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Alternative Assessment

Policy and Procedure

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to detail the University College of Estate Management's (UCEM) policy and procedure for requesting, approving and delivering alternative assessments to those that have been set for a particular module. A summary of the procedures is available as a diagram [in Section 10](#).

This policy sets out:

- the criteria and procedure for applying for an alternative assessment;
- the procedure for approving requests for alternative assessments to be provided;
- the process for completing the alternative assessment;
- the responsibilities of the members of UCEM's staff who may be responsible for assessing requests for, and facilitating the provision of, alternative assessments.

The provisions of this document do not relate to any arrangements for assessment that may already be incorporated in an Additional Support Plan for an individual student under the terms of UCEM's Code of Practice Chapter on Disability and Additional Needs.

2. Introduction

The aim of this policy is to ensure assessment is reliable, consistent, fair, valid, inclusive and equitable.

In line with UCEM's Code of Practice Chapter on Equality and Diversity and UCEM's Code of Practice Chapter on Disability and Additional Needs, UCEM is committed to equal education opportunities for all and will endeavour to meet specific needs and circumstances a student may have.

The provision for disabled students and students with additional needs can be found within UCEM's Code of Practice chapter on Disability and Additional Needs and the Disability and Additional Needs Procedure, which is available on the "Listening, Disability and Welfare" area of the [Student Hub on the VLE](#). UCEM has a dedicated Disability and Wellbeing team who are available to discuss any specific needs requiring reasonable adjustments for teaching, coursework and/or examinations. In addition, UCEM offers students who meet the required criteria set out within this policy to undertake an alternative assessment.

It may also prove necessary to author alternative assessments when circumstances beyond the control of UCEM result in students being unable to complete the original element of assessment – typically, an examination – on the scheduled date. This may require a replacement alternative to be provided.

The essential characteristic of alternative assessment procedures is that they should ensure that the students concerned are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged in being able to meet relevant learning outcomes, thus ensuring that academic standards are maintained.

Alternative assessments will only be offered in exceptional circumstances where the student's needs for assessment cannot be met by the standard offering or UCEM's provision for students with either additional needs or mitigating circumstances.

3. Eligibility Criteria

In order to be considered for an Alternative Assessment, students must meet at least one of the set criteria detailed below:

- i. **Ongoing physical or mental health issues that affect the student's ability to undertake examinations under normal circumstances and which falls outside of the provision for students with a disability or additional needs.**
Supporting evidence: relevant letter from medical professional or hospital
- ii. **Pregnancy** – those who are in their third trimester of pregnancy.
Supporting evidence: MAT B1, or relevant documentation from medical professional
- iii. **Religious observance or belief** – please refer to the [UCEM Policy on Religious Observance](#) which can be accessed on the Student Hub on the VLE.
Supporting evidence: letter from religious leader
- iv. **An occurrence caused by extreme weather conditions or other significant factors affecting access to and/or the functioning of an examination centre, rendering it incapable of use by all or some candidates.**
Supporting evidence: report from Academic Registrar or nominee

Supporting evidence, as detailed above, will be required in all circumstances. An alternative assessment will not be granted without valid supporting evidence.

Please note that even if you meet one of the criteria above, UCEM may still determine that an alternative assessment is not appropriate.

4. How to request an alternative assessment

4.1. Ongoing physical or mental health issues and/or Pregnancy

Requests for an alternative assessment due to health issues or pregnancy (Criteria 3i. and 3ii.) must be made by logging an enquiry through Student Central, or by telephoning on: +44 (0)118 921 4696. You must make this request **no later than 6 weeks before the assessment date**.

4.2. Religious observance or belief

Requests for an alternative assessment due to religious observance cannot be made directly. Please follow the UCEM Policy on Religious Observance and submit a Religious Observance form. If it is not possible to schedule your assessment to avoid the time and date you have notified to us, then the alternative options as outlined in the Religious Observance Policy may be considered at UCEM's discretion. One of these options is the setting of an alternative assessment.

4.3. An occurrence outside UCEM's control

Where the alternative assessment is sought by UCEM as a consequence of other factors beyond UCEM's control, the Academic Registrar or nominee determines if this may be required. The Academic Registrar must advise the Dean of School, Associate Dean and Subject Head, as well as module leader(s) and programme leader(s), of the circumstances that may necessitate provision of alternative means of assessment within **2 working days** of their occurrence.

Examples of such factors include, but are not limited to:

- Unforeseen and extreme weather conditions (e.g. earthquake, typhoon etc.) rendering an examination centre unusable or a student unable to safely attend the centre

- Government regulations, civil/ political unrest or war which result in a student not being permitted to attend the examination centre, or where a student is unable to safely attend
- Where UCEM is unable to provide a suitable examination centre in line with its Policy on Centre Provision.

5. Procedure for approving provision of an alternative assessment

In all cases, a written record must be maintained of proceedings and filed in Student Central. Programme leaders should be kept informed throughout the process.

5.1. Ongoing physical or mental health issues and/or Pregnancy

A member of either the Disability and Wellbeing team or the Assessment team (as appropriate) will discuss with the student the reasons for the alternative assessment request and determine whether their circumstances are likely to meet the required criteria for eligibility and advise them of the supporting evidence required.

Once the supporting evidence has been submitted, the Disability and Wellbeing Adviser or Academic Standards Officer will assess the case in consultation with the relevant module leader(s) and agree the outcome. The Academic Standards Officer will inform the student of the decision within 5 working days.

5.2. Religious observance or belief

If it is determined, through the UCEM Policy on Religious Observance that an alternative assessment may be appropriate, an Academic Standards Officer will meet with the module leader(s) and agree an outcome. The module leader will be informed if any of the other alternative options from the UCEM Policy on Religious Observance are available. The Academic Standards Officer will inform the student of the decision within 5 working days.

5.3. An occurrence outside UCEM's control

An Academic Standards Officer will meet with the module leader(s) to review the circumstances, agree whether an alternative assessment will be appropriate and propose an outcome. The proposed outcome must be approved by the Dean or Associate Dean, prior to notification of the student(s) of the decision. The Academic Standards Officer will inform the student of the decision **within 5 working days of the incident occurring**.

6. Decisions

One of the following decisions will be made:

- **Alternative assessment is appropriate.**

The student(s) will receive an Alternative Assessment Agreement form via Student Central which details the alternative assessment that is being offered. The student is required to sign and return the Agreement **within 5 working days**, via Student Central. The alternative assessment cannot be processed without the signed Agreement in place.

- **Alternative Assessment is not appropriate**

A decision that it would not be appropriate to arrange an alternative assessment will not prejudice the rights of the student(s) to apply for consideration of their situation under UCEM's Policy on the Submission and Approval of Mitigating Circumstances.

- **Alternative Assessment is not appropriate, and the student should defer the module.**

This decision will be made particularly where the student's situation may have affected the learning process associated with the module in addition to its assessment.

7. Alternative Assessment format

Following the decision that an alternative assessment is required, the Assessment team will co-ordinate its provision and ensure the following guidelines are adhered to. The final format of the alternative assessment will be agreed between the module leader, the Disability and Wellbeing team (if being proposed due a disability, additional need or pregnancy) and the Assessment team. Full details will be provided to the student within the Alternative Assessment Agreement.

- Wherever possible, alternative assessments must be prepared by the authors of those that they replace.
- The alternative assessment must be of the same academic standard and must assess the same learning outcomes as those covered by the original. Normally this ensured by writing each question to reflect the learning outcomes being assessed in the original question.
- The alternative assessment will always reflect the format/ rubric of the examination paper or the coursework assignment brief for which it is an alternative.
- If replacing an examination, the answers expected will be more comparable with an assignment as opposed to an examination question.
- The assessment will clearly state the word limit.

8. Process for completing the alternative assessment

The alternative assessment will be sent to the student on the agreed date and time via Student Central. The student will complete the alternative assessment in line with the instructions given in the Agreement and the rubric of the assessment. For an examination, students will be allowed 72 hours to complete the alternative assessment. For coursework, students will be allowed between 72 hours and 5 days to complete the alternative assessment. The time allowed will only exceed 72 hours in the case of health issues or pregnancy. In these cases, the time allowed will be agreed following advice from the Disability and Wellbeing team. An allowance beyond 5 days will only be given in exceptional circumstances. No additional time beyond the specified deadline will be allowed for an alternative assessment.

Submission will be handled in line with standard UCEM procedures. The completed assessment will be returned to the Academic Standards Officer within the agreed timeframe and the agreed manner as detailed within the Agreement. The submission will be processed through Turnitin, in the same manner as non-examination assessments.

9. Process for marking of the alternative assessment

Wherever possible, alternative assessments should be marked by the module leader or other appropriate internal marker. The alternative assessment will be marked in line with the normal marking process using the assessment rubric and moderation will occur as normal. Results will be approved at the relevant Board of Examiners. Results normally will be released within the normal timeframes along with all other results for the relating module / programme. However, where it proves not to be possible to meet this deadline due to the student's circumstances, such students will be listed as Result Not Yet Available (RNYA) until marking and moderation has been completed.

10. Reporting, Monitoring and Review

Boards of Examiners are advised when alternative assessment has been provided on a module and the details of the assessment are made available. UCEM monitors and reviews its provision for alternative assessment on an annual basis to ensure all students' educational needs are addressed fairly and consistently. The outcome of this analysis is reported to relevant deliberative committees.

11. Summary of Procedures

