

Guide to the Code of Assessment – 5
Incomplete assessment resulting from good cause

5.1 Scope and definitions

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5.1 Scope and definitions

§16.45 For the purposes of §16.46 – §16.53 of these regulations:

- a) 'Good cause' shall mean illness or other adverse personal circumstances affecting a candidate and resulting in either:
- i) The candidate's failure to
 - attend an examination, or
 - submit coursework at or by the due time,¹ or
 - otherwise satisfy the requirements of the scheme of assessment appropriate to their programme of studies; or,
 - ii) the candidate's performance in examination or other instrument of assessment being manifestly prejudiced.

Good cause refers to the sudden onset of illness or adverse circumstances affecting the candidate. It is not intended to apply to chronic or persistent illness or to long-term adverse personal circumstances.² Where there is a chronic medical condition good cause shall only be established where the candidate's performance in assessment has been compromised by a sudden severe episode of the illness.

- b) 'Evidence' shall mean a report descriptive of the medical condition or other adverse personal circumstances which are advanced by the candidate for consideration as amounting to good cause. Such a report should include a supporting statement from an appropriate person as defined in the Student Absence Policy.³ Where the report refers to a medical condition of more than seven days' duration the report must be completed by an appropriate medical practitioner.
- c) The events described in paragraphs (i) and (ii) of paragraph (a) of this regulation shall constitute incomplete assessment.

These definitions establish at the outset that the regulations in this section are concerned with events in which a student either:

- a) misses an examination or a coursework deadline or otherwise fails to comply with the requirements of the course's scheme of assessment, or
- b) reports that they have submitted an impaired performance in an assessment.

These regulations will be invoked when the student reports formally that they were prevented by illness or other adverse personal circumstances from attending the examination or submitting the coursework or other assessment, or similarly reports that illness or other circumstances affected their performance. The choice of the verb 'prevented' is deliberate; the regulations are not concerned with occurrences which have merely hindered the student and, while more or less trivial events or ailments might have a marginal impact on a student's performance, they must necessarily be written off as irrelevant in this context. The regulations are concerned only with more serious circumstances – called 'good cause' – which justify the student's missing an examination or coursework or turning in a relatively poor performance.

Good cause is concerned with **assessment** that has been affected. It does not cover an on-going, or chronic, situation that affects a student's attendance at classes/lectures or their ability

¹ §16.27 sets out penalties for late submission of coursework; these will not be applied in the event of good cause being demonstrated. In the event of coursework being submitted not more than five days late as a result of circumstances beyond the control of the candidate, the candidate may apply for exemption from these penalties - see §16.28. If a candidate is so permitted to defer submission of coursework, the 'due time' hereafter in these regulations will be the later time permitted. [Footnote in the Code.]

² A candidate experiencing chronic or persistent illness or long-term adverse personal circumstances is encouraged at as early a stage as possible to contact appropriate sources of support such as their Adviser of Study/Advising Team and the Disability Service. The [Fitness to Study Procedure](#) may be used to consider how best to support any such candidate in their studies. [Foot note in the Code.]

³ The [Student Absence Policy](#) is available online at https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/Media_129312_smxx.pdf. [Footnote in the Code.]

to engage in the learning during semester. A student who has been ill for a number of weeks during term may have been unable to complete the required learning and is likely to need advice about the possible courses of action, such as repeating affected courses. Footnote 2 (which appears as footnote 14 in the on-line *University Regulations*) highlights the fact that where adverse circumstances described by a student do not fall under the definition of good cause alternative procedures or sources of support should be considered.

A student's statement that they were prevented from attending, submitting or performing in assessment must be substantiated. For this purpose supporting evidence must come from someone professionally qualified, and/or otherwise familiar with the circumstances and their effect on the student, to write a medical or other report supporting the student's claim. If the student has claimed that they have been ill for a period of more than seven days, that claim should be accompanied by a report from an appropriate medical practitioner. In the event of a short-term worsening of a long-term condition, it is possible for a Disability Advisor to provide a supporting statement if the student actually consulted the Disability Service during the period when the difficulties were occurring. More information on types of supporting evidence is given in the FAQs for students:

<https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/apg/policies/assessment/goodcausefaqs/#whatisappropriateforagoodcauseclaim%3F>

5.2 Procedure

§16.46 It shall be the responsibility of the candidate to make relevant good cause circumstances known to the School responsible for the assessment by submitting a claim to MyCampus, which must be supported by appropriate evidence.⁴ The outcome of any claim shall be notified to the candidate as soon as reasonably practicable.

§16.47 Where incomplete assessment may be the result of good cause, notification later than five working days after the examination, or after the date at which submission of the work for assessment was due, shall not be taken into account unless circumstances have prevented the candidate from submitting a claim within this time. A candidate may not retract a claim of good cause more than five working days after the examination or after the date at which submission of work for assessment was due, nor after the date of publication of the results of the assessment, whichever date was earlier.

It is the student's own responsibility to ask for consideration under these regulations by submitting a claim of good cause in MyCampus. The claim must be submitted, together with the supporting evidence, not later than five working days after the missed examination(s) or coursework submission date(s). No later claim will be considered unless the student can also demonstrate that they had been unable to submit the claim at an earlier date. (If supporting evidence is not immediately available, the student should submit the claim within five working days and indicate that the evidence is to follow as soon as possible.)

§16.48 a) The primary responsibility for determining claims of incomplete assessment due to good cause shall lie with the appropriate Board of Examiners. However, should a meeting of the Board of Examiners not be anticipated until some significant time after the relevant examination

⁴ The mechanism for notifying the Head of School is MyCampus. In the event that this facility is not available, the candidate should contact the Head of School directly.

In cases where candidates present sensitive personal information which they are reluctant to discuss with more than one or two members of staff, a member of staff should be given responsibility by the Head of School for ensuring that relevant information is passed to appropriate colleagues in order that their circumstances may be taken into account.

Where a candidate is seeking an extension of more than five working days to a coursework submission date they should submit a claim of good cause to MyCampus but they are also advised to alert a member of staff such as Adviser of Studies or Assessment Officer to the claim in order that it may be considered promptly. [Footnote in the Code.]

or coursework submission date, the Head of School or nominee⁵ shall determine the outcome of a claim of good cause in consultation with the relevant Assessment Officer. Any such decisions shall be reported to the Board of Examiners at the next available meeting. Although the Board of Examiners may pass comment on such decisions, it may not overturn a decision where this would cause detriment to the candidate.

The general rule is that the relevant Board of Examiners must determine whether the evidence presented by the student is strong enough to justify the 'good cause' regulations being invoked. However, in practice, decisions as to whether a student has demonstrated 'good cause' often cannot wait for the next meeting of the Examination Board; it is then the Head of School who makes this assessment. Their decision must be reported to the Board of Examiners, who may only overturn it where this would be to the benefit of the student. The Head of School may delegate decision-making in this respect to senior role holders such as Head of Subject, Programme Convener or Head of Year. Decisions must be made in consultation with the Assessment Officer. Given the volume of claims that are made, it is usual for Schools to manage this activity through a 'Good Cause Committee' that may meet on a regular basis through the semester once assessments are being submitted. There is no set timescale for considering a claim though it is regarded as good practice for decisions to be communicated to students as soon as practicable and ideally within two weeks. It is recommended that students are given an indication of the likely timescale for claims made in their School. Outcomes are provisional until they are ratified by the Exam Board (meaning that a student cannot appeal against a Good Cause decision until after the Exam Board meets).

The regulations deliberately avoid describing cases that might be cited as examples of good cause and Boards of Examiners and Heads of Schools are invited to apply their teaching experience with their general knowledge and understanding to determine whether something has happened to significantly impact on the assessment and to justify the student's input to that assessment being set aside. The following general points may, however, be taken into consideration.

- The report should indicate clearly the relevant circumstances, and set out how they affected the student. If it does not do this the application must be refused.
- A distinction will be made at the outset between events affecting preparation for assessment and those which impact directly on performance in assessment. The timing and duration of the event are therefore of critical importance. Thus, comparatively minor health issues (particularly those of a gastro-intestinal nature) may have no significance for the assessment of coursework but could be critically important if coinciding with an examination.
- Students should be expected to make reasonable provision for misadventure in their preparation for assessment, particularly in respect to travel arrangements if attending an on-campus exam.
- When looking for evidence of a deterioration in performance coinciding with the reported event, it is important that examiners look at the student's performance in all assessment, not just the assessment(s) they report to have been affected.
- The significance of a bereavement cannot be accurately defined by place in family alone, and the sudden death of a friend or relative might have more impact than the anticipated death of a much closer relation.

§16.48 b) In considering claims of good cause:

- i) the evidence provided by the candidate claiming good cause, and any relevant and available material submitted by them for assessment shall be scrutinised;

⁵ The nominee of the Head of School with responsibility for considering such claims shall be indicated in the programme handbook. Such a nominee will typically be an Honours Convener, Head of Year, Programme Convener or holder of another similar senior role. [Footnote in the Code.]

- ii) fairness to the individual candidate claiming good cause must be balanced with fairness to other candidates and the integrity of the assessment as a whole;
- iii) it shall be determined whether the failure to attend an examination or to submit work for assessment has been justified by good cause;
- iv) in the event of the candidate having submitted work for assessment by examination or otherwise and where the circumstances described in the claim are accepted as constituting good cause, it shall be determined whether such work has been manifestly prejudiced by good cause. If such prejudice is established the work affected shall be deemed not to have been submitted, and the procedure in §16.50 followed.

A number of things have to be taken into account before a decision can be made as to whether 'good cause' has been demonstrated. The evidence provided by the student in support of the claim will be examined, and so too will any examination scripts and/or coursework that they have submitted as part of the course assessment. The question that the Exam Board, Head of School or Good Cause committee has to answer is: if the student has failed to attend an examination or submit work for assessment, was that failure justified in the circumstances? Alternatively, if the student has claimed that the standard of their submitted work was reduced by reason of illness or other circumstances, does the evidence support the claim?

If the answer to the second of these questions is yes, the examination script or other work submitted for assessment will be set aside and the student's position will be the same as if the work had not been submitted. The Examination Board must not speculate as to the extent to which a submitted script may have been affected and attempt to determine an appropriate compensation. The University's long held position in such circumstances is that the Board is not competent to embark on such a task, and that the safest action is to set the affected script or other material aside on grounds that it could not be used with confidence as an indicator of the student's attainment of relevant intended learning outcomes.

Judgement on whether there has been manifest prejudice to a student's assessment performance should always be made, irrespective of whether the student has achieved the threshold grade (or higher) for the course in question (D3 for undergraduate programmes, C3 for PGT programmes). Judgement should be made taking into account the student's overall profile. Identifying manifest prejudice can be difficult particularly during the early stages of a student's career at the University. If a student submits a good cause claim in relation to the end of year exam, the Exam Board might have only a class test or piece of coursework available as evidence of prior performance. There are reasons why these may not provide reliable information about how a student might be expected to perform in the end of year exam. In the first year of an undergraduate degree programme, when there is least available evidence of other performance, a grade of D3 or above is generally sufficient and therefore the lack of clear evidence of manifest prejudice to performance is less of an issue. In second year, when grades determine entry to Honours, some evidence of previous performance, including on other courses, will be available. The view of Academic Standards Committee is that where Exam Boards are faced with difficult decisions they should carefully scrutinise all the available evidence but exercise doubt in favour of the student.

These regulations exist with the object of providing some relief for students who have been ill or the victim of adverse circumstances at a particularly unfortunate time, but decisions in favour of a student claiming 'good cause' cannot be taken lightly. Many students will have had problems of various kinds to overcome during the course of their studies and in their preparation for assessment, and an over-generous decision to accept a 'good cause' claim may be unfair to others and undermines the standard of all of the University's awards.

5.3 Outcomes

§16.49 Where it is determined that the evidence presented does not support the candidate's claim that they were prevented by good cause from attending an examination or submitting work for assessment, the assessment or assessments in question shall be treated as non-submissions. Where it is determined that the evidence presented does not indicate that the

candidate's performance in assessment was manifestly prejudiced by good cause, their work shall be assessed as though no claim of good cause had been received. The candidate's grade for the course as a whole shall be calculated accordingly.

If the student's application for consideration under the 'good cause' provisions is unsuccessful, the outcome is the same as if no such application had ever been made - there are no shades of grey. Thus, the consequences of missing the assessment will follow, and the marks awarded for submitted work will be the marks that would have been awarded had no good cause claim been made.

§16.50 In the event of incomplete assessment arising from good cause being established the candidate shall, subject to §16.52, normally be expected to complete their assessment by attending the examination at a subsequent diet, or submitting outstanding work for assessment, if an opportunity to do so occurs within their period of study. In considering whether this requirement should apply, the desirability of the candidate's assessment being conducted in full should be balanced with the practical considerations and financial costs to the candidate and the University of providing a later completion date. Consideration should also be given to the candidate's other assessment commitments to ensure that they are not unreasonably burdened. In order to permit such completion:

- a) a special sitting of an examination may be arranged, or the candidate may be required to attend for examination at a scheduled diet; and/or,
- b) a date for completion of non-examination assessment may be set;

as appropriate in the circumstances. In any such event, that sitting or submission shall be regarded as the candidate's first attempt if the examination or assessment missed would itself have been their first attempt.

If 'good cause' is established, the preferred remedy is for the student to be given another opportunity to complete the missing assessment. This may mean a new date for submitting coursework, or the student being required to take the missed examination at a future diet. If retaking a missed examination isn't an option, the Head of School should consider a special replacement examination for the student. Before reaching such a decision the Head of School is entitled to consider the costs and practicalities as well as the increased assessment burden that the student would carry forward as a result. For the purposes of regulations governing rights to reassessment, the rearranged examination or revised submission date will count as the student's first attempt if the examination or missed assessment would itself have been their first attempt.

Note: Once the good cause claim has been accepted it cannot be withdrawn by the student, i.e. a student whose claim is accepted and is asked to repeat the assessment cannot then elect to take the grade that would have been awarded to the original assessment.

§16.51 If the outstanding work, in respect of which good cause is established, is identified in regulations as a requirement for the award of a degree, this work must be submitted for the candidate to qualify for the award of that degree.

§16.52 In respect of work for assessment not excluded by §16.51, where it is determined that the evidence presented supports the candidate's claim that they were prevented by good cause from completing that work on or by the due time, and where no means of substituting an alternative assessment may be found, the following regulations shall apply:

- a) The extent to which the candidate's assessment has been completed shall be determined as a percentage, taking into account the relative weights attributed to the components of a complete assessment as published in the relevant assessment scheme approved by the Senate. The extent of such completion at sub-honours levels and on taught postgraduate programmes shall be determined on a course by course basis; at honours, the extent of completion of assessment shall be determined across the whole honours assessment.
- b) The Board of Examiners shall make an overall judgement of the candidate's work submitted for assessment, using as far as possible the standards and criteria applied in respect of the work of other candidates.

c) Where the candidate has completed 75% or more of the work required for assessment, the Board of Examiners shall recommend an award or other outcome on the basis of the work completed.

d) In respect of honours assessment,

i) where the candidate has completed at least 30% but less than 75% of the work required for assessment, an unclassified honours degree may be recommended if the completed portion is of honours standard, or, if the completed portion is not of honours standard, no award shall be made and the candidate will be regarded as not having been presented for assessment in the senior honours year;

ii) for the purposes of the award of an unclassified honours degree a candidate's failure, due to good cause, to achieve a grade D3 or above in a piece of independent work worth at least 20 credits shall not prevent award of the degree in terms of §16.51;

iii) where the candidate has completed less than 30% of the work required for assessment they will be regarded as not having been presented for honours assessment;

iv) in respect of courses where good cause is established in relation to no more than 25% of the assessment, a course grade shall be returned on the basis of the completed assessment; in respect of courses where good cause is established in relation to more than 25% of the assessment, the course grade shall be returned as MV; notwithstanding the return of an MV course grade, all components of assessment unaffected by good cause shall be included in the determination of the candidate's award in accordance with §16.52(c).

e) In respect of sub-honours and taught postgraduate assessment, where the candidate has completed less than 75% of the work required for assessment they will be regarded as not having taken the course.

§16.53 Where the Board of Examiners decides to recommend an unclassified honours degree or to make no award under §16.52(d)(i), this outcome shall be communicated to the Clerk of Senate together with a reasoned case for the decision. If the candidate has been recommended for the award of an unclassified honours degree, and has not previously refused such an offer, the Clerk of Senate shall invite them to accept that award. In the event of the award being declined, the candidate shall be regarded as not having been presented for assessment in the senior honours year and, subject to the requirement to comply with the maximum duration of study prescribed for the degree, shall be eligible to repeat the full senior honours year.

If it is impossible, impracticable or unreasonable to give the student an opportunity to fill the gap in their assessment, then - unless the missing work is identified in regulations as a requirement for the award of the degree (e.g. the achievement of at least D3 in a dissertation or other independent work worth 20 credits or more for the award of a classified Honours degree) - the following rules are applied to determine the fairest outcome overall. Although there are similarities, the rules are different for Honours and non-Honours assessment. In each case the question to be answered is "How much of the assessment has the student completed?"

For sub-Honours and taught postgraduate students the percentages and decisions are determined discretely on a course by course basis, taking into account the weights attributed to each component of the assessment.

Example 5.A

If three components, A, B and C contribute 50%, 30% and 20% to a course assessment, and the student misses only component C, they will have completed 80% of the assessment.

For Honours students, the question to be answered is "What percentage of the whole Honours assessment has the student completed?"

Example 5.B

Pat's Honours curriculum consists of two courses (A and B) carrying 60 credits, and four (C, D, E and F) carrying 30 credits.

Pat misses the examination in course C which is worth 50% of the course assessment and misses the examination in course D which is worth 60% of the course assessment. If she completes all other components of the Honours assessment, the answer to the question of how much has she completed will be:

$$\begin{aligned} & 100 - (50 \times 30 / 240) - (60 \times 30 / 240) \% \\ & = 100 - (1500 / 240) - (1800 / 240) \% \\ & = 86.25\% \end{aligned}$$

In sub-Honours and PGT assessment, if the student has not completed 75% of the course assessment they will be regarded as not having taken that course.

For Honours students the rules are a little more complex. If the student has completed at least 30% of the overall Honours assessment (but less than 75%), and if what they have submitted is considered by the Board of Examiners to be of Honours standard, the Board may recommend to the Clerk of Senate that the student be invited to accept the award of an unclassified Honours degree. The Board must bear in mind that an unclassified Honours degree can only be offered where a student is considered to have substantially completed the learning for the degree and where assessment is incomplete due to good cause; a student who had been affected by longer term difficulties, resulting not only in missed assessment but also missed learning would not be covered by the rules on incomplete assessment and good cause, and would therefore not be eligible for the unclassified Honours degree. A student in such a situation should instead be considered for a possible repeat year or for an exit award such as the ordinary degree.

If an unclassified Honours degree is offered, the student is at liberty to decline the offer in which event they will be regarded as not having been presented for Senior Honours assessment. The advantage for the student of this outcome is that they may present for Senior Honours assessment in the following session with the results of any previous attempts entirely discounted.

If the student has completed less than 30% of the assessment, or if the work submitted is not of Honours standard, the student will be regarded as not having been presented for Honours assessment and so may present for Honours assessment in the following session with the results of any previous attempts entirely discounted.

§16.60 Any questions of principle or procedure regarding the operation of the regulations governing incomplete assessment and good cause shall be determined by the Academic Standards Committee or, in respect of any individual case, by the Clerk of Senate.