

**UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN  
ACADEMIC QUALITY HANDBOOK**

**POLICY ON THE PENALTY FOR UNAUTHORISED LATE SUBMISSION OF COURSEWORK**

This policy introduces a consistent, institution-wide penalty to be applied to unauthorised late submission of coursework by students. This policy is to be applied for all undergraduate and postgraduate taught students from Academic Year 2021-2022 onwards.

1. Late submission refers to submission of work after the published deadline without an agreed extension, and in the absence of [exceptional circumstances](#). Where a student has agreed extensions, either due to their [disability provision](#) or because of accepted [mitigating circumstances](#), their work is deemed to be submitted late when it is submitted **beyond that agreed extension**.
2. Any assessed coursework that is submitted beyond the deadline, without an agreed extension, will be recorded as late and a penalty will be applied. For work submitted late, markers should grade the work as normal and award the CGS that is appropriate for the piece of work. The course coordinator will then exact a penalty according to the number of days the assignment is late (includes weekends and University and local/national holidays). The penalty exacted for unauthorised late submission of work will be as follows:
  - Up to 24 hours late, the grade will be deducted by 2 CGS points;
  - For each subsequent day, up to a maximum of seven days total, the grade will be deducted by a further CGS point for each day, or part of a day, up to a maximum of seven days late;
  - Over seven days late, a grade of G3 will be awarded.
3. For work that is up to seven days late, if the assignment was graded above a passing grade but the penalty awarded takes the grade below the pass mark, the student will be awarded the minimum passing grade, i.e. D3.
4. If the assignment is submitted after feedback on that work has already been provided to the class, that assignment cannot be graded and so the assignment should be given G3. However, formative feedback should be given to such a student.
5. The normal maximum late submission deadline of seven days may not apply to all types of assessment, and shorter deadlines may be more appropriate. For example, if there are time-sensitive marking and feedback requirements, such as weekly tests where feedback is required from one test before the next week's test, a maximum late submission deadline of seven days cannot apply. In these cases, there must be a clear indication in the course manual of the maximum late submission deadline for those assessments.
6. Where an assignment is expected to be submitted as a hard copy, rather than being submitted online, a student may encounter circumstances, such as travel disruption, that prevent them submitting the hard copy on time. Under these circumstances, the course coordinator will accept an emailed copy/scan of the assignment in lieu of the hard copy, along with an explanation for why the hard copy cannot be submitted on time. In such cases, where it is clear that the work would have been submitted on time were it not for these circumstances, no late penalty will be applied.

7. Students who anticipate being unable to meet the published deadline because of ill health or other mitigating circumstances must make a case to the School's mitigating circumstances committee (or equivalent) for an extension **prior to the published deadline**. If an extension is allowed, no penalty will be applied provided the assignment is submitted by the agreed extended time. Extensions can be approved by the School's mitigating circumstances committee (or equivalent), provided the extension does not bring the deadline to be after the class receives feedback on the assignment. The extension time must be commensurate with the duration of the relevant circumstances, i.e. illness on the day of submission would allow an extension of a day, not seven days.
  
8. If a student applies for an extension **after the deadline** for the assignment in question, a late penalty will be applied unless the circumstances that prevent the candidate from submitting work on time have also prevented them applying for an extension prior to the deadline

**Putting the policy into practice:**

**Scenario 1**

Student A has a deadline for an assignment that is 12 noon on Monday. They submit their assignment at 5pm on Tuesday without having asked for any extension. The assignment is graded as normal and receives a grade of B2. However, as the assignment is considered to be two days late it is subject to a three CGS point deduction (two CGS points for the first 24 hours and one further CGS point for the subsequent 24 hours) and so the grade that is reported to the student and which contributes to the overall course grade is C2. Had student A submitted their assignment before noon on Tuesday they would only be one day late and subject to two CGS points deduction.

**Scenario 2**

Student B is doing a course where fortnightly lab tests are required to be submitted by Friday 5pm. Generic feedback on those tests is provided to the class on the following Monday at noon. Student B asked for an extension because they were unwell on Friday. The student was allowed a one-day extension and was required to submit their test by 5pm on Saturday. However, the test was not submitted until Monday at 3pm. As Student B has submitted after the generic feedback has been provided to the class, their test will receive a grade of zero (G3). Had the student submitted their test at 11 am on Monday they would have had the test graded and received a three GCS point deduction (being two days late from the extended deadline agreed).

**Scenario 3**

Student C is completing their PGT dissertation (worth 60 credits) which is meant to be submitted by 5pm on Monday. However, they do not submit until Wednesday at 11pm without having asked for any extension. The dissertation is graded as normal and receives a grade of D1. However, as the dissertation was submitted three days late (two full days and one part day, which counts as a full-day in terms of penalty applied), the grade for the dissertation should be reduced by four CGS points which would bring it down to E2. As this grade is below the passing grade, the grade returned to the student is D3, the minimum passing grade.

#### Scenario 4

Student D has disability provisions that allow an extra five days beyond normal deadlines for essay- type assignments to enable proofreading. The normal deadline for an in-course essay was 5 pm on Friday but because of their disability provision the deadline for this student was 5 pm on the following Wednesday. Student D submitted their essay at 10 am on the Thursday after the normal deadline. The essay is marked as normal, receiving a grade of B1, but because it was submitted one day beyond the deadline, taking into account their disability provision, the grade is reduced by two CGS points and is therefore graded at B3.

#### Scenario 5

Student E has informed the course coordinator of a short-term health issue that has affected their ability to study in the lead-up to submission of their dissertation. They have provided medical certificates as proof of their condition and these have been accepted by the School mitigating circumstances committee who have given the student an extra five days to submit their dissertation. Student E submits their dissertation four days beyond the normal published deadline. Because the student informed the School of their health issues in advance and submitted before the extended deadline, no penalty should be applied to their grade. Had the student submitted their dissertation six days beyond the normal published deadline, i.e. one day beyond their authorised extended deadline, the grade awarded would have been reduced by two CGS points.

#### Scenario 6

Student F has submitted a lab report two days after the published deadline. After submitting it they contact the School's mitigating circumstances committee claiming to have been sick over the past week. Because this information was given after the deadline and there is no reason why the student could not have informed the School's mitigating circumstances committee in advance that they would not be able to submit on time, the grade for the lab report is reduced by three CGS points. Had the student been hospitalised or otherwise unable to access the internet to inform the School's mitigating circumstances committee of their difficulties it is likely that their grade would not have been reduced as the student's mitigating circumstances would have been accepted.