



FIT TO SIT

POLICY

Version 2
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Version Number	Date issued	Author	Update information
V1.0	September 2022	Quality Assurance and Enhancement	First published version
V1.1	September 2023	Quality Assurance and Enhancement	Minor revision, Section 2.2, to note that reasonable adjustments may be required in line with the Equality Act 2010.
V2.0	September 2024	Quality Assurance and Enhancement	Minor reframe of Section 1, to include an introductory section. Revisions to Sections 2 and 3, to enhance EEEEC protocols.

Introduction

In the normal course of events, the University operates a 'Fit to Sit/Submit' approach to student assessment and coursework submission, with a default assumption that any student undertaking a piece of assessment and/or submitting a coursework assignment, is declaring that they are fit to do so. Any mark and/or attempt at assessment will stand, unless a student has indicated that they were not 'Fit to Sit/Submit'.

The University recognizes that circumstances that are exceptional, serious, acute and lead to unforeseen problems or events can genuinely affect preparation for an assessment or a student's ability to undertake an assessment and/or submit a coursework on time. The Fit to Sit Policy intends to support students who experience such exceptional circumstances.

1. Fit to Sit

1.1 Where a student believes that they are not 'Fit to Sit/Submit', they can advise the University **up to five days prior to an exam/coursework submission date and up to two days after the date, allowing for a period of reflection**¹. All applications will be made using an online [form](#). Students will have the opportunity to provide an impact statement, which will be shared with the Student Wellbeing Team (See Section 3, for further details).

1.2 Where a student advises the University within the period outlined in Section 1.1 there will be no requirement to provide evidence². However, where the declaration is submitted post sit/submission (i.e. up to two days after the exam/coursework submission date), students will be required to state the reason for late declaration advising that they were not fit to sit.

1.3 Where the student does notify the University within the defined period, the student's attempt for that assessment will be preserved on one occasion and thereafter, the number of attempts remaining will count down and will not exceed the maximum number set by the University's Assessment Regulations. Students are reminded that the opportunity to re-enter outstanding elements of assessment is at the discretion of the corresponding Progression and Award Board, in line with Section 4 of this policy and Section 8 of the Assessment Regulations.

1.4 Any declaration to advise that a student is not fit to sit/submit, will render any submitted assessment void; no mark will be provided and no feedback will be given. For the purposes of record keeping, a 'non-submission' will be recorded against the student's academic profile for the assessment in question.

1.5 Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 1.1, this policy is distinct from extension

¹ A student can use the policy to cover all impacted assessment – with one application required for each,

² Students should not confuse this normal period of reflection with procedures for extreme circumstances – see Section 2 for Extreme Circumstances.

requests and must not be used to request an extension or to provide an explanation for the late submission of an assessment. Requests for an extension or explanations for the late submission of an assessment must be made via direct contact with the module leader/programme leader. Section 10 of the University Assessment Regulations (taught programmes), provides further detail of the procedures for late submission of coursework. **Students are advised that the reflection period referred to in this policy does not constitute an extension to submission deadlines.**

1.6 This policy is not intended for use where students have long-term health and/or support needs; advice for such cases should be sought from Student Wellbeing services, to ensure more targeted and appropriate support.

2. Extreme & Exceptional Extenuating Circumstances

2.1 It is accepted that students can be impacted by extreme and exceptional circumstances, which may prevent them from engaging as expected with assessment and with the corresponding Fit to Sit declaration process, as outlined in Section 1. Where this is the case, the University's Extreme and Exceptional Extenuating Circumstances approach allows students to highlight such circumstances and apply for a preserved assessment attempt, under the following criteria:

2.1.1 Where a student has previously received a preserved attempt through a Fit to Sit declaration and has experienced extreme and exceptional extenuating circumstances, which prevented normal engagement with assessment at the next attempt;

2.1.2 Where extreme and exceptional circumstances have prevented normal engagement with the University and thus the student has been unable to attempt the assessment and unable, due to the extreme & exceptional circumstances, to declare themselves unfit to sit/submit for an assessment, in line with the timeframes and process outlined in Section 1.

2.2 Where students have previously received a preserved attempt (through Fit To Sit or EEEEC), and they experience additional extreme and exceptional extenuating circumstances (Section 2.1.1), students must submit an EEEEC Form, including relevant & appropriate evidence, by the published deadline after each assessment period (normally by the end of each Trimester Assessment Period).

2.3 Where students have been impacted by circumstances that have prevented normal engagement with the University for an extended period of time (Section 2.1.2), students must make contact with appropriate University staff **within three weeks of meaningful re-engagement**. Meaningful re-engagement is defined as participating in synchronous or a-synchronous online or in person classes or coursework, and/or with the programme team regarding their planned return to study.

2.4 In all cases, students are **strongly recommended** to make contact with appropriate University staff prior to submission of an EEEEC Form. This recommendation is intended to ensure that students in such situations can be counselled appropriately and with due

regard to the University's duty of care. Students are advised that this initial contact can be with a Personal Tutor, the Programme Leader, Level Tutor, or the Student Wellbeing team. Students can also seek advice from a Students' Association Advisor.

- 2.5 Following initial discussion with University staff as outlined in Section 2.4, students should complete and submit the [Extreme Extenuating Circumstances Form](#) as early as possible and include evidence which outlines the circumstances preventing earlier engagement with the University.
- 2.6 Accompanying evidence is required for all Extreme and Extenuating Circumstances submissions and this must normally be independent and verifiable, (eg GP certificate or death certificate). Students should consult the published guidance about acceptable/inappropriate documentation (this list is non-exhaustive). It is the applicant's responsibility to arrange and submit supporting evidence. Inappropriate evidence will not be accepted and may result in the rejection of an EEEC application.
- 2.7 Where evidence is not provided in English, it is the responsibility of the student to provide both the original document and a verified translation to English.
- 2.8 On receipt of EEEC, such cases will be reviewed as follows.
 - 2.8.1 For EEEC cases submitted following the conclusion of assessment periods (as outlined in Section 2.2), the appropriate School Associate Dean of Learning, Teaching and Quality (ADLTQ, or equivalent, for academic units), will convene a small group to consider all cases, to ensure a consistency of approach
 - 2.8.2 For EEEC cases submitted following a period of extended non-engagement (as outlined in Section 2.3), the appropriate School Associate Dean of Learning, Teaching and Quality (or equivalent, for academic units), will review with the student's Head of Department; such cases are likely to be highly individualized and may fall outside of the deadlines set immediately after standard assessment periods.
- 2.9 In all cases considered under Section 2.8, a maximum of two preserved attempts per assessment will be available where a student has utilised Fit to Sit (Section 1) and/or EEEC (Section 2).
- 2.10 In addition to recording a decision for each student, the decision (and supporting rationale for the decision) will be recorded on the submitted form, which should be kept with the student's record. (Note: The declaration form must be kept until at least six months after the date of completion of the programme by the student, or six months after their withdrawal).

3. Duty of Care

- 3.1 Where a student discloses complex mental or physical health challenges and/or severe and complex life circumstances through completion of an [Extreme Extenuating Circumstances Form](#), this information will be shared with the Student Wellbeing Team. Where there is

no existing relationship with the student, the team will contact the student to offer follow-up support. Students have the opportunity to decline referral to the Student Wellbeing Team on completion of the appropriate application form. Further details for students are available via a Student Help Sheet published on the web.

- 3.2 It is acknowledged that on occasion there may be situations which are outside the scope of this policy and criteria, but may warrant consideration due to the nature of the student's circumstances. In such cases the School ADLTQ, in liaison with the School Associate Academic Registrar, has discretion to review and take appropriate decisions as necessary.
- 3.3 Where students consider that there has been a procedural irregularity in the consideration of their application, this should be addressed by submitting an Academic Appeal.

4. PABs and Student Fit to Sit Declarations

- 4.1 Where a student has declared that they were unfit to sit/submit within the timescales outlined in Section 1, the PAB will consider:
 - I. Whether this is the student's first declaration of being unfit to sit/submit a specific piece of assessment; and if so, the attempt will be declared void and the attempt preserved for the next available assessment period.
 - II. Whether this is the student's second or subsequent declaration of being unfit to undertake the same piece of assessment. In such cases, the student should proceed with second, or subsequent attempt as appropriate, to a maximum permitted number of attempts, as outlined in Section 14 of the Assessment Regulations. Where it is evident that a student has repeated submissions against the same assessment, the circumstances should be reviewed and the student should be counselled appropriately.
 - III. If, on the basis of overall performance in a particular year and, if appropriate, in previous years, that the student would not have passed, notwithstanding the fact that they had been affected by circumstances outwith their control. In such circumstances, the PAB may consider the student under Section 8 of the Assessment Regulations.
- 4.2 Where a student has notified the University of extreme extenuating circumstances, as outlined in Section 2, it may be necessary for a PAB decision to be revisited. In such cases, discussion with the School Associate Academic Registrar, to identify the most appropriate course of action, may be required.

5. Suspension of Studies

- 5.1 In line with the, '[Regulations for Taught Student Registration, Suspension of Studies and Withdrawal](#)', students who suspend their studies after the midway point of a module delivery will be deemed to have attempted the module assessments. Students can make an extenuating circumstances submission to their host Department to request that an attempt is not counted in such circumstances. Such

requests will be considered by the Head of Department in consultation with the School's Associate Academic Registrar.

6. Exceptions

- 6.1 Due to either a Professional Statutory Body requirement or the practical nature of an assessment where there is a requirement for immediate feedback on performance, an exception may be required to any post-assessment reflection period declaration. Any such requests to deviate from this policy must be approved by the University's Exceptions Sub-Committee. Any alternative approach will be fully outlined for students in Module Handbooks and as appropriate on GCU Learn for programmes with an approved exception to this policy.