

LTC12D123

Title: **Should standing for election to a Sabbatical Officer post in the UEA Union of Students be an allowable extenuating circumstance?**  
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## OPEN

### Issue

A proposal for a change in the Regulations relating to Extenuating Circumstances which allows for students campaigning for Sabbatical Officer posts within the Student's Union to use this as an allowable EC for extension requests from 2013/14 onwards.

### Recommendation

LTC members are asked to consider and approve the proposal from the ADTP. The proposal was discussed at TPPG on 2 May and an overwhelming majority of members were in favour of it.

Unlike other activities that students are involved in (e.g. sports/volunteering) having elected Officers is essential to the effective governance of the Union and the University. It is therefore in the best interests of the University that allowances are made for students who put themselves forward for election. Other Universities, e.g. Birmingham, already make similar provision.

### Resource Implications

No significant resource implications.

### Risk Implications

Very low – it must be emphasised that the proposal relates ONLY to students campaigning for sabbatical office, and this principle should be rigorously adhered to.

### Equality and Diversity

It is not envisaged that any of the recommendations contained in the report will impact on groups with protected characteristics. Indeed, it could be argued that approving this proposal will enhance equality of opportunity by ensuring that reasonable provision is made for all students campaigning for election, irrespective of background.

### Timing of decisions

To be included in revised Regulations relating to Extenuating Circumstances that will apply from 2013/14 onwards.

### Further Information

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### Background

The issue was brought to the attention of the ADTP by the Student's Union.

### Discussion

The key issues are set out in the proposal for discussion.

## Should standing for a Sabbatical Officer post in the UEA Union of Students be an allowable extenuating circumstance?

In the recent past we have experienced cases where students have decided to run for a Sabbatical Officer in the UEA Union of Students, who have found that the workload and pressures associated with campaigning for election have resulted in them experiencing difficulties managing their studies and meeting relevant submission deadlines. A colleague has asked that TPPG consider whether this admirable commitment to serving others and the democratic process should be an allowable extenuating circumstance in cases where students are requesting extension requests, or submitting academic appeals.

There are strong arguments for and against.

### For:

- It is essentially a 'good thing' – the Union needs to be led effectively and students need to have a proper opportunity to campaign for election.
- Seeking election to a sabbatical post is a positive sign of engagement in our community and commitment to enhancing the experience of other students by promoting and championing positive change and progressive policies etc.
- Running for election and serving as an officer builds a wide range of employability-related skills e.g. organisational skills, time-management, leadership, selflessness and proactivity that are likely to be attractive to future employers.

### Against:

- Extenuating circumstances should be, in principle, related to events/issues that are beyond the student's control – this is not the case here. Students make a deliberate choice to 'stand' for election and are under no pressure to do so.
- The student's priority should be their academic studies and meeting the submission deadlines etc associated with their programme of study. Students should manage their time in such a way that campaigning for election does not impinge on or adversely affect their studies.
- Within the current Regs on Extenuating Circumstances there is a clear indication that 'work commitments' will not normally be taken into account on full-time courses. Standing for election could be viewed as a work commitment, though the Regs were not drawn-up with this particular scenario in mind.

### Other Institutions

Birmingham has a two-week campaign period and permits extensions for students standing for election for any piece of coursework where the deadline falls in the second week of campaigning, but not the first:

*'Extensions to coursework deadlines will not be granted to students whose deadline for submission falls before or in the first seven days of campaigning. If the deadline falls within the final seven days of campaigning the student is entitled to a two week extension from the expected date of submission. If the deadline falls between one week and two weeks after the end of the voting, the candidate is entitled to an extension of one week from the expected date of submission for each piece of work'.*

### Recommendation

- The campaign period at UEA is 8 days, Monday to Monday, inclusive, in early Spring each year. The actual dates are published by the start of each academic year. This proposed extension would cover any student standing as a candidate during this election period, who has a coursework deadline within the campaign period. The coursework does not include course tests, presentations, online tests or preparation for seminars.
- The extension would be **one week** for any piece of coursework where the submission deadline falls within the eight days of campaigning.
- Students should apply in writing using the online form, submitted to the Hub, with appropriate evidence submitted in hard copy.

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