

## **TAUGHT PROGRAMMES POLICY GROUP**

### **Policy note relating to leave of absence granted by Heads of Schools and Good Cause rulings for missed course tests and examinations**

#### **1) Background**

The Head of School has authority to grant a student a period of absence as set out in General Regulation 13 (6) of the General Regulations for Students which says:

“A student may be granted a leave of absence (authorised absence) of up to two weeks during a course of study or research degree programme only with the prior permission of the Head of the relevant School of Study. Such leave will be dependent on the student having good cause for absence and undertaking to fulfil all obligations to the University. Longer absences will be dealt with under other concessionary procedures.”...

Students sometimes experience situations as a result of which they have a compelling reason to apply for leave of absence to fulfil some family obligations, e.g. attend family occasions or have short term urgent care commitments and a Head of School would normally grant leave of absence for this purpose. There have been occasions when some students have also assumed that leave of absence granted by the Head of School also means that leave of absence from a course test/examination has been granted and they will be automatically entitled to a delayed first sit in the missed course test/examination, but this is not the case.

#### **2) Conditions on which leave of absence is granted**

Where leave of absence is granted in accordance with General Regulation 13, such leave of absence is subject to the student fulfilling his/her obligations to the University which normally means that:

- a) A student has to catch up on missed lecture material in consultation with the module organiser;

**and**

- b) A student is required to submit all coursework assessments and projects by the deadline as stated in the coursework schedule unless an extension has been granted by the coursework co-ordinator according to local custom and practice governing extension requests within the respective School or Faculty;

**and**

- c) A student has to present himself/herself for all scheduled course tests and examinations. If scheduled course tests and examinations fall within the period for which leave of absence has been granted by the Head of School, then a student should not assume that absence from the actual course test or examination has been granted or that a delayed first sit will be granted automatically. Requests for absence from course tests and examinations are granted by the Director of Taught Programmes only and not the Head of School. Normally such applications for absence from a course test or examination are only granted if:

- a student is prevented from sitting a course test or examination due to ill health and declared unfit to sit such a course test or examination by a GMC registered doctor;

or

- a student is prevented from attending due to other extenuating circumstances outside of their control and unrelated to the course test or examination and evidenced by independent documentation, for example, serious family illness or funeral of immediate family member.

### **3) Actions**

**When a student makes an application for leave of absence to the Head of School, we propose the following actions should be followed:**

- a) The Head of School (or designated member of administrative staff on behalf of the Head of School) needs to request a list of assessments for which deadlines fall into the proposed period of leave of absence before considering an application for leave of absence.**
- b) If applicable, the student will be referred to the coursework co-ordinator dealing with applications for extensions to coursework or projects via the relevant Faculty Office.**
- c) If a course test or examination falls within the proposed period of leave of absence, the student will be informed by the Head of School (or designated member of administrative staff on behalf of the Head of School) of the stringent requirements regarding absence from course tests and examinations and that leave of absence granted by the Head of School does not mean that a student will be granted an automatic delayed first sit for a missed course test or examination.**

(Please see brief guidance below issued from the Examinations Office on the more common acceptable and unacceptable reasons when considering Good Cause applications for absence from course tests/examinations. For more detailed information regarding extenuating circumstances, appropriate evidence and Good Cause rulings, please see:

[https://intranet.uea.ac.uk/polopoly\\_fs/1.136638!Supporting%20Evidence.pdf](https://intranet.uea.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.136638!Supporting%20Evidence.pdf) )

If a student wants to pursue an application for Good Cause for absence from a course test or examination, the student will be referred to the relevant Faculty Office. Where possible, applications for delayed first sits or delayed/further reassessments should be made in advance of the period of leave of absence in order that the student is fully aware of the impact of taking up the leave of absence. Students whose Good Cause applications are not judged to be eligible for a delayed first sit by the Director of Taught Programmes will be awarded a mark of 0% for any missed course test/examination.

#### 4) Guidance from Examinations Office relating to Good Cause applications

##### a) Acceptable Circumstances

The general criteria for approval of an application for delayed first sits or delayed reassessments in advance are that the circumstances must be outside of the control of the student, unrelated to the assessment and supported by independent evidence. The following examples would normally be accepted for approval:

- **Bereavement/Funeral of a member of the student's immediate family, partner or a close friend**
- **Unforeseen Family Crises/Emergencies**
- **Unforeseen Care Responsibilities (eg a need to Look After Sick Parents, Spouses, Civil Partners, Partners or Children)**
- **Religious observance / festivals / pilgrimages**
- **Legal process (eg jury service, court summons)**

**b) Circumstances Not Acceptable for Advance Approval**

The following examples would not normally be accepted for approval:

- **Holidays**
- **Weddings, Civil Partnerships, Baptisms etc**
- **Financial Difficulties**
- **Part-time Work Commitments for Students on Full-time programmes**

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