



Examination allowances, including those taken in college

The vast majority of students experience no very serious problems in preparing for and taking their exams beyond the challenges the work itself presents. Every year, one or two undergraduates will have had their preparation for their examinations, or the actual examinations, hindered by serious illness or other difficulties (e.g. bereavement). The University does not allow candidates in such circumstances to have additional marks awarded to them to change their level of performance, but the University does take a sympathetic view of candidates who are so affected by illness or other good cause that they are unable to pass their examination.

In such circumstances, a Tutor makes the case on behalf of the candidate to the Examination Access and Mitigation Committee (EAMC) of the University Council. That body determines whether the student should be given an Allowance to proceed to the next part of the Tripos, or, in the case of final-year students, to graduate with honours. A full medical report, which remains confidential to the EAMC, is normally required as part of that exercise.

It is of the utmost importance that any undergraduate who feels that their work is being adversely affected by illness, family circumstance etc, should communicate with his or her Tutor at the earliest opportunity, and, if at all possible, before the start of the examinations.

In the interests of fairness to all candidates, the rules governing the taking of exams in College are strict. The University provides central exam rooms for use by candidates whose adjustment is solely the provision of an extra allowance of time. That may include some who take their examinations on a computer for medical reasons. (The only exception to this is when such a candidate has two exams on the same day. This may require one or both papers to be sat in College.) If you are granted extra time, once exam entries have been made you will be contacted by the Tutorial and Admissions Office who will confirm any examinations taken under special conditions.

In exceptional circumstances, the University may allow a candidate to sit his or her papers in College, with, where appropriate, an allowance of extra time or other adjustments. Such permission, which must be sought in advance by the candidate's Tutor or Tutorial and Admissions Office Manager, can only be granted when students are suffering from a serious disability or illness that makes it impossible for them to get to the examination room and/or write their answers in the usual way. Where permission is granted for special conditions, the Tutorial and Admissions Office will contact candidates to talk about their precise requirements. In all other cases, the University expects candidates to take their papers as normal, even if they feel they are suffering from factors which they consider could detract from their performance.

When a specific learning difficulty has been formally diagnosed, an allowance of extra time is granted only in severe cases. In less serious cases, examiners, provided the University has been given due warning following an application by the candidate's Tutor via the Tutorial and Admissions Office, are asked to disregard errors of spelling and other minor mistakes of a purely linguistic nature.

Any undergraduate who believes that they have good reason to need to take their exams in College must discuss this with his or her Tutor by the end of the Michaelmas Term. Supporting medical evidence will be required. It should be noted, however, that the support of a doctor or other professional consultant for an allowance of extra time, while it will always be given serious consideration by the College and by the University's EAMC, will not automatically lead to such an allowance being granted. If permission is granted to take papers in College, it will generally apply solely to the year in question. Some medical conditions must be re-assessed for this purpose each year. No consideration will be given later than the end of January to cases based on pre-existing medical conditions. After that date, applications will be made to the University only in cases of unforeseen illness or injury, and, it is emphasized, when the illness or injury is of such severity as to make it out of the question for the candidate to sit their papers under normal conditions.

Questions? Please contact senior.tutor@newn.cam.ac.uk