**Staff e-Vision Extension and Extenuating Circumstances Guidance**

Registry 2016

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# Access to the System and ASIS Support Guidance

Staff will access the system via the URLs ;

 [staffhub.hud.ac.uk](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cregskb%5CDesktop%5Cstaffhub.hud.ac.uk) or <http://halo.hud.ac.uk/silive/> *(using your AD username and password)*

For further guidance as to how the system operates and procedural guidance, please follow the link to the ASIS Support page;

<https://www.hud.ac.uk/services/asis/trainingdocuments/>

# The difference between Extensions and ECs;

The best way to consider the difference between an Extension and an EC is, does the impact that a student’s circumstances has on them determine (via independent evidence) that the student cannot engage with the scheduled assessment until beyond the next available Course Assessment Board? If this is the case, for whatever reason, then the student should be guided towards an EC not an extension.

Please note that the result of the student’s circumstances could be short-term but that the assessment type cannot be re-arranged in-year, prior to the CAB (Exams for example), this added condition means that an EC should be pursued.

If the student’s circumstances are such that they may be impacted for a short to mid-term length of time and that the assessment deadline can reasonably be re-scheduled in year then it is expected that the student should opt for an Extension.

The new Extension/EC system has within it parameters that have been established to avoid the student and/or staff needing to fully appreciate this distinction as the in-built decision tree advises the student accordingly.

# General info;

The system has been built using the information currently contained in ASIS. In order for the system to work efficiently both for staff and student then the deadline dates both for component and sub-component level must be entered (where possible). The system will talk back to ASIS advising it of when an extension has been approved for a student and in-turn will update the deadline date associated to that student.

It is hoped that the information and metrics pulled form the new system will support the University in a number of ways to review how extensions operate (in light of seemingly increasing figures) and how we can mitigate against those who use the system inappropriately. It will also assist in reviewing assessment schedules and assessment types to analyse where there is a peak in extension requests against particular assessments/modules/courses. It is hoped this will help support positive changes to ultimately reduce pressures on staff.

The system relies on a response being given to a request by someone who can review and make a decision based on the criteria of the claim. It is not anticipated that the system moves towards an automated response for particular types of requests.

The systems technical support will be offered by ASIS Support. They are on hand to offer training in how to use the system and to respond to ad hoc queries or glitches that may arise in the system. 2016 is the systems pilot year so it is expected that the system will require maintenance and amendments once it is being accessed fully.

Registry staff (namely Karen Brough, Katie van Niekerk and Katie Engel) can offer guidance on the regulatory support behind the decision making and evidence.

The system has been set up to recognise varying levels of access.

Module leaders have full user access to;

* Review the claim
* Request evidence
* To add in received evidence
* Reject the claim
* Re-assign the request to another colleague
* To look at all claims against their module

ASIS Managers and Registry\* have superuser access to;

* See all extension requests across the School
* re-assign the request from one colleague to another
* review the claim
* request evidence
* add in received evidence
* reject the claim

\*Registry would rarely go into individual claims and interfere with them but may be required to on the odd occasion

Course Assistants/Course Administrators have read only access to;

* See all extension requests across each School
* Add in received evidence

Disability and Wellbeing staff have read only access to;

* See all extension requests across each School

Staff will also be notified of any activity due to be assigned to them via the extension system by email.

These emails will inform staff in relation to an Extension request having been submitted by a student or any subsequent activity in relation to the student’s application. These emails will acts as prompts or reminders that a response or outcome is required against the extension request.

# Extensions Guidance;

Students can submit an extension and normally have it approved (depending on the length of request) where it is reasonable to assume that their ability to meet the original deadline cannot be met. This assumption may be corroborated by independent evidence depending on the extension type and/or the circumstances you are presented with.

Please note that you cannot approve an extension for a deferral or referral piece of work. The system has noted this parameter and where a student asks for an extension having identified the work as a referral or deferral, will suggest an EC instead of an Extension but if for any reason the system is circumvented, it is a regulation that we cannot offer extensions on such pieces of work.

The request, whether it is for a short or long-term extension, must be made within 2-days of the agreed deadline (this applies to any deadlines previously extended via the extension system against the same piece of assessment)

A paper-based version of the form will be circulated so that those students who need to submit an extension but for whatever reason do not have access to their Portal or require assistance with completing the form via another service or simply need to complete forms as a hard copy as part of their PLSP will be able to locate a form via the Students’ Union Advice Centre or Student Services.

## Short-term extensions;

A short-term extension has been defined by UTLC (June 2016) is a request for anything up to 5-working days. It is normally expected, in line with the University’s HR policy, that a student can self-certify their illness during that period and as such shouldn’t normally be required to submit independent evidence to corroborate their claim. For course with professional body involvement this may vary. Discretion may also be used to consider whether the circumstances that the student has detailed require independent evidence. Should this be the case then you will request the evidence keeping a log as to why evidence was requested. This to ensure that for audit purposes, that we are treating students consistently but where we need to vary that practise, we have professional judgement reasons for having done so.

## Long-term extension;

As a result of the short-term extension period being anything up to and including 5-working days, anything beyond that timescale is now defined as a long-term extension. For long-term extensions students are required to submit evidence to support why such a long period is necessary. It is likely that long-term extension requests will be rejected more often than short-term extensions as a result of students not gathering and providing the required evidence.

When looking at a long-term extension request and the timescale requested by the student, you will need to consider whether approving the new deadline compromises the feedback issuing date for those students who submitted for the original deadline (this may be applicable to some assessments but not others). It is an option for you to modify the requested extended deadline date to fall in line with the 3-week feedback period. If this is too short a period for the student to submit the work then they should be advised, as part of their outcome email, to consider submitting an EC form.

## PLSPs;

All students submitting a short-term extension request should be treated equally and should not normally be required to submit evidence. However, if a student with a PLSP submits a request that by it timescale is determined to be a long-term extension request, then you may find the student referring to their PLSP as their evidence. You will be able to access the details of the PLSP through the system. It is not a definitive that you must accept the request in light of the PLSP when it is acting as evidence, but more so that you should review what the student claims to be their reason for the request and whether the PLSP is deemed to be appropriate. This is at your discretion. Disability and Wellbeing has now modified their PLSP statements for 2016 to reflect that as this decision is now discretionary, that a student with a PLSP has been advised that they may be requested to get further evidence from Disability and Wellbeing to clarify the currency of the student’s circumstances and what impact it has had on their ability to meet deadlines.

## Evidence being received or not

Where a request for evidence has been made, the student should be given 5-working days as a maximum to get it unless they contact the School/staff member dealing with the request to advise they will struggle with this. It is then the responsibility of the member of staff involved to make a discretionary call as to how long of a delay we would accept in terms of gathering evidence. If for example, the student advises that their GP is on holiday for 3 weeks and that it will take a further 3 weeks to produce the letter, 6 weeks in total then this is not appropriate and the student’s claim should be rejected with a view to encouraging an EC. If the student advises that it will take 10-working days in total to get the evidence then this would be appropriate and a delay in considering the claim up until that point may well be accepted. Where making decisions to await evidence please ensure that all the relevant staff are included to ensure each party is up to date on the progress of the claim.

If a student simply does not respond or engage with queries relating to getting evidence then once the 5-working day deadline is up, reject the extension request. The student is prompted as part of this outcome email to then go for an EC if they wish to contest the decision but at this stage the requirement for evidence is much stronger.

## Extensions that are approved;

It is expected that you would approve an extension request where it has been submitted within the relevant timescales, with appropriate evidence (if requested) and that the requested new deadline is reasonable within the constraints of the assessment/course.

Once approved, the student and ASIS are both updated to confirm the new deadline date. The student should then submit the work on time for the new deadline.

It may be that a student requests an extension deadline date that far exceeds what is reasonable in light of what circumstances they have detailed or for the structure of the course. it may be that an overly long extension request may compromise other conditions within the module or the course as a whole. If you modify the requested date by reducing it, then the claim is still approved but the student has the option to submit an EC nearer the new deadline date should they feel it is simply not long enough. The EC form is populated via a link should the student wish to proceed with it.

## Extensions that are rejected;

The bulk of claims that will end up being rejected are likely to be so on the basis that;

1. The student did not have supporting independent evidence as requested
2. The delay on receiving the requested evidence became unrealistic for an extension to then be agreed to (if this happens then the claim should be rejected which advises the student to submit an EC)
3. The request itself was not appropriate (this is where you find that the decision tree has incorrectly advised the student to submit an extension, in which case, reject the Extension request so that they receive the information regarding submitting an EC instead. You can also direct the student to the Registry pages where the EC form also exists but remember to make a decision on the extension request, don’t simply ignore it)
4. it was found that following a series of similar extension requests based on similar grounds that the student hadn’t demonstrated the required engagement with the University or their own support services
5. that the claim was simply submitted too late

A student cannot appeal the decision to reject their Extension. What they are expected to do is follow the guidance of the outcome letter and submit an EC using the link to the EC form contained within the outcome email.

## Extensions that you feel should be an EC;

If you genuinely feel that the decision tree has opted for an Extension when you believe it should be an EC you would need to reject the claim that in turn highlights to the student that they need to submit an EC.

The student can also be referred directly to Registry’s EC page where a link to the form is available.

## Students unable to submit their own Extension Requests

If for any valid reason, a student is unable to submit their own extension request using the e-Vision system then a hard copy submission facility has been made available. You may wish to complete the form with a student as part of their personal tutor meetings or may be aware of a student having difficulties in which case you can access the paper copy form via Registry’s webpage. Once completed, the student should submit their form to the School Office where a member of administrative staff will be able to input the request acting as if they were the student.

Please note that this should only be used in exceptionally agreed circumstances and it may be more appropriate for the student to be sent to the Students’ Union Advice Centre or Student Services.

# Types of evidence;

Generally, the types of evidence, if requested, should mirror those requested for ECs.If a student has submitted a long-term extension request that requires medical evidence or has been asked, at the discretion of the person considering the claim, to submit evidence for a short-term request then the following list, whilst not being exhaustive, gives an indication as to what is acceptable;

1. A letter from a recognised independent health professional (please refer to Kirklees website if unsure as they list all those registered to operate locally)
2. Statutory Sick Pay note
3. Statement from an employer about workload issues (needs to be on headed paper)
4. Letter from Schools re; strikes or unavoidable closures
5. Transport issues that are corroborated by the transport service or other legitimate means, particularly if for a missed in class test
6. Information from the University’s Student Services
7. PLSP (can be sufficient depending on the circumstances)

You may also decide to use your discretion where it appears that the circumstances detailed by the student are difficult to evidence or that the student is unable to obtain evidence given the circumstances in which they are involved (court hearings that are confidential, or students who are facing forced/arranged marriages or domestic violence from family or partners).

The circumstances can vary widely and so not all will be able to be evidenced by the standard documents provided above.

Where there is an obvious impact on a student that does not require evidence (such as a broken arm or a lost voice for musical recitals) which prevents a student from being able to complete a scheduled assessment then medical evidence should not always be required. Reasonableness should be considered in light of what is being detailed as part of their request.

# When a student exceeds 3+ extension request;

When a student submits in excess of their third extension request within one academic session, whether they are all short-term, all long-term or a mixture of the two, then it is expected that the staff member who has received the fourth or above request, following the automated notification, that they conduct a holistic review of the student’s profile in relation to extension requests submitted. If the profile suggests a pattern of similar ailments or circumstances then it would be appropriate to arrange a meeting with the student to discuss the trend and to see if the support made available by the University can assist. It can also act as a deterrent for those students who believe that any extension request will simply be accepted without further investigation.

If a meeting is decided to be appropriate then the student should attend a brief meeting for roughly 10-15 minutes to discuss, with the relevant staff member (I suspect this is likely to be School admin support staff), the circumstances surrounding their extension requests. It is not expected that this staff member diagnoses or tries to treat any circumstances identified at this meeting but acts as an advisor highlighting where the student can access the relevant support they may require. The student will subsequently sign the agreement at the end of the meeting that confirms they understand to go for support rather than simply submitting an extension repeatedly.

The student should be given one opportunity to reschedule the meeting. If they fail to re-arrange or to attend then the agreement should be sent electronically to the student with a view to this acting as information that they accept and understand and that any future requests will be reviewed against their subsequent level of engagement with support services.

All documents relating to this meeting should be recorded in Wisdom against the student’s personal circumstances file.

Registry has drafted template invite letters and agreement forms that will be made available to all Schools.

# Extenuating Circumstances;

Extenuating Circumstances are not yet part of the e-Vision system other than that the system will decide if one is needed. The process of completing the claim is still manual and requires the student to print the form off taking it to their respective School Office with evidence for processing up to Registry. The capacity for e-Vision to include ECs is there but will form part of phase 2 of the project which as yet has no defined start date.

The requirement of an EC to be submitted no later than 5-working days beyond the deadline date remains.

ECs are not applicable against Tutor Reassessments.

Should staff require anymore guidance on ECs, your questions should be answered via the FAQ part of the Registry webpage. The webpage also includes the EC Form and the EC Appeal form. The link can be found below;

<https://www.hud.ac.uk/registry/extenuatingcircumstancesfaqs/#d.en.62783>

# Annual reporting;

Annual reports to the University’s senior committees will be formed on the basis of the data retrieved from the Extension system.

It is envisaged that a preliminary report will be pulled for January of each year to help inform Schools of any changes at Course or Modular level that may be considered so that the information is timely for changes to be made for the subsequent academic session.

# Feedback;

Feedback on how the system operates will be collected throughout the year but will form the basis of the annual reporting. It is hoped this will advise how the system can be updated to support a more efficient process for all staff.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Type of Request | Where does the student submit the request? | What is the deadline by which to submit the request? | Who considers the request? | Time for staff members to respond | Duration of time the student can request to defer the deadline | Evidence required? | Who has access to the requests? | Can the student appeal the outcome |
| Short term Extension | Via MyDetails in the Student Hub;<https://studenthub.hud.ac.uk/Pages/default.aspx> | No more than 2-days after the agreed deadline date | Module Leader | 5-working days maximum (allowing for exceptions where evidence is requested) | Up to 5-working days | No, unless exceptional | Module leader (full)ASIS Manager (full)Registry (full)Course admin (read only with ability to add evidence)Disability and Wellbeing (read only) | Not directly, but can submit an EC |
| Long term Extension | Via MyDetails in the Student Hub:<https://studenthub.hud.ac.uk/Pages/default.aspx> | No more than 2-days after the agreed deadline date | School defined contact but is likely to be School central admin | 5-working days maximum (allowing for exceptions where evidence is requested) | Defined by the module as to what the maximum amount of time is. This is dependent on a number of variables | Yes | Defined School contact (full)ASIS Manager (full)Registry (full)Course admin (read only with ability to add evidence)Disability and Wellbeing (read only) | Not directly but can submit an EC |
| EC  | To the School Office | No more than 5-working days after the assessment deadline | Registry | As soon as possible | Takes the student beyond the next available CAB and can be upt an academic year in length | Yes  | Registry staff | Yes |

# Table 1 – Process overview