# **Fit to Sit**

# **Student FAQs V8 – May 2024**

New Questions and answers are provided at the top, so that they can be easily identified

## New FAQa, May 2024

**For students who had MITS upheld for an assessment component/s in 21/22 and will be re-taking/sitting in 23/24, can they use Fit to Sit for the same component/s?**

Yes. For any new assessments that are undertaken from academic year 22/23 onwards (including resits from previous academic years), under Fit to Sit procedures, students have the opportunity to inform the University of circumstances impacting on performance and have the comfort of knowing that (where the declaration is made in line with the policy) their Fit to Sit declaration will be accepted and their attempt preserved on one occasion only. This does not include any previous preservation under MITS.

## New FAQa, Feb 2023

**I declared myself not fit to sit/submit – when will I get an opportunity sit/submit the assessment?**

Students with outstanding assessments, who are permitted by their Progression & Awards Board (PAB) to resit/submit normally get an opportunity to do this during the resit diet (which for the majority of programmes is in August). For any (re)assessment that is not successfully completed in August, the resit/resubmission is normally in Trimester A or B of the following academic year, depending when the module is next available – your Programme Coordinator will be able to advise.

**By declaring myself not fit to sit/submit automatically mean that I am given a preserved re-attempt of the assessment?**

In the majority of cases yes, your Progression & Awards Board (PAB) will grant you a preserved attempted, with 2 exceptions:

1. Where you have already been given a preserved attempt for the piece of assessment previously via declaring yourself not to sit/submit, in which case you will be given a resit attempt as long as it does not breach the maximum attempts possible as per the assessment regulations or
2. Where the PAB makes a decision that due to your overall performance, you are required to withdraw, in which case a re-attempt will not be given.

**What happens if I declare myself unfit for a piece of assessment more than once (e.g. I declare at 1st diet, then declare again at the resit)?**

As per the approved policy, students will only have their attempt at a piece of assessment preserved on one occasion. Therefore, if a student declares themselves unfit once and then again at the next attempt, while a mark and feedback should not be given, there will be no preservation of an attempt.

As outlined in section 4.1 ii of the policy, "….. 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.”

**What impact will declaring myself not fit to sit have on my length of study period?**

This will depend on your individual circumstances and structure of your programme, however there is the potential that by declaring yourself not fit to sit an assessment, it may take longer for you to complete your studies and be awarded, which in turn may impact other aspects such as SAAS funding, UKVI VISAs (including the ability to apply for the Graduate Visa Scheme)

## Fit to Sit

**Do I need to provide evidence?**

Evidence is not required if you submit a declaration 5 days prior or up to two days after the date of assessment/coursework submission deadline.

If you sit/submit an assessment and then subsequently decide that you were not fit, you are asked to provide a reason as to why you had considered yourself fit upon attempting the assessment, but subsequently changed your mind. Please note that this information is not shared with your module leader and does not influence any decision taken.

*You will, however, have to provide evidence if you need to submit an Extreme Extenuating Circumstances Form. This is only for students who have been unable to engage with the University* ***at all*** *and have therefore been unable to complete a Fit to Sit Submission Form within the timescales required.(see further down).*

**Do I need to provide details regarding my circumstances and why I do not feel fit to sit/submit?**

When you complete *the Fit to Sit Submission Form*, there will an opportunity to include an impact statement, giving more information about the circumstances that are affecting your studies. This statement will be shared with the Student Wellbeing Team who will be able to provide you with information and support, as appropriate. This is an optional statement, you do not have to complete this part of the Form.

**If I do provide details regarding my circumstances, who sees this?**

This information, should you decide to provide any, is only provided to the Student Wellbeing Team.

**I have sat/submitted an assessment but then declared myself unfit within the 2 day post period. Will my assessment be marked and will I receive any feedback?**

No, your assessment will not be marked and you will not be provided with feedback.

**What happens if I do not fill in the form correctly?**

It is the responsibility of students to fill in the form correctly, to ensure that this is received by your Module Leader. If you do not do so, your declaration may not be accepted. It is particularly important that you provide accurate details regarding the module title, code and module leader (inc. their email address) - to ensure that they receive the declaration.

**Why has a piece of assessment been given an exception therefore I can’t declare unfit in the 2 day post sit/submit period?**

There are situations where practical assessments give immediate feedback, and/or Professional, Statutory or Regulatory requirements mean that an alternative approach is necessary, where a student is not fit to sit/submit.

 Where this is the case, the academic team will seek an exception to the policy and this will be fully outlined within the appropriate Module Handbook.

**I have missed the 2 day deadline to declare unfit post submission/sit, however I do not feel that I did my best in the assessment, what can I do?**

The new Fit to Sit Policy allows you to advise the university up to five days prior to an exam/submission date and two days after, ensuring a period of adequate reflection prior to and after the assessment. Unfortunately, the two-day, post sit/submit deadline must be adhered to, to ensure consistency and fairness for all students.

**I declared myself unfit to sit/submit an assessment but now also consider myself unfit to sit/submit at the resit diet. What should I do and what happens?**

You can submit a declaration to advise that you are unfit to sit/submit at second or subsequent attempts at a piece of assessment. Your Progression and Award Board (PAB) will take this into consideration, in line with Section 4 of the policy. Where you have declared yourself unfit for a second/subsequent time, you will proceed with your remaining attempts at the module, to the maximum permitted number of attempts as outlined in the Assessment Regulations.

**I have a resit from a failed attempt in a previous academic year. Does MITS still apply for this resit?**

All assessments in 22/23 are covered via Fit to Sit, including resits from previous academic years, including where a student may have submitted MITS previously.

## Extreme & Exceptional Extenuating Circumstances (EEEC)

**How is EEEC different from declaring unfit to sit?**

EEEC is a safety net for students where, due to extreme and exceptional circumstances, they find themselves unable to engage at all with the University for a period of time and therefore are unable to declare themselves unfit to sit within the normal timeframe of 5 days prior and 2 days post assessment.

Unlike Fit to Sit, applications under EEEC require an impact statement and evidence to be provided. Applications are then reviewed by the relevant Academic Head of Department and School Associate Dean Learning, Teaching & Quality who will come to a decision as to whether an application is supported or not.

**While I have not been able to attend classes or sit/submit assessments, I have been able to check my email and log into GCU Learn etc, am I eligible to apply under the extreme & exceptional circumstances route?**

We know that there may be circumstances where a student is hospitalised or severely impacted by events and cannot engage **in any manner** with the University. If this is the case, you can submit via the Extreme and Extenuating Circumstances route.

 If you are in a position where you can check email and GCU Learn, there would be an expectation that you utilise the Fit to Sit Policy to advise that you are not Fit to Sit, in line with Section 1 of the policy (i.e. 5 days prior to and up to 2 days after the impacted assessment).

**Do I have to provide evidence?**

Yes, evidence must be provided and uploaded as part of your EEEC application. Please see section 2 of the Fit to Sit policy for further details.

**Do I need to speak with someone at the University before I submit an EEEC application?**

It is strongly recommended that once you are able to re-engage with the University, you contact with appropriate staff (I.e. Programme Leader, Personal Tutor or Student Wellbeing Team) prior to submitting an EEEC form. Students can also seek advice from the Students’ Association.

**I have submitted an EEEC application, how long will it be before I hear the outcome?**

Students will be informed of the outcome of an application under EEEC within 28 days of application being received. It is anticipated that an outcome will be communicated a lot sooner than this, but is dependent upon availability of appropriate staff to review the application etc.

**My EEEC has been accepted, does this automatically mean that I will receive a preserved attempt for any failed assessments?**

Where an EEEC application is supported, your Progression & Awards Board (PAB) will make a decision based on your overall academic profile and the supported EEEC, which may involve revising a previous decision.

However, as the PAB has to take into account your overall academic performance, there is no automatic right to being able to sit/submit failed assessments with preserved attempts.

**My circumstances are not acute and may last for a medium to long period time, what support can I get?**

As with MITS, Fit to Sit and EEEC are only for acute & unforeseen circumstances, with the expectation that in the normal course of events, all students who commence studying will be able to successfully complete all modules within the standard timeframe.

The University has a variety of mechanisms in place to support students with disabilities to assist them achieve success. Details of these can be found at <https://www.gcu.ac.uk/currentstudents/support>

## Suspension of Studies

**What if I need to take time out and suspend my studies?**

We know that students sometimes need to take time out or suspend their studies. If this is something you are considering, you should review the University’s ‘Regulations for Taught Registration, Suspension of Studies and Withdrawal’ to understand the full implications of this; you may also wish to speak with a member of your academic team or your Personal Tutor. Where a student does suspend their studies after the mid-point of a module’s delivery pattern, they are deemed to have attempted the module. In such circumstances, the extenuating circumstances process as outlined within the Fit to Sit Policy can be used to request that your academic Department does not record an attempt at the module; approval of such requests is at the discretion of your Head of Department and your School’s Associate Academic Registrar.

**I am suspending my studies after the mid way point in a trimester, due to exceptional and extreme circumstances, how do I request that my attempts are not counted?**

Please contact your Programme Leader to discuss your circumstances.

You will be asked to provide details within an email, which will then be considered by the appropriate Head of Department and School Associate Academic Registrar. Once a decision has been made, your programme leader will inform you of the outcome.

## Student Support and Advice

**Who can I talk to about making a declaration under the Fit to Sit Policy?**

In the first instance, you can talk to your Module Leader or Programme Leader, if you feel that an extension to your assessment submission date would be sufficient. This does not require a Fit to Sit submission and you should make contact with them directly to discuss. Please note that extension requests CANNOT be made via the Fit to Sit declaration form.

 At all times, you can speak to your Personal Tutor, your academic programme team or the Students’ Association for information and support.

**I have been hospitalised and missed an assessment – what should I do?**

We know that there may be circumstances where a student is hospitalised or severely impacted by events and cannot engage with the University in any way. If this is the case, you can submit via the Extreme and Extenuating Circumstances route.

 When practical to do so, you should make contact with the University as circumstances permit. We would strongly advise you to do so before you submit an Extreme Extenuating Circumstances Form, so that we can help and support you through the process. This initial contact can be with your Personal Tutor, your Programme Leader, Level Tutor or the Student Wellbeing team. You can also seek advice and support from the Students’ Association.

**I have made initial contact – what should I do now?**

You should complete an Extreme Extenuating Circumstances Form and include evidence (e.g. Doctor’s certificate or appropriate 3rd party evidence) which prevented earlier engagement with the University.

Your submission will be reviewed by your Head of Department, in consultation with your School’s Associate Dean of Learning, Teaching and Quality (or equivalent).

**Who can I seek advice regarding my circumstances and current situation?**

The University takes its duty of care seriously, to support students to be able to successfully complete their studies, within the approved regulations. Below are details of the support services that you can contact for advice and support.

## Student Support Services

**Disability Service**
 The Disability Team provides advice, information and services to disabled students and applicants. Each year, around 1500 GCU students disclose a disability. This includes students with long term medical conditions, sensory impairment, mental health difficulties, physical impairment, specific learning disabilities (e.g. dyslexia) and students on the autism spectrum.

Further information can be found at:

<https://www.gcu.ac.uk/currentstudents/support/disabilityservice/howtogetsupport>

 **Mental Health Advisers**
 The role of the Mental Health Adviser is to support students who may be experiencing emotional or psychological distress or personal difficulties. The Mental Health Adviser will be able to co-ordinate support for students with mental health difficulties and act as a point of contact for the duration of your studies. The Mental Health Adviser works alongside the disability service and counselling service, but it is not their role to be a counsellor. mentalhealthadviser@gcu.ac.uk

Further information can be found at <https://www.gcu.ac.uk/currentstudents/support/wellbeing/mentalhealthsupport>**Counsellors**
 Counselling involves a series, usually a maximum of 6, confidential sessions where the counsellor/therapist and student will explore the student’s issues or concerns. These sessions take place at a regular, mutually agreed time. Counselling is not about giving advice or opinions, nor is it a friendly chat with a friend. The counsellor /therapist will help the student to understand themselves better and find their own solutions to cope with or resolve their situation. Counselling may involve talking about life events, feelings, emotions, ways of relating, of thinking, and patterns of behaviour.

<https://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/studentlife/studentsupport/counsellingservice/appointments/>

Further information can be found at

<https://www.gcu.ac.uk/currentstudents/support/counselling>

**Student Carers**

If you are looking after a friend or family member, you may wish to find out more about how GCU can support student carers:
 <https://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/support/supportingourstudents/stucarer/> <https://www.gcu.ac.uk/currentstudents/support/wellbeing/supportingourstudents/stucarer>
 Similarly, you may wish to contact your Personal Tutor to discuss any issues you may be experiencing if you feel comfortable doing so.

**Student Association Advice Centre**

The Students Association also provide an advice centre for students.

Further information can be found at

<https://www.gcustudents.co.uk/advice>

## Other

**Why has the University introduced Fit to Sit?**

Fit to Sit gives students greater control, where life events have impacted on your ability to undertake assessment. You can submit a *Fit to Sit Submission Form* up to five days prior to – and two days after\* – the assessment deadline, with no requirement to provide evidence. Students should familiarise themselves with the policy, to fully understand the new process.

(\*subject to exceptions to 2 day post submit period)

**What about MITS?**

The Consideration of Mitigating Circumstances Policy (MITS) is being withdrawn and the new Fit to Sit Policy comes into operation for academic session 2022/23. *The MITS policy will, however, remain in operation for any outstanding assessments, related to study in academic year 2021/22, and will be withdrawn thereafter.*

**What consultation was undertaken with students?**

The new Fit to Sit Policy has been discussed extensively with student representatives over the past two years. Various additions and enhancements have been made to the policy, to directly capture feedback from student representatives. It has also been agreed that a full review of the policy will be undertaken following its first full year of operation.