



EXTENSIONS FOR ASSIGNMENTS PROTOCOL

Contact Officer	Student Affairs and Service Quality Manager
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1. OVERVIEW

- 1.1. A subject coordinator is often asked to make difficult decisions in relation to applications for extensions of the lodgement date for assignments and penalties for late submission of assignments. This protocol should assist in this decision-making process.

Reason for Protocol on Assignment Extensions

- 1.2. Subject coordinators should bear in mind the following when considering extensions for assignments.
- 1.2.1. Many students are able to conform to assignment deadlines despite sickness, personal problems and employment concerns. It is unfair to those students who have conformed with the prescribed deadline to allow extensions to others without some proper explanation and justification.
- 1.2.2. An aspect of the training inherent in our various degrees is to inculcate an appreciation of the importance of meeting deadlines.
- 1.2.3. Despite the above comments, it is necessary to have a protocol on assignment extensions as on occasions students genuinely do experience illness or other extenuating circumstances on or before the due date for assignments. It would be harsh not to allow students some leeway in regard to submission of assignments if good cause is shown.

Onus if Proof

- 1.3. The onus is upon students to satisfy the criteria discussed in the protocol below.

Lodgement of Assignments

- 1.4. Assignments should be lodged in the Assignment Box in the Law Library on level 2 or submitted electronically through iLearn if directed to do so by the subject coordinator, by the required time – normally 4.00pm on the specified day. The Assignment Box is cleared at 4.00pm daily and assignments that have been deposited are date stamped. Any assignments deposited after that time are late. Professional staff have on occasions been verbally abused and pressured to accept assignments after the deadline. An analogy can be made with lodgement of court documents within a limitation period – you have either lodged within time or you have lodged late.
- 1.5. The Faculty of Law has always had a protocol of requiring students to deposit assignments by the due date. A late lodgement penalty is applied unless an application is made for an extension prior to or on the due date and is approved by the subject coordinator based upon sickness or other proper reason.

Assignment Coversheets

- 1.6. Students are to ensure all available fields on the coversheet are completed.

2. THE PROTOCOL

Application Timing

- 2.1.** An application for extension should be made on or before the due date. An application for extension lodged after the due date should only be accepted if the reason for the extension made it impossible to seek an extension earlier (i.e., serious illness or accident). Subject coordinators should use their own discretion as to whether such an incident has occurred.

Reasons for Extension

- 2.2.** If the assignment is not lodged by the prescribed time the standard late lodgement penalty will apply unless an extension is granted for the following reasons:

- 2.2.1.** Sickness

- 2.2.2.** Extenuating circumstances

Sickness

- 2.3.** Extensions for assignments for sickness will only be granted if the student presents a medical certificate in the form discussed below. Subject coordinators need not look behind a medical certificate unless the certificate reveals a reason for an extension that would not justify an extension (such as a sore foot, a mild cold, etc.).

- 2.4.** A medical certificate should not be considered valid unless it indicates:

- 2.4.1.** the date on which the medical practitioner examined the student;

- 2.4.2.** the severity and duration of the complaint expressed as a medical opinion; and

- 2.4.3.** the practitioner's opinion of the effect of the condition on the student's capacity to undertake study.

- 2.5.** It is difficult to indicate in a protocol whether an extension should be granted if the sickness occurred, say, two weeks before the due date and was a mild or severe handicap as against a severe sickness just prior to the due date. For example, does a bout of severe sickness two weeks before the due date for a period of two days mean an extension should be granted? What if the sickness is for one day on the lodgement date? A decision on this will always be a matter of discretion for the subject coordinator. The following may be a guide:

- 2.5.1.** If sickness is in the five days leading up to the due date, an extension for some period of the sickness is appropriate.

- 2.5.2.** Sickness only on the due date should allow a one-day extension.

- 2.5.3.** Sickness earlier than one week before the due date should normally mean no extension is granted unless it is a relatively long term and severe illness (i.e., for more than 10 days). In that case a short extension may be appropriate.

Extenuating Circumstances

- 2.6.** Extensions on this ground are granted only in exceptional circumstances. An extension will only be granted on this basis if sufficient evidence is given of the circumstances (e.g. letters from employers, funeral notices, letters from doctors and other professionals, etc.).

- 2.7.** Students may in rare cases not wish to divulge some reasons because they consider them to be confidential. Obviously, these reasons will need to be revealed to someone. Students may choose to divulge information to a University counsellor or to the Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Service

Quality. In such cases subject coordinators should refer to the Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Service Quality or Student Affairs and Service Quality Manager who may have further information.

2.8. Reasons which would normally allow for an extension of time include:

2.8.1. Recent family deaths.

2.8.2. Severe emotional disturbances.

2.8.3. Unusual and unexpected changes in employment circumstances (e.g., a recent change in shifts).

2.9. There has been some pressure brought to bear by students in full-time employment to grant extensions, ostensibly because of 'busy-ness' caused by a crowded vocational schedule. This is not a sound reason to grant an extension of an assignment.

Insufficient Grounds for Extensions

2.10. Extensions should not be granted for the following reasons:

2.10.1. Recent Computer crashes. It is the responsibility of students to ensure proper backup of assignments.

2.10.2. Clashes in assignment dates. The assignment coordination process should avoid most clashes. On many occasions these clashes are caused by overloading of subjects or because students are not doing subjects in the prescribed order.

2.10.3. Because a student is busy with work pressures. It is the responsibility of students to ensure that their subject load reflects the level of work commitments that they may have.

2.10.4. Failure to attach the assignment (where submitted electronically).

Optional Assignments

2.11. The above provisions apply to optional assignments.

Late Lodgement Penalty

2.12. The standard penalty will be 10% of marks awarded to that assignment per day late (rounded off to the nearest one-half mark) with no assignment to be accepted seven days after the due date. Where a student is granted an extension, the penalty of 10% per day late starts from the new due date.

3. RELATED POLICIES AND PROTOCOLS

Nil

4. RELATED GUIDELINES AND FORMS

Nil

5. MODIFICATION HISTORY

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