Cambridge Theological Federation

Common Awards

Student Absence, Extensions and Mitigation Policy

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Introduction, Background & Scope

1. The Cambridge Theological Federation has a responsibility to monitor student attendance for reasons of student support; to ensure that programme learning outcomes are met; and to meet Home Office requirements in respect of international students. In compliance with the policies of the University of Durham, the Federation must have an agreed procedure for monitoring attendance at compulsory lectures, classes, etc., and for ‘chasing up’ students who are absent without having informed their Module Tutor or Director of Studies. The procedure will typically involve informal contact with the student in the first instance to identify the reasons for the student’s absence so that appropriate action can be taken. The procedure should be made known to students and adhered to. If a student is absent but fails to inform anyone, he/she should be reminded of the proper procedures.

2. The Federation must have processes to record self-certified or other missed academic commitments and to approve extensions to deadlines for assessed work or other forms of mitigation, in the light of section 6.2.6 of University of Durham’s Learning and Teaching Handbook.

3. The Cambridge Theological Federation expects all students to fulfil all compulsory academic commitments, (for instance, attendance at all contact hour classes; submission of summative coursework; examinations and other academic commitments notified as compulsory). However, it is inevitable that some students will experience difficulties outside their control (such as illness or bereavement) that will adversely impact on their work or prevent them from fulfilling their commitments. This document details Federation policy and procedure in respect of such circumstances.

4. The following policy has been drafted in the light of section 6.2.6 of University of Durham’s Learning and Teaching Handbook and covers the procedures for the following circumstances:

   A. Missed Academic Commitments (e.g. absences from class)

      i. How students may inform their tutors and Directors of Studies of the need to be absent from an upcoming class or other compulsory module element, including formative assessment; and what circumstances are acceptable for missing a class;

      ii. How students may inform their tutors and Directors of Studies of the reasons for a past absence from a class or other compulsory module element, including formative assessment;

   B. Extension and Mitigation Requests

      i. How and in what circumstances a student may request a short extension to a deadline for summative coursework;

      ii. How and in what circumstances a student may request a further extension or a long extension for summative coursework;

      iii. How and in what circumstances a student may request mitigation in the form of an alternative assessment method, or some other mitigation;
iv. How and in what circumstances a student may be supported academically through a period of adversity or distress.

C. Serious Adverse Circumstances
i. How and in what circumstances a student may request mitigation for missed or poor performance in examinations due to adverse circumstances
ii. How and in what circumstances a student may request mitigation for a low mark or a fail in circumstances where an extension request was not filed within 5 days but there were nevertheless adverse circumstances.

5. The Cambridge Theological Federation is committed to supporting students from all backgrounds. The procedures below include a process for acknowledging the impact specific learning difficulties can have on summative and formative assessment, where those difficulties are outlined in a Diagnostic Assessment Report. The Federation is also committed to the ongoing support of students with specific learning needs and the first point of contact for any student on this question is the Director of Studies.

6. In addition to the procedure below, the University of Durham procedures to apply adjustments for students under the terms of the Equality Act 2010 shall apply.

7. In order for the Cambridge Theological Federation to provide appropriate support, students must inform their Director of Studies as soon as any adverse circumstances occur, using the procedures outlined below. Students must not wait until they receive their marks to inform their Director of Studies. Retrospective requests are only considered in exceptional circumstances.

8. The general approach is to attempt, where possible and appropriate, to deal with circumstances ‘in-year’, for instance through extensions to deadlines for summative coursework. A flowchart outlining the process is available in Appendix Two to this policy.

9. The procedure and forms detailed below relate only to circumstances beyond the student’s control.

10. This policy was approved by the Federation’s Common Awards Management Committee on 25th June 2015.
A. Missed Academic Commitments

11. The Cambridge Theological Federation expects students to meet all academic commitments associated with their programme of study.

12. It is the student’s responsibility to ‘catch up’ on missed academic commitments by making mutually agreeable alternative arrangements (for instance, to read the expected texts; to attend an alternative seminar on the same topic). Module Tutors and/or Directors of Studies will endeavour to support this when possible, but this will not always be feasible.

13. If a student is unwell or affected by some other adverse circumstance or conflicting priorities and as a result is absent or anticipates being absent in the short-term she or he should:
   a. discuss the circumstances with the Director of Studies and any other relevant members of staff if pastoral support would be helpful.

AND

   b. with the help of the Director of Studies if necessary, complete and submit a Self-Certification of Absence Form stating his or her circumstances and the duration of the absence, and then submit this Form to the Director of Studies who will file it with the Office of the Registrar. The Form is available on FedLife and is also available as Appendix One of this policy.

AND

   c. inform the member(s) of academic staff leading the missed commitment as appropriate. This is particularly important when absence will directly affect the session (e.g. if the student was to give a presentation or participate in group work).

14. Where the missed academic commitment will include a compulsory element of formative assessment, it is the student’s responsibility to ‘catch up’ on missed academic commitments by making mutually agreeable alternative arrangements with the relevant class tutor. Tutors will make every reasonable effort to offer a response to the proposed completion of this element. Non-completion of formative assessment will not be acceptable grounds for an extension where the student has not made reasonable attempts to reschedule. If there are circumstances beyond the student’s control that prevent this rescheduling, the student should refer to section B for extensions and mitigation.

15. A student may self-certify on two occasions per term for a maximum of seven consecutive calendar days on each occasion. A term in this context refers to both term-time and the following vacation. However, a student may not miss more than 20% of any one module or course. The Director of Studies is responsible for checking that these limits have not been exceeded and for investigating any cases of attempts to self-certify on more than two occasions per term. The form should be completed within 48 hours after the problem has occurred.

16. After two such absences per term or semester, a student will be required to have a conversation with an appropriate member of academic staff.

17. Students who need to exceed these limits, by requiring further absences or an absence period of more than 14 consecutive days which will result in missing more than 20% of any
module should consult their Director of Studies to discuss their situation. The Director of Studies will explore the best possible means of support (for instance, application for deadline extension, a concession to temporarily take time out from their studies, or arrangements to withdraw from a module) and notify the Office of the Registrar of the decision.

18. Students are trusted to self-certify accurately and honestly, and there is no need to provide further evidence (e.g. a medical certificate) to justify absence from classes. The provision of false information will be regarded as a disciplinary offence by the Federation.

B. Circumstances affecting submission of Summative Coursework

19. The procedure outlined in this section relates to the submission of summative assessed coursework (including dissertations). Different procedures apply to formally timetabled examinations (see below).

20. Students who believe that their academic performance is being adversely affected by circumstances beyond their control are strongly encouraged to contact their Director of Studies to explore the possible options of support.

21. If a student suffers some adverse circumstance beyond his or her control, and as a result anticipates missing a deadline to hand in summatively assessed coursework, or anticipates missing a class which leads directly to the submission of work which counts towards summative assessment (e.g. a presentation) and therefore cannot hand in the associated work, he / she should:

   a. contact his or her Director of Studies as soon as possible to discuss and seek possible mitigation or an extension on the deadline for summative assessment;

   AND

   b. with the help of the Director of Studies if necessary, complete and submit an Extension and Mitigation Form describing the disruption to study leading to missing the deadline, and then submit this Form to the Director of Studies who, if the request is approved, will transmit it to the Office of the Registrar. The Form is available on FedLife and is also available as Appendix Three of this policy.

   AND

   c. consult any other relevant staff in his or her Federation Institution for pastoral support, if this would be helpful.

22. All such requests for extensions and mitigation require approval first by the Director of Studies who will consult any other relevant staff such as the Module Tutor, the marker and/or the Office of the Registrar before proposing an outcome. The Office of the Registrar must agree to the proposed outcome. Automatic approval of requests for extensions is not guaranteed.

23. Outcomes may include:

   a. Short Extension - a negotiated extension to a later deadline. In many cases a short extension of 10 calendar days will be an appropriate outcome to a request.
b. Long Extension - a negotiated extension to a deadline that goes beyond 10 calendar days, but normally not longer than 4 months from the original deadline.

c. Pre-submission mitigation - i.e. the acceptance of some alternative assessment in place of the prescribed assessment.

d. Intermission - the discussion may result in agreeing that the appropriate response to the student’s circumstances is time away from study, for an agreed period of time. The details of this process are outlined elsewhere.

e. Confirmation of the original submission date

**Short Extension**

24. A short extension is defined as an extension to a deadline for summative coursework of up to and including 10 calendar days.

25. Students who are requesting a short extension do not need to provide independent evidence in support of their absence / illness and request for mitigation. Students are trusted to “self-certify” accurately and honestly in these cases, using the Extension and Mitigation Form (Appendix Two).

26. The principle is that students can “self-certify” using the Extension Form to support a request for mitigation or extension only if their absence or disruption of study results from circumstances beyond their control. This renders it difficult to produce a definitive list of ‘good reasons’ under which students may default on their academic commitments through self-certification. The following is indicative but not exhaustive:

   a. significant illness, comparable to that which would result in absence from work;
   b. hospital appointment, doctor’s appointment, emergency dental appointment;
   c. bereavement;
   d. the ongoing effects of a specific learning difficulty outlined in a Diagnostic Assessment Report;
   e. significant personal problems or events (e.g. a family crisis; being the victim of a crime);
   f. significant illness of a close relative or dependent (e.g. sufficient to require absence from the Course or that the student needs to act as a carer).

27. Extension or mitigation requests should not be made in respect of general pressure of deadlines, missing deadlines due to oversleeping, failing to print out work on time, breakdown of printers, lost work due to failure to back-up, and so on. Students are expected to manage their work to be able to cope with such problems.

28. An undergraduate student may request an extension without independent evidence once per assessment component. The Director of Studies is responsible for checking that these limits have not been exceeded. The form must be completed within 48 hours after the problem has occurred.
29. Self-certification may not be used to gain a further extension or further mitigation on top of a previously negotiated extension.

30. If the student wishes a further extension or mitigation in addition to one already received, the student should discuss the situation with the Director of Studies. Such requests may be made but will require independent evidence to be supplied; the process for this, including examples of appropriate evidence are provided for below.

**Long Extension**

31. A long extension is defined as an extension to a deadline for a piece of summative assessment which is longer than 10 calendar days, but normally no longer than 4 months.

32. In special circumstances the extension can be a later date, providing that it is before the beginning of the next academic year.

33. In exceptional cases it is possible to apply for permission from the Common Awards Management Board for the extension deadline to be in the next academic year. This must be done using the Durham-issued Common Awards Concession Form.

34. Students who are requesting either a long extension or a further extension use the same Extension and Mitigation Form, specifying the nature of their request.

35. However, students making these applications cannot self-certify and will be obliged to provide independent evidence wherever this can reasonably be expected. Approval in these cases will be needed from the Director of Studies, the Office of the Registrar and the Chair of Examiners.

36. Again, an exhaustive list of appropriate causes for a long extension or a further extension request is difficult to formulate. Consult paragraph 26 for an indicative list. For long or further extensions should be added the following circumstances:

   a. illness ongoing beyond what was expected and specified in any earlier application;
   b. a series of circumstances from the indicative list;
   c. circumstances where the student has attempted but been materially unable to ‘catch up’ on formative assessment.

Where c is the case, should the extension be granted, it will be on the understanding that the student is responsible for ‘catching up’ on the formative assessment in advance of the new deadline. The tutor will be required to meet all reasonable requests with respect to rescheduling.

37. Supporting evidence should be submitted with the form if available and appropriate. It is the student’s responsibility to collect and supply this evidence. Examples of acceptable evidence are listed below (this is an indicative list only, and does not cover all instances):

   a. a medical certificate; letter from a medical practitioner; or medical records, including a letter or report from a counsellor or other mental health professional. Please note that doctors, consultants and other health care professionals are not obliged to supply medical certificates / letters, and will make a professional judgement on whether this is appropriate. Many medical practitioners charge for
the supply of certificates / letters. It is the student’s responsibility to pay any such charges;

b. correspondence from the University’s Disability Support service;

c. a letter of support from the student’s Director of Studies or other appropriate member of teaching staff.

In the event of a letter of supporting from the student’s Director of Studies being employed, the Office of the Registrar and Chair of Exam Board will consider the circumstances without further input from the Director of Studies.

Directors of Studies, the Office of the Registrar and the Chair of Examiners will carefully and sympathetically consider the necessity of students who have previously disclosed a long-term disability to produce independent evidence of circumstances relating to their disability, using their professional discretion. Advice and guidance is available from Durham University’s Disability Support Service.

Directors of Studies and the Office of the Registrar will similarly sympathetically consider whether independent evidence is necessary in respect of adverse circumstances relating to pregnancy and maternity.

The normal expectation is that such supporting evidence should be first-hand and contemporaneous. For example, a professional medical judgment cannot normally be made on a past illness. In such circumstances, a medical certificate is likely to be refused. The Federation will not normally take into consideration uncorroborated ‘hearsay’ evidence, whosever provides it (e.g. a letter from a medical practitioner stating ‘this patient of mine informs me that they were ill’).

38. However:

a. the Federation recognises that there are some entirely valid circumstances for which no independent evidence can be brought. For this reason, long extension requests will not be discounted simply because they are not supported by independent evidence;

b. independent evidence adds weight to the case only if it supports the conclusion that the student’s studies and/or performance were seriously affected: it will not influence the Director of Studies, the Office of the Registrar or the Chair of the Exam Board just because it is independent if it does not show this;

39. If the extension request is longer than 4 months it will normally not be granted, on the grounds that a semester of intermission may be a better pastoral response to the student’s circumstances. However, as stated above, in exceptional circumstances a longer extension may be considered. Any extension request that goes into the next academic year must be approved by the Common Awards Management Board as a Concession Request.

40. Guidance on the assessment of extension and mitigation requests is available in section 6.3.6 of Durham University’s Learning and Teaching Handbook.
Pre-submission Mitigation

41. Pre-submission mitigation is defined as a response to circumstances outside a student’s control, that present a material difficulty to the submission of the required assessment component, other than a deadline extension.

42. An indicative example of such mitigation is the alteration to the mode of an assessment component, such as changing an in-class presentation to an alternative when a class context is no longer available, the student having missed this opportunity through circumstances outside their control.

43. The process for requesting mitigation of this type is to consult in the first instance with the Director of Studies, who will support the completion of an Extensions and Mitigation Form. The completed form must be accompanied by a specific negotiated outcome, proposed by the Director of Studies and confirmed by the Office of the Registrar and the Chair of the Exam Board.

Further notes

44. The expectation is that students should apply for mitigation or extensions in advance of deadlines. The Federation recognises that adverse circumstances such as illness will sometimes make this impractical. If a student believes that an adverse circumstance caused the failure to submit summative work by a due deadline, it is his/her responsibility to contact the Module Tutor and Director of Studies as soon as possible to explain the situation and to request a retrospective extension (or other appropriate mitigation). Students in such situations should also complete the Extension Form as soon as possible. The student should normally complete the Form and contact their Director of Studies within 48 hours of the problem occurring, and no later than five days after the deadline for the submission of the assessment.

45. In the event that a student’s circumstances make it impossible to inform the Director of Studies directly during this timeframe, the Director of Studies may, in exceptional circumstances, make the application on the student’s behalf.

46. Whilst all requests for mitigation and extensions should be carefully considered, students should not assume that such requests will automatically be approved. There may also be some instances where it is not reasonable for the Federation to implement a particular type of extension or mitigation requested by a student (for instance, it may not be feasible to offer an extension in respect of a practical assessment). In such instances, the Director of Studies, Module Tutor and/or Office of the Registrar will consider whether another form of mitigation or support would be more appropriate.

47. In considering requests for extensions or mitigation, the Director of Studies will either:
   a. accept that the student has good reason due to their circumstances for defaulting on his/her academic commitments and (for retrospective requests) could not reasonably have negotiated an extension or mitigation in advance. In this case the
Director of Studies will propose an appropriate extension or retrospective extension, or form of mitigation.

or

b. not accept that the student has good reason for defaulting on their academic commitments and (for retrospective requests) could not have negotiated an extension to the deadline or an excused absence in advance. In this instance, the Director of Studies should inform the student and the Office of the Registrar, who will apply Common Awards penalties for late submission of assessed work as appropriate.

48. Normally the only grounds on which a retrospective extension will be granted are where circumstances beyond the control of the student have prevented submission.

49. The student must be informed in writing of the outcome of the consideration of the student’s request for extension or mitigation. An email to the student’s commonawards email address or, if within Cambridge, a letter delivered to the student’s Federation Institution will be considered suitable written notification. If an extension is granted then the new deadline must be made clear to the student, in writing, and the procedures with regard to meeting the new deadline should be those outlined in this policy statement. If the student fails to meet the new deadline then the Office of the Registrar should apply standard Common Awards policy and penalties on late submission of assessed work. Students should remember that failure to submit summative assessed work on the due date without a negotiated extension or self-certification means that procedures and penalties on late submission of assessed work will apply.

50. Students must advise their Director of Studies if their adverse circumstances are ongoing or if new adverse circumstances come to light, such that they believe that the mitigation or extension applied for is insufficient (for instance, if a student has negotiated an extension due to illness, but their illness continues longer than anticipated). Students are advised to follow the same procedure outlined above. Students must not wait until after the new deadline to advise their Director of Studies of such difficulties.

C. Serious Adverse Circumstances Affecting Performance in Summative Assessment.

51. The process for mitigation or extension requests outlined above does not apply in the following instances:

a. missed examinations;

b. serious adverse circumstances affecting performance in examinations or preparations for examinations within five days of the exam date;

c. serious adverse or ongoing circumstances affecting student’s performance in summative assessments besides examinations when for good reasons beyond their control or that of their Director of Studies the student was unable to bring these circumstances or the extent of their impact to the attention of their Director of Studies within the 5 day or other reasonable time period.
Students should not use the Extensions and Mitigation Form in these instances. Instead students should use the Post-Deadline Mitigation Form (Appendix Four).

52. Serious adverse circumstances are defined as "exceptional personal circumstances, outside your control, that have prevented you from either acquiring or demonstrating the skills, knowledge or competencies required to meet the learning outcomes associated with an assessment that contributes to the qualification for which you are studying, notwithstanding your best efforts, in consultation with your Director of Studies, to mitigate those circumstances." Students who anticipate that serious adverse circumstances will impact upon their examinations or other deadlines are advised to consult their Director of Studies to discuss possible support.

53. For an indicative list of serious adverse circumstances see paragraphs 26 and 34, with the added proviso that the student was unable to bring these circumstances or the extent of their impact to the attention of their Director of Studies within the 5 day or other reasonable time period of the submission deadline or examination date.

54. It is expected that the student will request post-deadline mitigation when the mark that is likely to result is a zero for non-submission or absence from an exam, or a piece of work is of a much lower standard than can reasonably be expected from a student. It is expected that a student will request post-deadline mitigation having submitted summative assessment/s, or missed or completed an exam, in adverse circumstances which have seriously affected his/her work, which need to be brought to the attention of the Common Awards Board of Examiners when they make a final decision on the student’s progression to the next year of study or his/her class of degree. The Board of Examiners has discretion to take serious adverse circumstances into account when making decisions regarding progression to the following year of study or the degree classification.

55. Where the student wishes serious adverse circumstances to be taken into account regarding their progression to their next year of study, the student must inform the Board of Examiners of any serious adverse circumstances before the board meets. Students should not wait until they receive their marks to inform the Board.

56. The Cambridge Theological Federation will therefore advertise to students:

   a. the need to bring such information to the attention of the Board of Examiners before the meeting;

   b. the date of the meeting of the Board of Examiners and the date by which post submission mitigation forms must be submitted [this date must always be after the last examination set by the Federation for which results are to be considered by the Board];

   c. how to access support in completing the SAC form, the first point of contact for which will be the Director of Studies;

   d. the name of the person to whom the information should be sent.

57. Students must submit evidence to the Board of Examiners using the Post-deadline Mitigation Form. The Director of Studies can provide assistance in completing the form. Students submitting a Post-deadline Mitigation Form in respect of examinations are advised to submit the
form after the relevant examination(s), in order to better articulate to the Board of Examiners the impact upon their performance.

58. Students should include independent evidence regarding their circumstances. Paragraphs 35 and 36 of this policy shall apply to that evidence. This evidence must explain why the student was unable to notify their Director of Studies of their adverse circumstances during the 5 day or other reasonable period following the submission deadline or exam date. In addition, the Board of Examiners will need to have evidence that the student’s ‘normal’ standard of work was at a higher level than that of the assessment in question. This is so that the Board can make a fair assessment of the student’s performance once the illness or other problem has been discounted. If no such evidence exists, the Board cannot exercise discretion in favour of the student. Appropriate evidence can be offered through a written reference from the student’s Tutor or Module Tutor.

59. If a mark has been awarded for an exam or assignment the Board of Examiners cannot alter a student’s mark. It can only decide that, despite the relatively low mark, the student will still be able to progress to the next year of study or be awarded a higher class of degree. The student’s transcript will show the mark actually obtained.

60. A student must use the Post-deadline Mitigation Form to tell the Board of Examiners of his/her problems directly and must not assume that because they have told someone in the Federation (such as the Director of Studies), the Board of Examiners will know.

61. Neither the Federation nor the University will pass on information received by the Board of Examiners in the context of serious adverse circumstances to third parties.

62. When a student has had an examination concession (for example to give extra time in an exam because of a medical problem) the Board of Examiners will not take those circumstances into account over and above the terms of the concession unless the student submits a Post-deadline Mitigation Form which additionally brings the circumstances to the attention of the board with evidence that the concession did not mitigate their problem.

63. Concessions such as extra time in an exam are intended to provide an environment which takes account of the student’s circumstances as they are understood at that time. After the examination, the student's work is treated in the same way as any other student's work: it is marked by the same criteria and the marks are treated in the same way by the Board of Examiners. In bringing his/her circumstances to the attention of the board the student is expected to show that his/her situation was not adequately mitigated by the concessionary adjustment.
Self-Certification of Absence Form (or other failure to meet academic commitments)

THIS FORM HAS 2 SIDES

This Form must be completed if you need to self-certify absence to cover the time when academic commitments have been missed for reasons beyond your control. An indicative list of acceptable reasons for absence is provided in the Federation’s Absence, Extension and Mitigation Policy. Academic commitments include compulsory classes, practicals, etc. (as detailed in your module guides on FedLife), up to and including scheduled formative assessments. This process requires approval from your Director of Studies and the Office of the Registrar.

If you believe in advance that you are unable to fulfill an academic commitment it is your responsibility to alert your Director of Studies and Module Tutor with advance notice. The Form may be used on up to 2 occasions per term for up to 7 consecutive calendar days on each occasion. However, you may not miss more than 20% of any one module or course. This Form must be submitted to your Director of Studies as quickly as possible after your return from absence or in advance if there is prior notice of your absence. You may seek advice from your Director of Studies.

Please note that requests for extensions or mitigation regarding summative assessments in relation to these or any other circumstances have a separate process and the Extensions and Mitigation Form can be found on FedLife.

Part A: to be completed by the student:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Surname:</th>
<th>Student Forename:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student ID:</td>
<td>Federation House:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Degree Programme and Level of Study:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cause of absence:</td>
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<td>Date of First Day of Absence/Disruption (DD/MM/YY)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Last Day of Absence/Disruption (If Known) (DD/MM/YY)</td>
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<tr>
<td>List the academic commitments affected:</td>
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<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Academic Commitment</th>
<th>Tutor</th>
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Declaration:

By submitting this form I declare that the information provided therein is true to the best of my knowledge, and that I have read and understood the Federation’s procedure for considering student absence and illness (see The Cambridge Theological Federation Common Awards Student Handbook). I understand that providing false information will be regarded as a disciplinary offence by the Federation. I agree to allow the Federation to hold and use this data for the purposes for which it was submitted in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Signature of student ____________________________

or signed on his/her behalf by ____________________________ Position ____________________________

Part B: For Completion by Federation Staff

For Completion by the Director of Studies:

- I do / do not confirm and approve the student’s circumstances described above.

- Comments: ____________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________

Signature ____________________________ Date ____________________________

The Form must be transmitted to the Office of the Registrar within 48 hours of the absence occurring.

For Completion by the Office of the Registrar:

- I do / do not confirm and approve the student absence described above.

- Comments: ____________________________________________________________

Signature ____________________________ Date ____________________________

Date student informed ____________________________
Appendix Two
Common Awards
Process for Extensions and Mitigation Requests

1. Adverse circumstances affecting student
   - Student informs DoS, module tutor/staff tutor as needed WITHIN 5 days (earlier if possible).

2. Is a 10-day extension sufficient and acceptable?
   - Yes: Student submits Request for Extension or Mitigation Form (self-certifies)
   - No: Student provides evidence where possible, using Extension or Mitigation Form

3. DoS considers and grants 10-day extension.
   - Can new deadline be met?
     - Yes: Pathway Leader notifies student/DoS of decision and new
     - No: DoS, PL and Exam Board Chair agree long extension or other form of mitigation

4. Pathway Leader notifies student/DoS of decision and new
Appendix Three
Request for Extension or Mitigation Form

THIS FORM HAS 3 PAGES

This Form must be completed if you need to register some circumstance that may have disrupted your study to the extent that you wish to request an extension or some other mitigation for a piece of summative assessment. An indicative list of acceptable reasons for such requests is provided in the Absence, Extensions and Mitigation Policy. Requests for extensions or mitigation require approval from your Director of Studies and the Office of the Registrar.

If you believe in advance that you are unable to complete a piece of summative assessment for the advertised deadline it is your responsibility to alert your Director of Studies and Module Tutor with advance notice. The Form may be used once for each component of summative assessment. This Form must be submitted to your Director of Studies as quickly as possible once the disruption to your study becomes clear, or as soon as possible after it becomes possible to communicate this to your Director of Studies. You may seek advice from your Director of Studies at any point during this process.

Part A: to be completed by the student:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Surname:</th>
<th>Student Forename:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Student ID:</td>
<td>Federation House:</td>
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Degree Programme and Level of Study:

Nature of Disruption to Study:

During what period has the disruption occurred? (DD/MM/YY)

List the academic commitments affected. Please give ALL module components for which you are requesting extension or mitigation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Academic Commitment</th>
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16
Request

Given the information above, I am:

☐ Choosing to register the results of a Diagnostic Assessment Report regarding a Specific Learning Difficulty/ies as grounds for a reasonable extension, specified below. Please note that this request must be registered **IN ADVANCE**, and that retrospective accommodation is not possible.

☐ Requesting a short extension of ten calendar days for summative assessment

☐ Requesting some other form of mitigation for summative assessment, specified in an attached letter from my Director of Studies.

☐ Requesting a further extension to a previous granted extension for summative assessment*

☐ Requesting a long extension (between 11 calendar days and 4 months of the original deadline)*

For these applications, independent evidence is normally required. This is attached.

Any other details: _________________________________________________________________

Declaration:

By submitting this form I declare that the information provided therein is true to the best of my knowledge, and that I have read and understood the Federation’s procedure for considering student absence and illness (see The Cambridge Theological Federation Common Awards Student Handbook). I understand that providing false information will be regarded as a disciplinary offence by the Federation. I agree to allow the Federation to hold and use this data for the purposes for which it was submitted in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Signature of student ______________________________________________________________

or signed on his/her behalf by __________________________________________ Position ____________

The Form should be transmitted to the Office of the Registrar as soon as it has been signed by the Director of Studies (page 3 of this form):

Office of the Registrar
Westminster Bounds
Lady Margaret Road
Cambridge, CB3 0BJ

Or by email: ctfreg@hermes.cam.ac.uk
Part B: to be completed by Federation Staff

(1) To be completed by the student’s Director of Studies:

☐ I do confirm and approve the student’s circumstances described above and recommend an extension of the coursework deadline

| The proposed new submission date is (DD/MM/YY): |   |
| Comments: |   |
| Signature: |   |
| Date: |   |

(2) To be completed by the Office of the Registrar:

☐ I do / do not approve the extension of the deadline for the summative assessment/s named.
☐ I do/ do not approve the requested specified mitigation of the summative assessment/s named.

| Confirmation of new submission date (DD/MM/YY): |   |
| Comments: |   |
| Signature: |   |
| Date: |   |
| Date student informed/form sent on to Exam Board: |   |

For long or further extension requests, the following section must also be completed as soon as possible:

(3) To be completed by the Chair of the Exam Board:

☐ I do / do not approve the extension of the deadline for the summative assessment/s named.
☐ I do/ do not approve the requested specified mitigation of the summative assessment/s named.

| Confirmation of new submission date (DD/MM/YY): |   |
| Comments: |   |
| Signature: |   |
| Date: |   |
| Date student informed: |   |
Appendix Four

Serious Adverse Circumstances Affecting
Performance in Summative Assessment

The Cambridge Theological Federation’s approach to Serious Adverse Circumstances:

Definition

Serious adverse circumstances are defined as exceptional personal circumstances, outside your control, that have prevented you from either acquiring or demonstrating the skills, knowledge or competencies required to meet the learning outcomes associated with an assessment that contributes to the qualification for which you are studying, notwithstanding your best efforts, in consultation with your Federation institution, to mitigate those circumstances.

The Federation’s process for considering serious adverse circumstances:

Exceptionally, you may use the Post-Deadline Mitigation Form below to ask the Board of Examiners to consider the effect of serious adverse circumstances on summative assessment you have submitted, or failed to submit at the required deadline. This applies only if, for reasons beyond your control, you were unable to bring those circumstances or the extent of their impact to the attention of your Director of Studies at the time or within five days or other reasonable timeframe.

The Board of Examiners is the committee of academic staff appointed to review the assessment of all students. It confirms final marks for assessed work and agrees awards or whether you may progress to the next year of study. The board has ‘discretion’ under the regulations to take account of ‘serious adverse circumstances’ to ensure that a fair assessment is made of each student’s performance. The Board of Examiners cannot alter your marks but might in exceptional circumstances:

- request a concession to allow you to take a resit which would not normally be permitted;
- allow you to progress to the next year of study despite having marks which would normally make this impossible;
- consider awarding you a degree class higher than the one which your marks would normally entitle you to have.
Post-Deadline Request for Mitigation Form

THIS FORM HAS 3 PAGES

You are strongly recommended to discuss the completion of this form with your Director of Studies. However, the form should be completed and signed by you. The Federation will not accept forms that are completed on your behalf by a third party and, only in exceptional circumstances, will forms submitted on your behalf by an appropriate member of staff in your Federation Institution be acceptable. The form should be returned to the Board of Examiners via the Director of Studies or Office of the Registrar by the appropriate deadline.

Please note that, in accordance with the University of Durham’s procedure for considering serious adverse circumstances (see: http://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/6/2/6/) the completion of this form will not result in any changes to your marks.

This form must be completed to inform the Federation of serious adverse circumstances which may have affected you which are not covered by the Federation's policy on student absence and illness and the associated approach to the consideration of adverse circumstances relating to 'in year' work. These policies can be found in the policy on Student Absence, Illness or Adverse Circumstances of the Cambridge Theological Federation Common Awards Student Handbook.

The purpose of this form is to help you present an appropriate case to show that there were circumstances which:

- were beyond your control; AND
- have seriously affected your study; AND
- led to you failing to perform to full potential in one or more summative assessments, including being unable to submit one or more summative assessments; AND
- these circumstances occurred during the examination period or where the circumstances or their impact could not be drawn to the attention of your Director of Studies 'in-year' for reasons beyond your control.

You must:

1. Complete the form in full supplying any supporting evidence or cross-referring to any evidence already submitted. Only add text in the table(s) provided.

2. Read and sign the declaration below.

Complete the table below when serious adverse circumstances affected your summative coursework or examination. If for good reasons beyond your control or that of your Federation Institution, you were unable to bring these circumstances or the extent of their impact to the attention of your Director of Studies at the time, include the nature of those circumstances as well. Boards of Examiners will support retrospective submissions relating to non-exam assessments only in exceptional circumstances. Students are expected to inform their Director of Studies of their situation at the time in order to receive mitigation in-year. Students should note that the receipt of a mark lower than anticipated is not, in and of itself, sufficient evidence that the impact of adverse circumstances could not be known at the time.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Surname:</th>
<th>Student Forename:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student ID:</td>
<td>Federation House:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree Programme and Level of Study:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of Serious Adverse Circumstances:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During what period have these circumstances occurred? (DD/MM/YY)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please provide the following information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates when problems affected your studies</th>
<th>Details of coursework affected (name of module; title of assignment)</th>
<th>Outline (i) the nature of the problem you were experiencing AND (ii) and how the problem(s) affected your studies AND; (iii) why you were unable to bring your problems to the attention of your Director of Studies at the time they were experienced.</th>
<th>Tutor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Supporting documentation:

a) If you are providing supporting documentation with this form as evidence of your difficulties, list the items below and the number of pages each consists of. You are advised to keep a photocopy of the evidence you submit as this will not normally be returned to you. Guidance on provision of evidence can be found in the Absence, Extensions and Mitigation Policy.

b) If you have already submitted supporting independent evidence which is relevant to this form, list the items below. In such a situation you do not need to submit the documentation again.

Student declaration:

I declare that the information provided in this serious adverse circumstances form is true to the best of my knowledge. By signing this form I declare that I have read and understood the guidance notes accompanying this form and the Federation’s procedure for considering Serious Adverse Circumstances (see the policy on Student Absence, Illness and Adverse Circumstances in the Student Handbook). I understand that providing false information will be regarded as a disciplinary offence by the Federation. I agree to allow the Federation to hold and use this data for the purposes for which it was submitted in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

_____________________________________________________
Signature

_____________________________________________________
Date

In exceptional circumstances your Director of Studies may submit this form on your behalf without your signature. In such cases a note must be attached explaining why this was necessary.

Return this completed form to:

The Common Awards Board of Examiners
c/o The Office of the Registrar
Cambridge Theological Federation
Westminster Bounds
Lady Margaret Road
Cambridge, CB3 0BJ
NOTES ON SERIOUS ADVERSE CIRCUMSTANCES

What do I need to tell my Director of Studies?

If you believe that your work has been seriously affected by circumstances beyond your control you need to provide evidence for the Director of Studies/Office of the Registrar that:

a. you were affected by adverse circumstances;

b. these circumstances were beyond your control – for example, illness or bereavement or reasons of employment;

c. this affected your work significantly because the situation:
   EITHER
   impacted on your performance in an examination
   OR
   coincided with the production of a piece of coursework, when for reasons beyond your control you were unable to bring your circumstances or the extent of their impact to the attention of your Director of Studies at the time
   OR
   seriously affected your studies for a long period which made it impossible for you to ‘catch up’ and perform well in your assessments at the end;
   OR
   a combination of the above;

d. your ‘normal’ standard of work of this sort was at a higher level so that there is reason to believe that you would have done better if you had not experienced your problems.

Note that ‘circumstances beyond your control’ do not include:

· minor ailments and illnesses
· misreading the exam or assessment submission timetable;
· oversleeping;
· pressure of work – you are expected to plan your work to manage such pressures;
· last-minute problems printing out, delivering or electronically submitting coursework – again you should plan ahead to have time to spare.

What sort of evidence is appropriate?

The Director of Studies/Office of the Registrar needs:

a. a clear, concise and honest statement of what the problem was. Your statement should be as concise as possible and certainly no more than 500 words long. However difficult it may be to write it down we can’t help you unless we know the details. Please be reassured that your evidence will be treated in the strictest confidence;
b. an explanation in your own words of what effect the problem had on your work. Everyone reacts differently to what might seem to be the ‘same’ problem and we need to know how it affected you;

c. supporting evidence that your usual performance was better than this. Think about formative work you did for the module at a different time or similar work you have done in other modules.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, this form must be completed and submitted by you. If you can provide independent evidence from a ‘third party’ such as a medical practitioner, a Counsellor or your Director of Studies you should do so. Any supporting evidence you provide should be brief, based on first-hand and contemporaneous knowledge of your circumstances, and be directly relevant to the circumstances you describe. However we will not ignore your form if you don’t have such evidence and we are well aware that in some sorts of perfectly valid situations it is just not possible to provide such evidence. And the fact that you do have independent evidence does not mean that the Board of Examiners will automatically agree with your evaluation of the effect on your work. Remember that we are trying to judge the effect on your work – not whether or not you had a problem.

Note that:

· you cannot expect a third party to supply you with independent evidence of your circumstances retrospectively (for instance, evidence from a doctor if you tell him/her that you ‘were ill’ but did not visit the doctor at the time and have no residual symptoms). The Federation will not normally accept uncorroborated hearsay evidence, whosoever provides it.

· a medical practitioner has the right to make a professional judgement on whether your illness warrants a medical certificate or letter.

· medical practitioners may charge a fee for the provision of medical evidence. It is your responsibility to pay such charges.

How much detail do I need to give?

We want you to provide the information in a clear and succinct way and for this reason we have a word limit of 500. We are not asking you to describe distressing incidents or situations in minute detail. The simple fact (a car accident, a bereavement, etc.) is all you need to say about the actual circumstances. Where you need to give some detail is in the effect of this on your work: were you away from the Federation for a while (in hospital? at home?); did you have medication? If so, did this cause other problems (e.g. side-effects such as making you drowsy so that you couldn’t concentrate)? Did you have other physical problems (e.g. difficulty writing, or sitting for long periods)? Try to concentrate on this information, not on the details of the actual incidents which triggered the problem, because it is this which will enable the Board of Examiners to make an informed judgement of your academic performance.

Do I have to do this every year?
If you have an on-going problem you still have to tell your Director of Studies each year at the point at which your work is affected, in all likelihood the start of the academic year. This is because the effect may be different in different years if the mode of assessment has changed; the difficulties you encounter may have changed in some way too. If your difficulty cannot be mitigated in any year you should submit a Serious Adverse Circumstances form for that year. Remember however that if you have a permanent problem it may be difficult to show evidence that your performance would have been better had you not been experiencing your difficulties. If you are in this situation it is essential that you apply for other kinds of help like an examination concession.

**When should I send in the form?**

You should inform your Director of Studies of any serious adverse circumstances as soon as possible after they occur and normally within 48 hours, but we realise that some problems may affect your ability to complete the form within this period. However you should use the following guidelines to help you determine when a serious adverse circumstance form should be submitted:

a. If you have already completed a self-certification form but the problem named is ongoing during the extension period for summative assessment.

b. If you have encountered serious adverse circumstances to justify requesting a long extension for one or more pieces of summative assessment.

c. If you have encountered serious adverse circumstances that prevented you from completing a self-certification form

d. If you wish to seek acknowledgement of mitigating circumstances that may have affected your performance in a summative assessment already submitted, which you were unable to raise prior to submission.

e. If you experience serious adverse circumstances during the examination period you should tell your Director of Studies as soon as possible and submit the serious adverse circumstances form before the deadline set by the Federation so the form is received in time for consideration by the Board of Examiners.

So if you break your leg in late November/early December you should inform the Director of Studies as soon as possible so that some form of mitigation in relation to any disruption to your coursework/dissertation can be considered at that time. If you later have another problem (say you have to go into hospital during the exam period for your degree programme and miss one or more examinations) you would need to submit a serious adverse circumstances form to cover that.

**What if I’ve already told someone I have a problem?**

You may have declared a disability via your Director of Studies or Disability Support or on your registration form. However such information will not be carried forward to the Board of Examiners because that information alone would not allow the board to judge how your disability has affected your work that year. Therefore, regardless of any adjustments already in place, if you still feel that serious adverse circumstances have or will affect your performance you should submit a Serious Adverse Circumstances form, with evidence that any adjustments did not mitigate the problem.

**Is this really confidential?**
Yes. Obviously some people need to know who you are and what your problem is but we keep this to an absolute minimum. The consideration of your circumstances will be undertaken by a few people in your Federation Institution and the Federation Office. Where the Board of Examiners is considering the circumstances there will be a few people on the Board of Examiners who will know your identity but Boards of Examiners’ meetings are conducted using students’ anonymous exam codes so information about your situation will be passed on to the rest of the board without your name being disclosed and the board as a whole will make a decision based on the run of marks you have received and the facts of your case without needing to know to whom it refers.

What if I need more advice?

If you need further advice consult your Director of Studies.