

ASSESSMENT FLEXIBILITY POLICY

1. Scope of the Policy

This document sets out the following:

- Responsibilities of students in regard to their studies (Section 3)
- The standard of the performer that SDC will support in seeking flexibility concerning formal assessment at the University (Section 4)
- Assessment flexibility options (Section 5)
- The additional flexibility offered for MCCU¹ cricket (Section 6)

This policy does cover situations where a student is studying for a module and is fully expecting to complete the required assessments within the University timescales but an event beyond his/her control (for example international team selection) prevents him/her taking the assessment alongside the rest of the student body.

This policy does NOT cover a situation whereby a student feels that due to sporting commitments he/she will not be able to adequately prepare for assessments. Similarly a student should not be expected to make repeated requests for assessment flexibility due to several international sporting commitments. In such cases other alternatives such as a stretch degree or leave of absence should be discussed with the Personal Tutor. Assessment flexibility as detailed in this policy is not normally appropriate in these circumstances.

2. Background to the Policy

Preservation of the integrity of a Loughborough University degree is paramount. However, the University recognises the dual demands placed upon student-athletes and our responsibility in helping them meet these demands. It is also essential to maintain equitable treatment of all students including student-athletes.

3. Student Responsibility

The onus will always remain with the student-athlete to contact their School if missed assessment may be a possibility. The personal responsibilities of the student-athlete themselves underpin this policy and the student-athlete is under obligation to discuss the possibility of missed assessment with their personal tutor as soon as they are aware it could be a possibility.

The University acknowledges that the timescale for notification of selection is completely outside the student's control and may be on a relatively short timescale. The student should, however, contact his/her School as soon as they are aware that selection may be a possibility.

If the student-athlete wishes to be absent from an assessment for the preparation for an international training event, negotiation with the National Governing Body of Sport should ascertain whether a modified length of stay at the training camp would be possible

¹ Marylebone Cricket Club University

4. Definitions

4.1 Sport

- The University recognises that students participate in a wide range of sporting and recreational activities. However, only those recognised by UK Sport², the English Institute of Sport³ or as a University sport with a performance programme⁴ will be eligible to request assessment flexibility.

4.2 The Performance Standard

- Student-athlete must be representing his/her country at a major international competition, be involved in preparation immediately preceding an international competition, or be taking part in a major national championship. This is commensurate with the performance standard required for consideration for a stretched degree.⁵
- Regular BUCS (British University & College Sport) competition is not usually considered to be of the level where flexibility should be considered. The University recognises that in some instances BUCS fixtures can be of appropriate importance to justify assessment flexibility. It is anticipated that assessment flexibility for BUCS will only normally be considered within the following circumstances:
 1. National championship finals
 2. Top tier league fixtures
 3. Key relegation risks
 4. Key knockout fixtures

Sports with an individual focus, where BUCS points are defined at a national championship final such as Triathlon and Gymnastics, accommodate ranging levels of athlete ability. Only athletes with a realistic medal chance in either individual or team events will be eligible for assessment flexibility. A 'realistic medal chance' will be defined by the Head Coach, Performance and Development Director or designated nominee based on current performance evidence.

The different process followed for MCCU detailed in Section 6 below remains unaffected.

4.3 Duration of Absence

- If assessment flexibility is granted it will be for the duration of the preparation and competition **only**. A student will be expected to return to University as soon as is reasonable; extended absences for non-competitive reasons will **not** be eligible for assessment flexibility.
- If the competition is overseas and a significant distance away from the UK the student may choose to extend the period of assessment flexibility to allow for the jet lag experienced. If the competition is four or more time zones away, the student may add one day to the end of the period covered. If the competition is eight or more time zones away the student may add two days to the period covered. This will be the student's choice at the time of the assessment flexibility request and may not be changed during or after their sporting absence. If they choose to take assessments immediately on their return they will **not** have grounds for an impaired performance claim.

² "UK Sport will work in partnership to lead sport in the UK to world-class success.". www.uk-sport.gov.uk.

³ www.eis2win.co.uk

⁴ <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/sport/performance/>

⁵ Performance Standard required to apply for a stretched degree: The athlete should have a realistic opportunity of competing at senior international level in their sport within 18 months of commencing a stretch degree study mode, or be aiming for a specified major international event (e.g. World Student Games, European Championships, World Championships, Commonwealth Games or Olympics). Performers who fall just short of these criteria but who have other extenuating circumstances may also be considered for SDC support.

4.4 Assessments

- Assessment is defined by the University as academic work (essays, coursework assignments, examinations, etc.) for which marks are awarded. This Policy covers all types of assessment. Further information can be found at:
www.lboro.ac.uk/students/handbook/exams/

5. Assessment Flexibility Options

The following sections set out the procedures for the various types of assessment.

5.1 Exam Flexibility Options

- If a student-athlete meets the above criteria and is due to be absent on the day of the exam itself the School is requested to consider offering the student flexibility.
- Requests for flexibility relating to the period immediately prior to an exam will not normally be supported by SDC; preparation for assessments should be a continuous process throughout the whole semester and as such other commitments immediately prior to an exam will not be seen as grounds to request flexibility.
- The final decision on the level of flexibility offered is left to School discretion in relation to the best interests of the student-athlete but the two options are outlined below:
 1. **Defer First Sitting of an exam to the SAP or next appropriate time.**
(Preferred option)
The student should understand that if they fail the examination(s) in the SAP, there would be no opportunity to retake the examinations before the next academic year. This will have implications relating to continuation on to the next stage of their course.
 2. **Undertake the exam in situ** where the student-athlete is competing. The student should be encouraged to think through all the implications of taking an examination in situ, for example an exam may take place at an unsociable hour to ensure synchronised timing with the Loughborough exam. This will have implications for both their academic and sporting performance, and the student should fully understand that participation in the sporting event is the student's own choice.

5.1.1 The Exam Flexibility Procedure

- AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY the student-athlete should discuss the possibility of missed examinations with his or her Dean of School. This could be prior to selection for the team or squad but where there is the possibility of selection.
- The student-athlete should obtain a supporting statement from their National Governing Body as to the nature of the competition/training camp, including when the student-athlete was informed of their selection/possible selection. (Proforma attached)
- Director of Individual Sport/Head Coach and Performance and Development Director or designated nominee, Sports Development Centre, to support/not support the application for assessment flexibility
- Should the Performance and Development Director feel that the applicant does not meet the Performance Standard (see Section 4) or has not acted in a responsible manner in terms of their organisation and communication of their selection (see Section 3) then the request for Academic Flexibility may be declined at this stage. The student may request to meet with the Performance and Development Director to discuss their declined application.
- Academic School (Dean of School) to support/not support the application, including an indication of the alternative examination arrangements
 - Should the Academic Department feel that the applicant has not acted in a responsible manner in terms of their organisation and communication of selection (see Section 3) then the request for Academic Flexibility may be declined at this stage. The student may request to meet with the Head of Department to discuss their declined application.

- Return to Student Records with relevant approval so the student record can be updated.

5.2 Coursework Flexibility

5.2.1 Coursework Test Flexibility

- If the student-athlete meets the above eligibility criteria and is due to be absent on the day of the coursework test itself the School is requested to consider offering the student flexibility. Students should be aware that the School may only be able to offer limited flexibility in relation to practical or laboratory-based coursework tests.
- The final decision on the level of flexibility is left to School discretion in relation to the best interests of the student-athlete.

5.2.2 Coursework Flexibility

- The majority of coursework assignments are provided to the students early in each semester. The student-athlete is expected to proactively manage their time effectively to allow them to engage in the work necessary to complete the coursework assignment prior to any absence from University.
- Requests for flexibility relating to the period immediately prior to a coursework assignment hand in date will not normally be supported by SDC; completion of coursework should be a continuous process throughout the whole semester and as such other commitments immediately prior to a coursework deadline will not be seen as grounds to request flexibility.
- In cases where the coursework assignment is provided to the student with a very short deadline (e.g. submission one week later) or where coursework can not be completed before certain resources or information has been provided and the student-athlete meets the eligibility criteria outlined in Section 4, School flexibility in relation to hand in deadlines is requested.

5.2.3 Coursework Flexibility Procedure

- AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY the student-athlete should discuss the possibility of missed coursework assessments with his or her personal tutor. This could be prior to selection for the team or squad but where there is the possibility of selection.
- The student-athlete should obtain a supporting statement from their National Governing Body as to the nature of the competition/training camp, including when the student-athlete was informed of their selection/possible selection. (Proforma attached)
- Performance and Development Director, Sports Development Centre, to support/not support the application for assessment flexibility.
- Academic School (Dean of School) to support/not support the application, including an indication of the alternative assessment arrangements.
- A copy of the form to be kept by the Academic School and a copy sent to SDC (note, for coursework flexibility it is not necessary to return the form to Student Records – however, doing so will ensure that it is filed on the student's electronic file).

6. The Special Case for MCCU Cricket

6.1 Rationale

Due to the timing of the competitive season for MCCU cricket fixtures, assessment flexibility is required so that students can compete for the University. The nature of the cricket season means that the students are highly unlikely to be available for examinations during the SAP, and so the students are permitted to take their exams off campus on the same date as the Semester Two (May/June) exams taking place on campus (hereinafter referred to as “scheduled campus exam”).

Only students who are part of the men's and women's MCCU squads are included in this group.

6.2 Procedure for Cricket MCCU fixture exam clash

- The Cricket Performance Manager will provide the Exams Office with the fixtures list, names, student ID numbers, courses and modules affected as early as possible following the start of Semester Two.
- The Cricket Performance Manager will ensure all the cricketers affected fully understand the implications of amended examination timings, for example a three hour exam may have to begin at 6am to allow completion before the start of the match. The student should be encouraged to think through all the implications for both their academic and sporting performance, and understand that participation in the cricket is the student's own choice. The student should be made aware that amended exam timings alone will not normally be sufficient grounds for a claim for impaired performance at a later date.
- Ensuring the exam protocol is adhered to will be the responsibility of the Head of Cricket. The off-campus exam will be invigilated by the Head of Cricket, or if he/she is unavailable by another University employee who has been appropriately trained.
- Each off-campus exam will take place on the day of the scheduled campus exam and will take place at a time as close as possible to the start time of the scheduled campus exam. The timing of cricket fixtures will often dictate that the off-campus exam will have to start prior (e.g. at 6.00am with a 9.00am match) to the scheduled campus exam start time.
- If the off campus exam timing is different to the scheduled campus exam start time, the student will then be constantly chaperoned by the Head of Cricket until the scheduled campus exam start time has passed. This will include confiscation of mobile phones and ensuring absolutely no form of contact between the student and the rest of the Loughborough student body.
- The Cricket Performance Manager will ensure the examination paper is returned by hand to the relevant academic School.

7. Further Information

For an initial discussion on the level of competition the student-athlete would like to attend please contact:

Education and Development Manager, Performance Sport, SDC
S.L.R.Wombwell@lboro.ac.uk, 01509 226103

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