

# Additional Considerations for Assessment Policy



**Policy owner:** Assessment, UCD Registry

**Approval date and  
body:**

**V1.0, Academic Council, 23 October 2024**

## 1. Purpose

UCD is committed to creating a university environment in which all students can flourish and complete their programme of study in a timely manner. All University students are expected to engage with and meet the academic requirements of their selected programme and develop important transferable skills relating to time and workload management. Nevertheless, students may encounter challenges that can adversely affect their ability to participate in studies, meet assessment requirements, or attend classes and other educational activities. These challenges may be personal or relate to broader familial, social, or geo-political circumstances. The University has a responsibility to all students and is committed to ensuring mechanisms are in place to support students through these challenges.

This policy sets out two such interrelated mechanisms to support students facing challenges meeting assessment requirements: **1) Self-Declare for Extension** and **2) Certified Additional Considerations** which, taken together, contribute to an environment of support, based on consistency and transparency across our University programmes. This policy should be read and considered in line with the University's Academic Regulations and the range of additional policies<sup>1</sup> which aim to support students through the duration of their studies in UCD.

## 2. Principles

The principles underlying this policy and its processes are as follows:

- a) All students are to be treated fairly and equitably, reflecting the principles of diversity and inclusion that underpin UCD.
- b) Equity should not be conflated with equality or sameness, and may require diverse approaches or interventions to ensure equitable and fair outcomes across our diverse student body.
- c) Clarity and consistency should inform the application of this policy, and each case should be assessed objectively, without bias.
- d) Students should be empowered to engage with this policy in a manner that is appropriate to their circumstances and in a manner that supports their timely progression through their programme of study.
- e) Timeliness is crucial to alleviate uncertainty and enable students to plan accordingly. All applications should be reviewed, processed, and actioned in a timely manner by the relevant person/body, and should be processed throughout a trimester, giving careful consideration to student workloads when devising reasonable plans to complete outstanding module components.
- f) Module completion by students under Certified Additional Considerations should demonstrate that the student has met the specified learning outcomes and should not be conflated with the process associated with remediating a fail grade.
- g) Where a Governing Board approves an application for Certified Additional Considerations, there are a variety of outcomes that can result. These decisions are based on academic judgement and with careful consideration of the student's workload and overall timely progression in their programme of study.
- h) Students' privacy should be respected by limiting the contexts in which disclosures are sought and made. Information related to Certified Additional Consideration requests should be treated in the strictest confidentiality, adhere to the principles of GDPR and involve the fewest people necessary to review and decide on applications.
- i) Acknowledgement that significant effort is required on the part of Module Coordinators to provide alternative assessment opportunities, and expectations as to the provision of alternative assessments that can be offered must be reasonable and practicable.

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<sup>1</sup> Fitness to Continue/Fitness to Practise; Continuation - Academic Progress Policy and Procedure; Leave of Absence (LOA); Withdrawal; Student Mental Health and Wellbeing; Distressed Student Protocol, High Performance Athlete Academic Flexibility Policy.

### 3. Scope

This policy applies to all the following:

#### **Undergraduate and Graduate Taught Students**

Undergraduate and Graduate Taught students studying in a full-time, part-time, or occasional capacity in UCD, or visiting Erasmus/International Exchange and Study Abroad students taking UCD modules.

#### **Graduate Research Students**

Graduate research students during their pursuit of the taught components within a research degree programme only. Graduate Research students who encounter any challenges that impact their participation in the research component of their programme should seek guidance and support from their Supervisor, Research Studies Panel (RSP) or from relevant University support services, such as UCD Student Counselling, Student Advisers, Student Health Service, Disability Services. Graduate research students requiring an extension for the research component of their programme should submit a formal application known as a [Graduate Research Extension Request](#) available on the Graduate Studies website.

#### **UCD students availing of Erasmus/International Exchanges**

Students studying in a host University under Erasmus/International Exchange should engage with the relevant host policies in the first instance and, where possible, all available local remedies for seeking Additional Considerations should be thoroughly explored and pursued.

Note: This policy does not apply to: UCD post degree medical graduates undertaking HSE Internships.

### 4. Additional Considerations Definitions

Students may experience challenges throughout their programme of study whereby they are unable to fulfil assessment component(s) within the designated timeline and they may require additional support. The University supports students who are experiencing such challenges in two ways. Depending on the nature of these challenges the student may be accommodated through the UCD Additional Considerations Policy via either:

**1) Self-Declare for Extension** - are available to students who require some additional time to complete a piece of work.

**2) Certified Additional Considerations** - Applications can be made by students who are experiencing challenges that mean a longer-term impact and who are able to present evidence of these circumstances.

Students may apply directly for Certified Additional Consideration without utilising the Self-Declare for Extension process if the issue is expected to extend beyond 5 days.

#### **4.1. Self-Declare for Extension**

All University students are expected to engage with and meet the academic requirements of their selected programme in line with set deadlines. Where they encounter challenges and need additional time, they may avail of a Self-Declare for Extension. The principle of Self-Declare for Extension means students can, before the assessment's submission deadline, self-declare their intention to avail of an extension of up to 5 working days with no penalty and with no requirement to provide independent evidence or seek academic approval. Self-Declare for Extension will only apply to written assignments and coursework (see inclusions and exclusion lists below).

There is no cap on the number of Self-Declare for Extension a student may avail of. However, Module Coordinators may introduce a cap within a specific module, specifying the maximum allowable Self-Declare for Extensions that a student may take. In such cases, this must be clearly stated in the module descriptor.

Students should be advised that availing of multiple Self-Declare for Extension over an academic year can impact their overall workload and may raise progression challenges.

#### **4.1.1. Additional 5-day extension with penalty**

At the discretion of the Module Coordinator an additional 5-day extension with penalty may be offered. The penalty will involve a grade reduction, with coursework submitted during this additional 5-day period having the grade awarded reduced by one grade point (for example, from B- to C+). This additional 5-day extension will apply to major assessment components only. Coursework received after this date will not be accepted or graded unless an application for Certified Additional Considerations has been submitted.

#### **4.1.2. Exclusions under Self-Declare for Extension**

Not all types of assessments are suitable for the application of extensions under the self-declare option, and on this basis, the following assessments are excluded under Self-Declare for Extension:

- Examination (timetabled and/or invigilated).
- High frequency, low stakes assessments such as quizzes/short exercise.
- Collaborative group work or teamwork assignments.
- Practicals/Studio/Oral Presentations/Laboratory-related Assignments: Given the intricate and varied nature of disciplinary practices across the university, students who have missed scheduled laboratory or practical components are advised to engage with their Module Coordinator. The Module Coordinator should give reasonable consideration and respond to student applications in a timely manner, to explore potential localised remedies, with the aim to support students to engage with their programme of study as soon as is practicable and possible.
- Graduate research students requiring an extension for the research component of their programme. These requests are administered through a formal application as a Graduate Research Extension Request.
- Work integrated learning including Academic Internships and Professional/Clinical Placements and Assessments: Students who are unable to attend or to fulfil the work-based placement requirements of Internships or Clinical Placements due to Additional Considerations must seek guidance from the relevant staff member to explore potential localised remedies which will aim to support the student to re-engage in their Internship/Professional/Clinical Placements as soon as is practicable and within the contexts and confines of their professional programme.

Note: It is important to acknowledge that UCD programmes leading to a professional award which are certified or Professional Programmes certified or approved by regulatory bodies may impose additional regulations and requirements concerning assessments, placements, and internships. The highly variable external environments, in addition to specific requirements imposed by regulatory bodies and the contexts and confines of the professional programme should be considered in any local response and should reflect the principles in the Additional Considerations of Assessment policy.

#### **4.1.3. Inclusions under Self-Declare for Extension**

It is anticipated that Self-Declare for Extension will be available for the following assessment types:

- Assignment (including essay/poster)
- Portfolio
- Reflective Assignment
- Report(s)
- Individual Project

The decision to include assessments under Self-Declare for Extension is made by the Module Coordinator and will be clearly outlined in the module descriptor. In the event that a Module Coordinator deems another assessment type appropriate for inclusion, this may be incorporated under the Self-Declare for Extension. This should be done in line with the Additional Considerations for Assessment policy, the relevant School/Unit/College approval process of the module Assessment Strategy and will be clearly stated within the module descriptor.

### **4.2. Certified Additional Considerations**

Where a student cannot be accommodated via the Self-Declare option, or for periods exceeding 5 working days, or in cases where assessments do not fall within the scope of the policy (see aforementioned exclusions), students may make an application for Certified Additional Considerations. These must be supported by documentation (see section 5). Certified Additional Considerations applies to all assessment types including in-person end-of-trimester examinations.

Applications for Certified Additional Considerations may be submitted within the trimester or at the end of the trimester.

- For in-trimester assessments, within 10 working days of the date of the assessment deadline.
- For end-of-trimester examinations, within 5 working days of the end of the University examination period.

Applications will not normally be considered after this point however, it may be possible to make a retrospective application - see section below.

#### 4.2.1. Certified Additional Considerations Categories

There are five broad categories under which Certified Additional Considerations can be sought. It is important to note that this list is not exhaustive, and instances may arise that are not covered under these five categories which necessitate a bespoke response by the Governing Board:

- a) **Significant Life Events:** includes, but is not limited to, crises in personal relationships; personal financial difficulties; difficult/challenging home environment; challenges related to housing and accommodation; as well as incidents pertaining to criminal and legal matters, such as jury duty.
- b) **Logistics:** includes, but is not limited to, issues related to transport; IT; and performance in both significant sporting and cultural activities.
- c) **Health and Wellbeing:** encompasses both physical and mental health conditions; pregnancy and pregnancy-related conditions; as well as worsening pre-existing health conditions; and critical medical appointments.
- d) **Caring Responsibilities:** encompass the full range of caring responsibilities including childcare; eldercare; sibling care; and other caregiving duties.
- e) **Bereavement:** recognising circumstances related to the loss of a loved one.

#### 4.2.2. Retrospective Applications for Certified Additional Considerations

In exceptional circumstances, it may not be possible to meet the Certified Additional Considerations application submission deadlines. Governing Boards should consider retrospective Certified Additional Considerations applications submitted through the online system. These will be limited to instances where there are valid reasons for non-submission within the usual timeframe and students will be required to demonstrate the reason they were unable to submit an application within the usual timeframe. Retrospective applications will not be considered as part of the Self-Declaration process.

### 5. Supporting Documentation for Certified Additional Considerations

All certified applications must be submitted in a timely manner and supported by appropriate, authentic documentation. Authentic documentation will be certified by an appropriate person, and may include medical certificates, letters or other pertinent evidence. Supporting documentation should be submitted in the working language of the University (**English or Irish**). If the supporting documentation is in a different language, a translation must be provided. Where appropriate, such evidence will articulate and demonstrate how the circumstances have directly impacted the student's ability to fulfil their academic obligations and the period in which the student was impacted.

Recognising the sensitivity of personal details, standardised templates for Certified Additional Considerations are available for use in certain situations as appropriate. These templates may be completed either by a medical practitioner, mental health practitioner or by student support professionals, including Student Advisers; Student Counselling; Student Health Service, Access and Lifelong Learning staff; or those associated with the Dignity and Respect Support Service.

Certified Additional Considerations applications over the student lifecycle that involve exacerbations of existing and previously evidenced ongoing conditions/situations need not require the student to submit duplication of the same previously submitted documentation as part of their applications within a given academic year.

## 6. Roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of the key parties involved in Additional Considerations – 1) the Student, 2) the Module Coordinator, 3) the School/Unit, 4) the Governing Board, and 5) the University – are defined below. For all key parties, all information received in a student application must be handled with the utmost respect and confidentiality, in accordance with UCD policies and GDPR regulations.

### 6.1. Responsibilities of the Student

- a) **Timely Application:** Promptly submit requests for Additional Considerations and as deemed appropriate, maintain open and transparent communication with relevant University staff to discuss the impact of the circumstances on coursework, assignments, and examinations. Students should register their intention to avail of the Self-Declare for Extension through the University system no later than the submission deadline set by the Module Coordinator. If the student does not submit the assessment by the end of the 5 working day Self-Declaration period, they will be assigned an ABS grade for the assessment component, in line with GAP timelines. This does not prevent the student from initiating an application for Certified Additional Considerations, should this be required.
- b) **Workload and Time Management:** Students may register their intention to avail of Self-Declare for Extension for multiple modules without limit unless the Module Coordinator has specified a cap in the module descriptor. However, students must take their overall workload into account. Multiple Self-Declare for Extension applications may raise progression challenges. Where multiple applications are necessary, advice and guidance should be sought as appropriate from relevant staff members.
- c) **Submission of Supporting Documentation:** Provide relevant and authentic documentation supporting their Certified Additional Considerations application, such as medical certificates, official letters, completed UCD templates or other evidence. Where appropriate, clearly articulate and demonstrate how the circumstances have directly impacted the student's ability to fulfil academic obligations and the period in which they were impacted.
- d) **Completion of Assessments:** Engage with the Module Coordinator on the completion of assessments.
- e) **Maintaining Academic Integrity:** Uphold academic integrity throughout the Additional Considerations application process, ensuring honesty and transparency in all communications and submissions.
- f) **Adherence:** Adhere to any additional reasonable requirements or recommendations set out by the Governing Board within the prescribed timeline.
- g) **Seeking Additional Support:** Seek guidance or support (if necessary) from relevant University support services, such as UCD Student Counselling, Student Advisers, Student Health Service, Academic Advisers, Disability Services, Programme Managers and Programme Directors to address any challenges they may be experiencing.

### 6.2. Responsibilities of the Module Coordinator

- a) **Approachability and Support:** Foster an approachable environment, encouraging students, where appropriate, to discuss their Additional Considerations and seek guidance on the application process. The Module Coordinator is responsible for engaging with students whose Certified Additional Considerations applications have been approved by the Governing Board, to provide an opportunity for a student to demonstrate they have met the learning outcomes of the module.
- b) **Communication:** Clearly communicate the deadlines for any assessment to be completed; ensure students are informed about the timelines; reply promptly to student communications within working hours.
- c) **Module Completion:**
  - Under Self-Declare for Extension, if the student does not submit the assessment by the end of the 5 working day period, the Module Coordinator will assign an ABS grade<sup>2</sup>, in line with GAP timelines, including where the student initiates an application for Certified Additional Considerations. Unless explicitly stated in the module descriptor, an additional 5-day extension with a one-grade-point penalty for major assessment components is not permitted.
  - Under Certified Additional Considerations students complete and do not remediate.<sup>3</sup> Where a student has been awarded an IX as the outcome of their application, completion should be within two teaching trimesters. It is not envisaged that extensions to the IX period will be necessary, however, where it is required, further IX extensions should only be granted in exceptional circumstances and with approval of the Governing Board.
- d) **Timeliness:** Module Coordinators shall provide an assessment opportunity for students with Certified Additional Considerations in a timely manner, to support and ensure student progression in their programme. Should the student be deemed unfit for the next assessment opportunity, the Module Coordinator should, within reasonable and equitable parameters, provide the student with an opportunity to complete the assessment when their circumstances allow, within the two teaching trimester maximum

<sup>2</sup> ABS grade - No work was submitted by the student or the student was absent from assessment.

<sup>3</sup> Resits provide opportunities to students who have failed modules to remediate. This is distinct from students who are completing an IX. Module coordinators may offer a resit assessment as a completion option for students with Certified Additional Considerations, but only after all other avenues for providing an appropriate completion opportunity, such as extending deadlines or offering alternative assessments, have been exhausted

timeline allowed and in line with the University's Academic Regulations.

- e) **Flexibility in completing Assessments:** Explore assessment options for students with approved Certified Additional Considerations, including extensions to original deadlines that allow students to meet the learning outcomes of the module and facilitate progression<sup>4</sup>. Such assessment options do not need to be identical to the original assessment and should strive to ensure a compassionate and fair resolution with due consideration to the student's workload and progression and, where relevant, the confines and contexts of professional programmes.
- f) **Referral to Support Services:** Where appropriate, direct students to relevant University support services, such as UCD Student Counselling, Student Advisers, Student Health Service, Academic Advisers, Disability Services or Access and Lifelong Learning to address any additional challenges they may be experiencing.

### 6.3. Responsibilities of the School/Unit

- a) **Information Dissemination:** Ensure that clear and comprehensive information about the Additional Considerations policy is readily available to students. This information should cover procedures, deadlines, and required documentation.
- b) **Guidance and Support:** Offer guidance and support to students who may require assistance in understanding the Additional Consideration policy and to clarify any uncertainties.
- c) **Flexible Assessment Arrangements:** Work collaboratively to support academic staff in the implementation of assessment arrangements for students facing Certified Additional Consideration that allow them to meet the learning outcomes of the module and facilitate progression.
- d) **Referral to Support Services:** Where appropriate, direct students to relevant University support services, such as UCD Student Counselling, Student Advisers, Student Health Service, Academic Advisers, Disability Services or Access and Lifelong Learning to address any additional challenges they may be experiencing.
- e) **Monitoring and Tracking:** Use reports for monitoring Additional Considerations available within the University system and liaise with the Module Coordinator to support students complete the assessment within agreed timelines.

### 6.4. Responsibilities of the Governing Board

- a) **Academic Regulations Adherence:** Ensure adherence to University's Academic Regulations.
- b) **Information Dissemination:** Ensure that clear and comprehensive information about the Additional Considerations application process is readily available to students. This information should cover procedures, deadlines, and required documentation.
- c) **Decision-Making:** The Governing Boards are the decision-makers in approving Certified Additional Considerations applications. It is the role of the Governing Boards to ensure transparency in the decision-making process, clearly communicating the criteria used to assess Certified Additional Considerations applications. This function can be delegated to a subcommittee of the Governing Board if required. However, the ultimate responsibility remains with the Governing Board.
- d) **Application Review and Evaluation:** Review and decide on applications under Certified Additional Considerations fairly, objectively and without bias considering the provided supporting documentation and the impact of the circumstances on the student's academic performance. In complex student cases liaise with key actors to support the development of reasonable plans that support module completion and by allowing the student to demonstrate they have met the specified learning outcomes of the module and facilitate their progression. A Governing Board may delegate authority to a sub-committee or standing committee of its members to facilitate this process.
- e) **Timely Response:** Provide timely responses to students regarding the outcome of their Certified Additional Considerations application. Typically, this should be within 10 working days and the outcome should be clearly communicated.
- f) **Decision Outcomes:** Where a Governing Board approves an application for Certified Additional Considerations, there are a variety of outcomes that can result to support a student with module completion. Such outcomes may be actioned within a trimester and may consist of but not limited to, local solution, extensions to original deadline, the award of a WN grade, the award of IX or a combination of IX and WN grades. Where a student has been awarded an IX as the outcome of their application, completion should be within two teaching trimesters. It is not envisaged that extensions to the IX period will be necessary, however, where it is required, further IX extensions should only be granted in exceptional circumstances and with approval of the Governing Board.
- g) **Referral to Support Services:** Where appropriate, direct students to relevant University support services, such as UCD Student Counselling, Student Advisers, Student Health Service, Academic Advisers, Disability Services or Access and Lifelong Learning to address any additional challenges they may be experiencing.
- h) **Communication with relevant staff:** Maintain open lines of communication with relevant academic staff to understand any specific considerations related to the academic programme or modules affected and to gather additional insights into the student's academic progress where relevant.
- i) **Multiple Additional Considerations Submissions:** Maintain oversight of all Self-Declare for Extension and Certified Additional Considerations applications. Where a student makes multiple submissions within a given teaching trimester and/or academic

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<sup>4</sup> Non-progression may have a significant impact on students, including financially. Where a resit is scheduled at the end of the second trimester and where no other completion opportunity has been provided to the student, this can impede students' progression.



year, these students should be identified and timely interventions should be made, including referral of students to relevant support services and consideration under other UCD policies as appropriate.

- j) **Flexibility in Decision-Making:** Exercise flexibility in decision-making to accommodate the unique circumstances of each student, recognising that Additional Considerations can vary widely.
- k) **Monitoring and Tracking:** Monitor Additional Considerations reports available within the University system to track Additional Consideration data trends and share as appropriate with key actors.
- l) **Record Keeping:** Within the GDPR guidelines, maintain accurate records of Additional Considerations decisions and communications.

## 6.5. Responsibilities of the University

- a) **Accessibility and Awareness:** Ensure that information regarding the Additional Considerations policy is readily accessible and communicated in multiple formats text/video/infographics/audio etc. and provides students and staff with the information required to implement the policy ensure that a communal user-friendly system (electronic platform) to support the Additional Considerations for Assessment policy and its management is implemented.
- b) **Documentation Guidance:** Offer high level guidance to students and staff on the implementation of the policy.
- c) **Confidentiality and Privacy:** Emphasise the importance of confidentiality and privacy in handling Additional Considerations applications. Assure students that their personal information will be treated with discretion and sensitivity.
- d) **Validity of Application:** The University reserves the right to investigate the validity of applications. In cases where there is suspicion of fraudulent submission, the issue may be referred to the University's disciplinary process.
- e) **Policy Implementation:** Adequately support and resource all stakeholders in the implementation of this policy including upholding the Workplace Relations Commission's Code of Practice on the Right to Disconnect e.g., by not routinely emailing or calling outside normal working hours.
- f) **Policy Monitoring, Review and Evaluation:** Design and conduct a comprehensive data driven, evidence based, evaluation and review of the implementation of this policy. This should be undertaken in the first, second and third years of implementation and any issues or unforeseen consequences identified should be addressed.

## 7. Appeals Process

Governing Boards will consider all applications for Certified Additional Considerations in accordance with the principles set out in this policy. Governing Board outcomes in relation to applications for Certified Additional Considerations are a matter of academic judgement and, as such, decisions are final. However, where retrospective applications are rejected because the reason for the lateness is deemed invalid by the Governing Board, students may submit an appeal using the Assessment Appeals Policy and procedure. Students wishing to raise concerns about an incorrect application of the Additional Consideration Policy may do so directly with the relevant Governing Board, under the University's Student Complaint procedure, using both informal and formal approaches.

## 8. Related Policies and Protocols

UCD is committed to supporting students to make the most of their studies and be successful. There are a range of other policies and protocols listed below that are available to help where Additional Considerations are not appropriate, no longer applicable, or capable of addressing a student's circumstances.

[Leave of Absence Policy](#)

[Continuation - Academic Progress Policy and Procedure](#)

[Fitness to Continue in Study Policy](#)

[Student Fitness to Practise Policy](#)

**Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy**

**Distressed Student Protocol (under development)**

**Pregnancy Supports for Students Policy**

[Graduate Research Policies](#)

9. Version history

Version	Date	Summary of Changes	Approval Body
1.0	23 October 2024	Policy approved at Academic Council	Academic Council