



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

Undergraduate Examination Allowances: Information for Candidates

Introduction

Dear Student,

This leaflet provides information about Examination Allowances and Warnings and explains what you should do if you feel you been ill or had extenuating circumstances during, or leading up to, your examinations. If you need special arrangements to take your examinations such as extra time or special equipment or facilities you should also refer to the separate guidance note on Special Examination Arrangements (www.cam.ac.uk/disability/specialexams/). The procedures set out on the following pages relate to undergraduate examinations. If you are a graduate student, you should contact the Board of Graduate Studies or the Graduate Union for information on the procedures for graduate examinations.

These notes have been prepared by the University in consultation with Cambridge University Students' Union (CUSU) and are for guidance only; if in any doubt, seek advice.

If you are ill or have extenuating circumstances which may affect your performance in an examination, it is very important that you contact your College Tutor who will be able to offer support and advice and may decide to apply on your behalf for an Examination Allowance. The University Counselling Service and the Disability Resource Centre are available to provide confidential help. Further advice and information can also be obtained from the CUSU Education Officer or from the appropriate officer of your College JCR.

Education Officer
Cambridge University Students' Union

Diane Rainsbury
Senior Assistant Registry
University of Cambridge

Sources of Information and Support

<p>University Counselling Service 2-3 Bene't Place Lensfield Road Cambridge CB2 1EL 01223 332865 reception@counselling.cam.ac.uk</p>	<p>Disability Resource Centre Keynes House Trumpington Street Cambridge CB2 1QA 01223 332301 ucam-disability@lists.cam.ac.uk</p>	<p>CUSU Old Examination Hall Free School Lane Cambridge CB2 3RF 01223 333313 education@cusu.cam.ac.uk</p>
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What These Notes Cover

These guidelines describe the procedures relating to examination warnings and allowances for undergraduate examinations, and examinations for the LL.M, MBA, and the MEd Degrees, and Diplomas and Certificates. See also the formal guidance issued by the Applications Committee on Examination Allowances www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/exams/students/allowances_guidance_students.pdf

At Cambridge, examinations are set and marked by Boards of Examiners appointed for each subject. Examiners can award marks only on the basis of the work actually submitted to them. The class awarded to a candidate depends on the rules adopted by each subject for converting the marks gained for each paper into an overall class. In some circumstances, allowances can be made to recognise special factors affecting a candidate's performance in examinations. The University Council has authority to grant 'examination allowances' and the procedure for considering such allowances is operated on the Council's behalf by the Applications Committee. These guidelines are based on the formal University regulations relating to examination allowances. Should you wish to consult the regulations, your College Office will have a reference copy.

Extenuating circumstances

It is possible to take examinations under special conditions, for medical or other reasons, because of illness or disability. Your college is responsible for applying to the University for permission and the college (if you sit your examination in college) is then responsible for all the logistical arrangements for you. It is important you allow sufficient time to discuss your requirements with your Tutor. Sometimes you can be allowed to sit exams at other than the prescribed period. Special arrangements include:

- *Blindness or visual impairment:* Braille versions of papers can be ordered, or papers can be enlarged.
- *Food and drink during examinations:* if you have a medical condition that requires you to consume small quantities of food or drink at regular intervals during your examinations, special permission for this can be granted.
- *Extra time:* this is often allowed for candidates with a disability – poor vision, dyslexia/dysgraphia/dyspraxia, muscular dystrophy, arthritis, etc. Your Tutor will need to explain to the University why extra time is needed, and suggest a suitable amount. You may also be able to use a word-processor depending on your circumstances. If you are granted permission for extra WRITING time in your examinations, then you will be expected to take those examinations in the Designated Examination Centre (in the University Centre). If you are granted permission to use a computer in your examination then you will be expected to take those examinations in the Titan Suite (Computing Service). The Titan Suite is also able to accommodate those students who need extra time (but not rest breaks) as well as a computer. If you need extra time for rest breaks, unless you do not need to move around, you will be expected to take your examinations in college.
- *Poor handwriting:* if this is caused by a disability or medical reason, then word-processing or dictation may be allowed (practice of these methods is recommended beforehand). If your handwriting is bad, but you don't have a specific disability, you will have to take examinations in the normal way. In certain circumstances the Examiners may ask for some of your scripts to be typed with your assistance; but you should not rely on this. The Board of Examinations will only allow a percentage of your scripts to be transcribed, e.g. 3 out of 5 papers. You should assume that, if you do not write legibly, you will be at a severe disadvantage.
- *Religious obligations:* the University may allow you on religious grounds to sit your examinations at an alternative time to the published timetable where the scheduled examination coincides with a religious festival or observance day.

In every case, consult your Tutor without delay!

Frequently Asked Questions

Can the Examiners be warned of a problem with my examinations?

Yes, by means of an 'Examination Warning'. *Note that the Examiners are not allowed to award you extra marks, because they can award marks only on the basis of work actually submitted to them.* In most cases the procedure is relevant only if there is a risk of you failing the examination.

On what grounds can I apply for an Examination Allowance?

Extenuating circumstances of any kind, in particular illness or bereavement. You may be granted an Examination Allowance if you failed your examinations or you received a lower class than anticipated. If you missed a relatively small part of the examination or achieved a lower class in just one or two papers the Examiners may be given permission to raise your overall class.

When should I raise problems, and with whom?

It is vital that you contact your Tutor as soon as a problem or issue becomes apparent. If for any reason you feel unable to raise a problem with your Tutor, speak to the Senior Tutor or another Tutor or College Officer in your college or the CUSU Education Officer. If your problem is of a medical or similar nature, it is essential that you seek professional advice (perhaps a doctor or counsellor, or the Disability Resource Centre) without delay.

If it turns out to be necessary for your case to be taken up on your behalf by your College, you will then be able to offer proof of the nature of your illness or other disability. The officers of CUSU or of your College JCR can provide information and advice, but your College Tutors are the people empowered to approach the University authorities on your behalf in matters relating to Examination Allowances.

Owing to extenuating circumstances, I got a much lower class than I feel I deserved. Is there anything I can do?

Yes. Your Tutor may make an application to the Applications Committee for an Examination Allowance, as described under the section on Examination Allowances. Further information is given in the Committee's Guidance Notes on Examination Allowances.

What do I have to do if I am taken ill during revision or during the examination period?

If you are ill during your revision or during the examination period you should contact your Tutor. Depending on the nature of your condition you may be entitled to extra time, sitting your examinations in College or at a different time than scheduled. Similarly, if you are ill and are having difficulty completing a project or dissertation you may apply for an extension. In both cases you should also seek your doctor or college nurse so that someone has a record of your illness.

In all instances, your Tutor is responsible for submitting an application together with any supporting evidence on your behalf so you should contact your Tutor as soon as you are aware that you may be in difficulty.

What should I do if I am ill on the day of an examination?

Even if you are ill on the day of the examination, it is usually possible to make appropriate arrangements on your behalf. In all instances, you should contact your Tutor straightaway. You should try and remain calm and remember that your Tutor is experienced in dealing with such matters and will be able to reassure you. Any arrangements will depend on the nature and severity of your condition but every effort will be made to enable you to take or complete your examinations. However, if you are unable to sit any

of your examinations your Tutor may apply for an examination allowance. If you are ill during the exam, do not just leave, but alert the Invigilator that you are ill and cannot carry on.

I have, or I think I have a Specific Learning Difficulty. What do I need to do?

If you are, or think you have, dyslexia/dysgraphia/dyspraxia you should notify your Tutor as soon as you are aware of or suspect you may have such a condition. If you have not already been assessed by an Educational Psychologist or accredited Specialist Teacher (for example Patoss) you will need to arrange to do so. In such circumstances, you should contact the Disability Resource Centre which will be able to make such arrangements on your behalf.

Your Tutor is responsible for applying for any special arrangements (such as extra time) in which to complete your examination. In some instances, it may be necessary for you to use a word-processor in your examinations. Your Tutor will need to apply for any special examinations arrangements on your behalf which will need to include a diagnostic assessment report from an Education Psychologist or Specialist Teacher.

If you suspect you may have a Specific Learning Difficulty it is in your own interests to be assessed as soon as possible. An early diagnosis will enable your Tutor and Director of Studies to arrange other forms of support throughout your studies at Cambridge.

What should I do if I am dissatisfied with a decision of the Applications Committee?

A decision of the Applications Committee can be appealed in writing to the Administrative Secretary within three weeks of the Committee's decision.