSULTATION

Introduction

In 2016/17 Education and Student Committee agreed that a review of the current approach to late participation in assessment at City would be conducted. The current Assessment Regulations permit local arrangements to be approved by Boards of Studies in relation to allowing programmes to accept late participation and extensions to student work. It was agreed by Education and Student Committee that this variation in practice should be reviewed and a policy and guidance be produced to ensure that students are treated equitably. Greater transparency of process and clarify of recording activity will provide more robust data for consideration alongside other information on progression, retention and student satisfaction.

This paper summarises key considerations highlighted during consultations with Board of Studies and the Student Union. The collated responses are attached at Appendix 1. The existing regulation is attached at Appendix 2.

General Observations

Exemptions

Six Boards of Studies and the Student Union were invited to participate in consultations on extensions to student work and late participation in assessment. Responses were received from all parties and summarised in the table below. Overall, the respondents agreed that there was a need for a clear policy on extensions and late submission of work that would guarantee fair and equitable treatment of students across all Schools. It was also recognised that some professional programmes may require alternative arrangements therefore appropriate provisions should be drafted in the policy to allow variation for those with an agreed rationale.

Respondents recognised that there should a clear demarcation between extensions and ECs in terms of guidance, eligibility criteria, staff involved, decision making process and possible outcomes. Records of successful and unsuccessful extension requests should be available to personal tutors to enable them to intervene effectively if they spot early warning signs suggesting that a student is either struggling with their studies or developing undesirable patterns of behaviour.

There was a consensus that extensions should only be applied to summative work if requests are submitted prior to the original deadline. Most respondents believed that panels were too unwieldy and they would hinder the timely decision making. Yet, on average respondents supported the inclusion of an oversight mechanism to ensure parity.

All respondents were in favour of set, if different, extension periods for coursework and dissertation. Ten assessment types were proposed for exemption from the extensions policy.

Late submission of work

Respondents largely agreed that the zero tolerance policy was undesirable and unnecessarily harsh. The impact of a zero tolerance policy on retention, progression, student welfare and satisfaction was commonly invoked to promote alternative arrangements. Overall, it was felt that the penalty for late submission should not be unjustifiably punitive yet it should also act as a deterrent against overuse.
Main considerations

Although the majority of respondents endorsed most of the proposals for extensions and late submission, the theme that commonly recurred in their responses was that introduction of any sort of a university-wide policy that allowed extensions and late submission would create an administrative burden. Caution was urged against introduction of un-implementable measures which would have a disruptive effect on the marking turnaround times. The need for speed and simplicity was consistently referred to and the use of technology to manage the process to avoid human error and unmanageable workload encouraged.

The SU, who strongly supported the introduction of a uniform extensions policy and opposed the zero tolerance policy on late submission of work, indicated that achieving a positive outcome of this consultation is one of their priorities for the current academic year. It is suggested that supporting the SU in their attempt to secure a more lenient approach to extensions and late submission of work would help strengthen City’s relationship with its student body.

Sector practice

Extensions

The benchmarking study that looked at 20 universities indicated that a half of them had institution-wide provisions for extensions to student work outside of the standard EC processes. The extension periods ranged from 48h and 10 working days for coursework and two and four weeks for dissertation. Students were required to seek approval prior to the original submission deadline. In some cases requests were considered by individual administrators in faculties and in others by Chairs of EC Committee plus one qualified person within School. None of the institutions made use of extension panels.

Late submission of work

29 out of 34 of researched Universities allowed penalties to be applied where work was submitted up to 20 days late. Penalties ranged from a reduction of mark by 2%, 5% or 10% per day to a deduction of one increment (B- grade to C+) for submitting work up to 24h late. Some universities employed a blanket penalty of a capped mark for a specified period of time (between 24h and 5 working days). Where a sliding scale of penalties operated, work below the pass mark was not penalised for late submission, nor was the penalty imposed if it brought the grade below the pass mark. Some universities employed penalties for late submission to first sits only.

Next steps

This summary will be shared with Educational Quality Committee the Student Case Management Forum (both with SU representation) and the Quality Forum to invite further discussion on the detail of the proposals. These discussions will inform the drafting of a Policy and Guidance which will be brought to the next meeting of Educational Quality Committee for consideration.
## 1 Extensions to student work

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<tr>
<th>Proposal/Questions</th>
<th>BoS responses</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Proposal a:</strong> In order to ensure equality of opportunity, extensions should be permitted.</td>
<td>All respondents agreed with the proposal.</td>
<td>In order to ensure equality of opportunity, extensions should be permitted.</td>
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<td><strong>Proposal b:</strong> A common approach to extensions to student work should be developed, noting that Professional Body requirements or restrictions would be considered for specific programmes where applicable.</td>
<td>All respondents agreed with the proposal noting that flexibility would be required to accommodate any regulatory or programme requirements.</td>
<td>A common approach to extensions to student work should be developed, noting that Professional Body requirements or restrictions would be considered for specific programmes where applicable.</td>
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<td><strong>Proposal c:</strong> The extensions process operates alongside the EC process with clarification on when each would be applicable (details to be agreed in liaison with relevant School and Professional Services colleagues).</td>
<td>Six respondents agreed with the proposal. One respondent did not give an answer.</td>
<td>The extensions process operates alongside the EC process with clarification on when each would be applicable (details to be agreed in liaison with relevant School and Professional Services colleagues).</td>
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## 2 Administration of requests for extension

| Proposal a: A common approach is adopted for students wishing to request an extension. | Five respondents agreed with the proposal, one disagreed and one did not give a conclusive answer. Professional programmes were keen to retain flexibility in making their own arrangements which catered to their specific needs. | A common approach is adopted for students wishing to request an extension. Exemptions will be considered for programmes that provide a strong rationale and develop an alternative model to manage extensions. |
| Proposal b: Extensions are requested via single point of contact within the School, such as an online form, (similar to but independent from the Extenuating Circumstances form on E-Vision) | Five respondents agreed with the proposal and two disagreed. There is a board consensus that standardizing the submission procedure is essential, however some have questioned the feasibility of having a single point of contact for extensions within the School. It was stressed that requests must be processed in a timely manner. | Extensions are requested via single point of contact within the School, such as an online form, (similar to but independent from the Extenuating Circumstances form on E-Vision) to |
form on E-Vision) to ensure students know where to submit an application.

| **Proposal c:** To increase transparency in the decision-making process, extension requests are considered by more than one person, or a Panel. | Three respondents agreed with the proposal, three disagreed and one did not provide a conclusive answer. It was noted that for transparency, extension requests should be considered by more than one person however doubt was cast on the practicality of convening a panel due to the time sensitive nature of extension requests. | Extension requests to be considered by one member of academic staff familiar the assessment in question and one member of professional staff for oversight. |
| Proposal d: Guidance on extensions will be devised to differentiate extension requests from EC claims. | Five respondents agreed with the proposal and two disagreed. It was commented that if extensions were to be allowed, clear guidance would be required to allow parity in decision-making. Two respondents expressed their preference for incorporating extensions into ECs. | Guidance on extensions will be devised to differentiate extension requests from EC claims. |
| Proposal e: There should be a clear deadline for extension requests (details to be agreed in liaison with relevant School and Professional Services colleagues). | Four respondents agreed with the proposal and three respondents did not provide a conclusive answer. It was noted that for transparency, set extension periods should be published, however it was also stressed that if the request was to be rejected, students would need to be informed rapidly to give them a chance to submit their assignment. It was also pointed out that the impact on marking and turnaround times would need to be considered. | There should be a clear deadline for extension requests (details to be agreed in liaison with relevant School and Professional Services colleagues). |
| Proposal f: All extension requests are to be supported by evidence. | Four respondents agreed, one disagreed and two respondents did not provide a conclusive answer. Importance of evidence to ensure consistency and fairness to all students was noted, as well as to act as a vetting mechanism necessary to discourage frivolous requests. However, it was also observed that it might be impractical to require evidence at short notice. Events that required extension were often sudden and it was felt that evidence for short-term illness should not be required. | Extension requests are to be supported by evidence where possible. In the first instance, the benefit of the doubt approach to be applied where evidence is difficult to produce (short term illness, adverse personal/family circumstances and transport difficulties). Personal tutors will be asked to discuss all extension requests with their students. Decision makers will have the right to reject requests if suspicion arises that students develop undesirable patterns of behavior or consistently fail to supply evidence to support their claim. |
### Proposal g: Records of successful and unsuccessful extension requests are to be kept on the students’ records and centrally within the School (to inform e.g. potential support needs, monitoring of trends, assessment and feedback turnaround data), e.g. on E-Vision.

All respondents agreed with the proposal. It was suggested that personal tutors have access to the records of successful and unsuccessful extension requests.

### Proposal h: Set period(s) of additional time should be applied to standard coursework and dissertations

Six respondents agreed with the proposal and one respondent did not provide a conclusive answer. There was a broad agreement that extensions should have a limited duration however caution was urged over potential disruption of longer extension periods which could overlap with feedback sessions and hence give some students unfair advantages. It was also suggested that students retained the option to submit their work before the set extension period expired if they chose to do so. Implications of extensions on the Assessment Feedback Turnaround Times policy would also need to be given due consideration.

### Proposal i) Only one extension per submission is allowed, if an issue persists, the student will be advised to submit ECs

All respondents agreed with the proposal.

### Question 2 iii) Are there any assessment types which should be excluded for practical reasons (i.e. groupwork, presentations, practical assessment)?

Six respondents agreed that some assessment types should be excluded for practical reasons and one respondent did not provide an answer. Assessments scheduled for a particular time and requiring supervision and invigilation, exams, tests, presentations, groupwork, music ensemble attendance, OSCEs and practical exams/placements were deemed unsuitable for extension.

### Question 2 iv) Should extension requests be considered by an EC Panel, a separate Extensions Panel or other

Three respondents agreed with the proposal and four disagreed. Some considered panels necessary to ensure oversight and parity. Others argued that panels would be too unwieldy and impractical as deadlines were spread throughout the year (to balance student work) so panels would need Extension requests to be considered by a primary decision maker with knowledge of the assessment and a
<table>
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<th>Question 2 v)</th>
<th>Five respondents agreed that the eligibility criteria for extensions should be in the same vein as the EC, one respondent disagreed and one did not give an answer. Those leaning towards having similar criteria as EC argued that such an arrangement would avoid confusion for students. Circumstances deemed acceptable included: 1) illness personally or close family member; 2) bereavement; 3) unexpected increase in workload (supported by an employer’s letter); 4) overseas travel on part-time courses; 5) personal crisis; 6) compassionate grounds; 7) leniency towards students returning to programme; 8) any incident where student was able to demonstrate it had caused them significant problems. Another suggestion was to drop the requirement for circumstances to be ‘unforeseen’ and allow students to seek extensions on occasions which were not recognized by ECs.</th>
<th>Eligibility criteria for extension to be broader and more lenient than for ECs but also to encompass circumstances covered by ECs where evidence is hard to produce. Extensions to be considered when student is able to demonstrate that an incident, which can be work, family, or transport-related, has caused them significant problems and prevented them from submitting their work on time.</th>
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<td>Question 2 vi)</td>
<td>Respondents considered several aspects of implementing set extension periods for coursework and dissertation. It was suggested that set extension periods should be published for transparency. Extension periods should be calibrated carefully to avoid any risk of disrupting the student's revision schedule. However, it was noted that if a student experienced a substantial difficulty with a dissertation, they may not be able to complete the work in additional 10 days. The extension periods suggested by respondents for coursework were: a) five days b) a week, c) ten days d) two weeks and for dissertation: a) two weeks + b) four weeks c) 6 months (if issues with ethical approval data collection arose).</td>
<td>Extensions to be granted for a period of five working days for coursework and ten working days for dissertation.</td>
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### 3 Late submission of work and associated penalties

| Proposal a) | Five respondents agreed with the proposal and two disagreed. Some felt that zero tolerance policy was unnecessarily harsh, had a severe impact of students’ progression, retention and satisfaction and could result in an increased number of EC claims. | Work submitted up to 24h late without an approved extension will be capped at the minimum pass mark. The policy |
would be awarded if the work is submitted within an agreed extended period, but no marks would be awarded if the new deadline is missed (details to be agreed in liaison with relevant School and Professional Services colleagues).

Others argued that a late submission policy would provide students an option and encourage them to utilize it. Concerns were raised that allowing students more time for submission would give them an opportunity to copy work from other student who have already submitted. Consideration would need to be given to the administrative burden and practicalities of any set of penalties developed. Technology should be used to manage the process to avoid human error and unmanageable workload arising from administration of this process.

Proposal b) Feedback for late submissions is provided

Four respondents agreed with the proposal and three did not provide a conclusive answer. The broad agreement was that feedback should be provided for work submitted within the agreed late and/or extension period. Routinely permitting late submission could potentially create a significant academic burden which would disproportionately affect part-time academics and therefore constitute an equality and diversity issue. A suggestion was made to exempt late submissions from the three week marking turnaround. One respondent supported giving feedback on all student work, whether on time or late, over or under the word count.

Proposal c) A standard range of penalties is developed for the submission of work which is significantly under or over a set word-count (details to be agreed in liaison with relevant School and Professional Services colleagues).

Four respondents agreed with the proposals, two respondents disagreed, one did not provide an answer. It was argued that introducing penalties for over the word limit work would help students consider concise and critical communication, rather than descriptive. Penalties for work significantly under the word-count were already dealt with under the assignment's assessment criteria. Others raised concerns over the administrative burden set standard penalties would create and expressed preference for a development of further guidance instead.

Proposal d) There should be a common approach to considering appeals related to students unhappy with the outcome of the process.

Five respondents agreed with the proposal and two did not provide an answer. There was a board consensus that having a common approach would be a positive development however it was also felt that the appeals process already constituted common practice open to all student.

Feedback to be provided for all summative assessment. Work marked zero for non-submission will be exempt from the three week's marking turnaround.

A standard range of penalties is developed for the submission of work which is significantly over a set word-count (details to be agreed in liaison with relevant School and Professional Services colleagues).

There should be a common approach to considering appeals related to students unhappy with the outcome of the process.
SUMMARY OF THE CURRENT REGULATION: EXTRACT FROM 2017/18 ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

4.4 PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE

Boards of Studies must approve arrangements for participation in all forms of assessment (including participation, late participation and any extensions that may be permitted in certain circumstances, usually where a student has submitted Extenuating Circumstances) and these will be detailed in the Programme Handbook. These procedures will take into account the nature of the subject area and any professional, statutory or regulatory requirements.

Students are expected to attend scheduled lectures, tutorials and laboratory sessions and are required to participate in all assessment components by the specified deadlines. Assessments must be submitted in line with the arrangements approved by the Board of Studies.

Attendance for some students on some Programmes and/or Modules is mandatory, often to meet PSRB requirements. Where this is the case, the requirement for mandatory attendance is set out in the Module and Programme Specifications, and attendance will be recorded and will count towards the successful completion of a Module or Programme Stage. These requirements will normally lead to a pass or fail and will not normally contribute to overall Award classification.

Where a student participates in, but fails a component or Module, resit rules apply (see Section 4.7).

4.4.1 Late Participation in an Assessment

Where late submission is permitted, the penalties for late submission and arrangements for extensions are determined by Programme Teams, approved by Boards of Studies and published in the relevant Programme Handbook.

If late submission is permitted, penalties will apply where a student:

- participates in an assessment after the due date where a deadline has not been extended and there are no Extenuating Circumstances.
- has been given an extension but participates in the assessment after the extended date but within any stipulated timeframe.

4.4.2 Failure to Participate

Where a student fails to participate in an assessment component and has no Extenuating Circumstances, then that component will be considered to be failed. No mark or credit will be awarded and a resit opportunity will be offered subject to the rules in Section 4.7.2.

A student who has not met the pass requirements for the Module and who does not complete any required resit assessment by the required date will be withdrawn from the Programme by the Assessment Board in accordance with the rules in Section 4.7.2.