

## Good Cause – the Basics

### *What is 'Incomplete Assessment resulting from Good Cause'?*

The University's 'Code of Assessment' sets out the way that the University will deal with a student's assessment that is affected by adverse circumstances. The University aims to be fair to all students, those who are affected and those who are not. 'Incomplete assessment' refers to:

- assessments that have been missed (e.g. an exam that wasn't taken);
- late submission of work (e.g. being unable to submit an essay by the deadline);
- submitting a piece of work (including an exam taken) that does not demonstrate the performance that you would otherwise have been able to achieve.

'Good cause' is the term used to refer to adverse circumstances that are beyond the student's control and are judged to be sufficiently serious to account for the incomplete assessment or the affected performance. Mistakes in submission, pressure of work for other courses, part-time employment, or holidays booked are *not* regarded as grounds for good cause as they are not beyond a student's reasonable control and would be mitigated by adequate planning.

If a good cause claim is accepted, the most likely outcome is that you will be asked to complete the assessment at a later date. In very limited circumstances, such as the assessment opportunity no longer being available, some work may be 'set aside', i.e. not required to be completed.

If the good cause claim is **not** accepted, then if you completed the assessment, the grade that you achieved will stand. If you did not complete the assessment, it will be treated as a non-submission.

### *What the rules do not allow:*

- The University will not award credit where you have completed too little assessment.
- The University will not increase grades on the basis of adverse circumstances; it will not speculate about how well you might have done if you hadn't been facing the adverse circumstances.

### *General points:*

The University recognises that students may face significant challenges during their studies. The Code of Assessment sets out what the University can do when you provide us with evidence of significant adverse circumstances which prevent you from demonstrating what you have learned during your studies and prevent you from completing assessment to the best of your ability.

Note that good cause is concerned with **assessment** that has been affected. It does not cover an on-going, or chronic, situation that affects your attendance at classes and lectures or your ability to engage in the learning during semester. If you have been ill for a number of weeks during term, it is likely that you will not have completed the required learning and you should speak to your adviser of studies or other member of staff as soon as possible about the possibility of repeating the course, and should also discuss what support you might need in your studies if the circumstances are continuing.

Many students have on-going difficult circumstances or medical problems and the University will support you to manage these so that you can engage fully in your learning (e.g. through assessment carried out by the Disability Service or Counselling & Psychological Services). For on-going or chronic circumstances the Disability Service can recommend any

appropriate adjustments to the arrangements for examinations and other assessments, but these arrangements take time to put in place so you should make contact at the earliest possible opportunity. Remember it is your responsibility to ask for help and make use of the support offered to help you manage your circumstances. If you experience a sudden worsening or flare-up of an on-going condition at the time of assessment then you may be able to claim good cause. Without a sudden worsening of circumstances, good cause cannot be used to take any further account of these issues.

For students with mental health problems such as depression and anxiety, good cause can only be granted if the problem has been significantly worse than usual at the time of the assessment. Evidence for this would normally be required in the form of a letter from a GP, psychiatrist or other health professional. Such a letter should be obtained as soon as possible in relation to the period of acute deterioration in health, e.g. within a few days of missing an exam. However, we understand that during the Covid-19 pandemic there may be particular difficulties in obtaining supporting evidence. Please see the section *Evidence to support claims of Good Cause* below.

For claims that relate to work you completed but which you believe was directly affected by good cause (e.g. you sat an exam but believe that you performed poorly because of the circumstances), firstly the circumstances described in your claim will be considered. Secondly, an Exam Board must reach the view that the standard of your work was 'manifestly prejudiced'. This means that the Exam Board must judge that, when considered in the light of all the other information (such as your performance in previous exams), the grade achieved for this assessment was significantly lower than expected and that repeating the assessment is therefore in your best interests. Making a judgment on expected performance can be difficult, which is why the Board looks for evidence of a **significant** impact. If the grade you achieved is broadly in line with your other performances then it is unlikely that your claim will be accepted.

#### *Timing:*

If you believe that any of your assessment has been affected, you must submit a good cause claim to MyCampus within **five working days of the assessment date** (e.g. exam date, coursework submission deadline). If you change your mind about making a claim (e.g. on reflection, you decide that the impact on work that you submitted wasn't as severe as you had first thought), you may withdraw the claim so long as you do so within **five working days of the assessment date**. Thereafter you cannot withdraw the good cause claim. If your good cause claim is accepted and you are asked to repeat the assessment (submit the coursework again or sit the exam at the next available opportunity) then you cannot later say that you wish to take the grade that would have been awarded to the original assessment.

#### *Completing a Good Cause claim:*

MyCampus leads you through the various stages and requirements for completing a good cause claim, but remember you need to show how **specific assessments** have been affected and support that with any available evidence that relates to the **assessment dates** in question.

If you submit a good cause claim in relation to several assessments, you need to show how the circumstances have impacted on each one. Your claim may be accepted only in relation to **some** of the assessments if the impact is not clear for **all** of them.

#### *Evidence to support claims of Good Cause:*

Normally relevant supporting evidence is required for good cause claims (see the [Good Cause FAQs](#)). For medical matters this could be a letter from your GP, consultant or hospital. It is important that any such letter precisely refers to relevant dates so that the impact on

your assessment can be understood. In view of the particular difficulties associated with obtaining medical evidence at the current time, good cause claims do not require, but can be strengthened by, provision of such evidence. Students should make reasonable efforts to support their claims in this way. If you don't yet have the relevant evidence to hand, you must still submit the good cause claim within five working days of the assessment date. Supporting evidence can be submitted a little later, providing it is available in good time for the relevant Exam Board.

In the event of a short-term worsening of a long-term condition, it is possible for your Disability Advisor or Counselling and Psychological Services to provide a supporting statement if you were already known to the relevant service before the condition worsened.

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