

Undergraduate Dissertations: Request for Extension

1. Reason for revision

1.1. New SOP

2. Purpose and scope

2.1. Establishing the conditions and process to apply when requests are made for extensions to undergraduate dissertation deadlines.

3. Abbreviations and Definitions

None.

4. Responsibilities

4.1. Role and Responsibilities of Head of Department

- To ensure that Dissertation Coordinators make submission deadlines clear at least nine months before submission date.
- To ensure the establishment of a Board of Examiners for each dissertation.
- To receive, and process, requests for extension as detailed below.

4.2 Role and Responsibilities of Dissertation Coordinators

- To establish a submission date in conjunction with the Board of Studies of the respective Programme.
- To ensure that submission deadlines are made clear to students on VLE at least nine months prior to submission dates.
- To ensure that both supervisors and students are clear about the conditions and process of requesting dissertation extensions.
- To establish an early warning system whereby supervisors, alert the Dissertation Coordinators as early as possible, but in any case, no later than three weeks prior to submission date, if their student is unlikely to submit by the deadline.

4.3 Role and Responsibilities of Boards of Studies

- The Board of Studies is to consider and approve the submission date for dissertations falling under their remit.

4.4 Role and Responsibilities of Supervisors

- Supervisors are to establish milestones with students whose work they supervise, and monitor students' progress towards them.
- When it becomes clear to the supervisor that it is very unlikely that the student will submit by the established deadline, the supervisor is to discuss with the student as early as possible. The student should be informed if their request for an extension will be supported by the supervisor or not.
- The supervisor is to endorse, or otherwise, any request for an extension made by the student.

4.5 Role and Responsibilities of Students

- Students are to ensure that they establish milestones for their dissertation, together with their supervisor, as early as possible in the supervisory process.
- Students are to invest their best efforts to abide by these milestones, planning their work and delivering the outputs agreed with their supervisor on time.
- Where exceptional circumstances occur that make it impossible for students to submit by the deadline, they are to alert their supervisor immediately.
- Students may request an extension and address their request in writing to the Head of Department, copying their supervisor and the Dissertations Coordinator by no later than two weeks prior to submission date (but as early as possible, where serious difficulties can be foreseen).

4.4 Role and Responsibilities of Boards of Examiners

- The Boards of Examiners of dissertation study units are, at the request of the Head of Department, to consider requests for extensions of three or more weeks, and to make the necessary recommendation to Faculty Board for its consideration.
- Where dissertations are submitted, without its prior permission, within three weeks from the deadline (or the extended deadline when an extension has been granted) the Board of Examiners shall reduce the final mark by one mark for every day the submission is late.
- Where dissertations are submitted, with its prior permission, more than three weeks late but within the same academic year, the Board of Examiners shall reduce the final mark by two marks for every month late.

4.5 Role and Responsibility of Faculty Board

- Faculty Board is to receive recommendations from the Board of Examiners, through the Head of Department, for dissertation extensions in excess of three weeks.
- Where the extension is between three weeks and six months, Faculty Board is to approve or reject.
- Where the extension exceeds six months and Faculty Board accedes to the recommendation to grant the extension, Faculty Board is to send its recommendation to Senate.

4.6 Senate

- Where Senate receives the recommendation from Faculty Board to grant an extension exceeding six months, it is to advise the Faculty administration of its approval or otherwise.

4.5 Role and Responsibilities of Administrative Staff

- To process requests for dissertation extensions according to the duration of the request.
- To inform the Head of Department of decisions taken by Faculty Board and Senate as the case may be.

5. Health and Safety Requirements

5.1. N/A

6. Procedure

- 6.1. In the first semester, Heads of Department are to liaise with their Dissertations Coordinator to set tentative dates for dissertation submission in the subsequent calendar year.
- 6.2 The Head of Department is to ensure that this date is brought to the attention of, and approved by, the relevant Board of Studies.

- 6.3 The Dissertations Coordinator uploads the dissertation timeline on VLE at least nine months prior to submission date.
- 6.4 The supervisor is to establish milestones with the student and actively monitor that these are being adhered to.
- 6.5 Should an extension be required, the student is to apply in writing, providing justification and evidence, to the Head of Department, copying their supervisor and Dissertations Coordinator.
- 6.6 Where the requested extension is of less than three weeks, it is decided upon by the Head of Department, and the student is advised accordingly, keeping in copy the supervisor and Dissertations Coordinator.
- 6.7 Where the requested extension is between three weeks and six months, it is considered by the Head of Department in consultation with the Board of Examiners. If endorsed, it is sent to Faculty Board for consideration and approval (or rejection). The Faculty Office advises the student of the outcome, copying the supervisor and Dissertations Coordinator.
- 6.8 Where the requested extension is of six months or more, it is considered by the Head of Department in consultation with the Board of Examiners. If approved, it is sent to Faculty Board for consideration and approval (or rejection). If approved, Faculty Board recommends to Senate that the extension be granted. Senate may, or may not, approve the extension. The Faculty Office advises the student of the outcome, copying the supervisor and Dissertations Coordinator.

7. Other Considerations

7.1 **Valid reasons for extension** include illness or injury in respect of oneself or a member of one's close family; bereavement; or documented and justified difficulties with the supervisory process.

Invalid reasons include employment-related issues; travel abroad (except for illness); moving house (except for unforeseen moves like the unexpected loss of a rental contract or eviction); and the desire for more time to produce a better dissertation. Difficulties in obtaining ethical approval or in data collection will only be considered in exceptional circumstances where the delays were clearly not attributable to student.

Requests for extension are to be supported by evidence, for instance, medical certificates in the case of illness; certificates from mental health professionals in the case of mental health difficulty; death certificates in the case of bereavement; or certification by the ACCESS Disability Support Unit (ADSU) where applicable.

7.2 There shall be consistency and transparency in the **reduction of marks**, as follows:

	Justified, and with prior approval	Unjustified, or without prior approval
Within three weeks from deadline	No reduction	1 mark for each day late.
Between three weeks and six months *	2 marks for each month late	Mark of 0, Grade F

* Where the extended deadline goes beyond the end of the academic year, the student shall be deemed to have been granted an extension year. In such cases, no marks will be deducted.

8. References

8.1 General Regulations for University Undergraduate Awards 2019

8.2 Excerpt from Procedures for Boards of Examiners of Bachelor Dissertations

9. List of Appendices

9.1. Excerpt from General Regulations for University Undergraduate Awards 2019

9.2 Excerpt from Procedures for Boards of Examiners of Bachelor Dissertations

9.1 Appendix: General Regulations for Undergraduate Awards

Article 56: Long Essay and Dissertation

- (1) When the mode of assessment is by Long Essay or Dissertation or similar end of Course assessments, the deadline for submission shall be established by the Board of Studies.
- (2) When considering requests for extensions, which must be accompanied by the reasons for non-submission by the given deadline, the Board shall be guided by procedures approved by Senate. The board of examiners shall take into account the period of extension and may decide on a reduction of marks. If the extension period extends beyond the end of the academic year, the student shall be deemed to have been granted an extension year.
- (3) Submission of Dissertations or Long Essays or similar within three weeks from the deadline or the extended deadline when an extension has been granted, without the express permission of the board of examiners, may be accepted but shall result in a reduction of marks as decided by the board of examiners.
- (4) A Dissertation or Long Essay or similar that is not submitted by the deadline, or the extended deadline when an extension has been granted, shall receive a mark of 0, grade F.
- (5) When students fail the Long Essay or Dissertation or similar they shall, if otherwise eligible, have only one other opportunity to resubmit it.

9.2. Appendix: Procedures for Boards of Examiners of Bachelor Dissertations

Article 11: Extensions of Submission Deadline and Late submissions

11.1 A student may request an extension of the deadline for the submission of a dissertation for a maximum of 6 months at least two weeks before the submission deadline, which may be approved if the reason provided is deemed valid by the Board. The extension given may elicit a reduction in marks, provided it would not change a mark from a pass to a fail. If the extended deadline goes beyond the end of the academic year and the student will not be able to graduate with the same cohort, the student shall be deemed to have been granted an extension year.

11.2 Late submissions of dissertations within three weeks from the deadline or the extended deadline when an extension has been granted, without the express permission of the Board of Examiners, may be accepted but shall result in a reduction of marks as decided by the Board of Examiners. Faculty guidelines to students should clearly specify the reduction in marks, provided it would not change a mark from a pass to a fail.

11.3 Dissertations that are not submitted by the deadline, or by the extended deadline when an extension has been granted, shall receive a fail grade.