Dissertations and Research Projects
Student Regulations for 2021-22

1. Do these regulations apply to me?

1. These regulations apply if you are taking 'Dissertations and Research Projects' i.e. extended, in-depth coursework assignments involving research and independent study.

   **Departmentally-managed assessments**

2. Dissertations and research projects are departmentally-managed.
3. Dissertations and research projects may be submitted via Moodle, AssessmentUCL or an alternative digital assessment platform. Your department is responsible for telling you about the specific arrangements for the assessment.
4. Dissertations and research projects are not included in the Central Assessment Timetable. Submission deadlines will be published in module handbooks/ Moodle sites.
5. Departmental assessments should follow these regulations but occasionally it may be necessary to make alternative arrangements e.g. to account for a different digital assessment platform. Departments are responsible for ensuring that any differences are clearly communicated to you.

   **Intercollegiate assessments**

6. These regulations apply if you are a student from another institution who is taking assessments at UCL.
7. If you are a UCL student taking assessments at another institution, you will be subject to that institution’s regulations for those assessments.
2 Preparing for your assessment

1. You must ensure that you are registered on the correct modules, otherwise you will not be able to access the assessment. Your module registrations are viewable in Portico under ‘My Studies’.
2. You must verify your modules on Portico by the deadlines published by UCL Student Records each year.
3. Being registered on the wrong module will not be considered valid grounds for Extenuating Circumstances.
4. You must ensure that your UCL login details and password are up-to-date and not about to expire. Password expiry will not be considered valid grounds for Extenuating Circumstances.

3 Reasonable Adjustments for Dissertations and Research Projects

1. If you have a disability, medical condition or mental health condition, if you are pregnant, or if you are a primary carer, you may be eligible for Reasonable Adjustments, such as an extension or specialist equipment.
2. Adjustments are available to students who have a Summary of Reasonable Adjustments (SORA).
   How to apply
   3. The Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing team can help you complete your application and advise you on gathering any documentary evidence that you might need.
   Deadline for applications
   4. You should apply for a SORA as soon as possible so that we can put support in place for you throughout your time at UCL.
   Extensions
   5. The standard SORA extension for Dissertations and Research Projects is two weeks. However if you have more complex needs which mean that the standard amount of extra time is not suitable, the Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing team may recommend alternative arrangements.
   Extenuating Circumstances and Reasonable Adjustments
   6. Long-term conditions are not usually considered to meet the definition of Extenuating Circumstances because UCL can support you better through Reasonable Adjustments. However there may be times when you do need to use the Extenuating Circumstances procedure on top of your SORA arrangements – for example if you experience a serious worsening of your condition, a newly-diagnosed condition or some other difficulty unrelated to your SORA. If you are unsure of which procedure to use, the Student Support and Wellbeing team can help.

4 Extenuating Circumstances (ECs) affecting Dissertations and Research Projects

1. If you are ill or you experience something sudden, unexpected, significantly disruptive and beyond your control which will have a severe impact on your ability to complete your assessment, you may be eligible for Extenuating Circumstances.
2. Falsification of Extenuating Circumstances is an Academic Misconduct offence. This includes false Self-Certification claims and false evidence. If you make an EC claim which appears to be fraudulent, you will be investigated under UCL’s Student Academic Misconduct Procedures.
   How to apply
   3. Applications must be made via the Extenuating Circumstances procedure. Your Student Handbook or Moodle website should explain where and how to submit a claim.
   4. You must submit your EC claim as soon as possible and no more than one week after the assessment deadline.
Self-certified extensions

5. For Dissertations and Research Projects, the standard mitigation is a two-week extension.
6. Two-week extension claims submitted before the assessment deadline are eligible for Self-Certification.

Other mitigations

7. If a short extension will not provide the support that you need, you can apply for other forms of mitigation, but you will need to provide a doctor's note or other appropriate evidence – you will not be eligible for Self-Certification. This includes:
   a) A longer extension, or
   b) Suspension of the Late Submission Penalties, or
   c) A Deferral of the assessment to the next normal occasion.
8. If, in exceptional circumstances, the above arrangements will not provide adequate mitigation for you, the EC Panel may consider offering you another form of mitigation. Full details can be found in the UCL Academic Manual, Chapter 4, Section 6.9.2: Types of Mitigation.

5 Working on your Dissertation or Research Project

5.1 Assessment brief

1. You must follow the instructions given to you, including:
   a) Which/ how many questions to answer
   b) Word counts or page counts
   c) Diagrams, tables and figures
   d) How to submit handwritten answers or artefacts
   e) File format (the default is PDF unless otherwise specified)
   f) Upload requirements (if applicable).

5.2 Queries about the assessment brief

1. If you have a query about the assessment brief you should contact the Module Convenor for advice. Please note: The Central Assessment Team is not able to answer queries about the assessment brief.

5.3 Illegible scripts

1. You must write clearly in English or the language specified for the assessment.
2. All work submitted for assessment must be legible to the markers. This means that all handwritten answers, typed answers, images, scans and any other documents that you submit must be clear and easy to read.
3. If the markers are unable to read your work, they may refuse to mark your submission and award you a mark of 0.00% / Grade F for that assessment.

5.4 Word count penalties

1. A minimum and/ or maximum word count may be specified as part of the assessment criteria. The assessment brief should tell you whether the word count includes footnotes, bibliographies, appendices, tables, figures etc.
2. Your department may impose penalties for over- and/ or under-writing, such as a deduction in marks. Your department is responsible for ensuring that you are aware of the local regulations.
3. UCL’s regulations can be found in the UCL Academic Manual, Chapter 4: Section 3.13 Word Counts.
6 Maintaining Academic Integrity

1. UCL requires high academic standards in order to maintain trust and confidence in our world-leading research and teaching, as well as the individuals who work and study here. UCL’s Academic Integrity website explains how you can maintain the highest standards in your work.

2. By submitting your assessment, you are confirming that all the work is your own unless collaboration has been specifically authorised by the Module Convenor.

3. All Dissertations and Research Projects will be run through Turnitin®. This is a sophisticated detection system which scans work for evidence of copying and plagiarism against billions of sources worldwide including websites and journals, as well as work previously submitted to UCL and other universities.

4. UCL takes a zero-tolerance approach to contract cheating and any students found engaging with essay-writing or ‘homework help’ websites will be subject to the highest possible sanctions. **UCL will not consider exam stress or any other form of Extenuating Circumstances as mitigating factors for cheating.** If you are experiencing difficulties you are expected to engage with UCL’s Extenuating Circumstances procedures to apply for an extension to give you more time to complete your assessment, or a deferral to submit your assessment at the next normal occasion.

5. **All forms of Academic Misconduct are prohibited.** Academic Misconduct is defined as any action or attempted action that may result in a student obtaining an unfair academic advantage. Penalties for Academic Misconduct include, but are not limited to, a mark of 0.00% Grade F for the component or module concerned and, for the most serious offences, exclusion from UCL.

6. Online Assessment Offences include but are not limited to:
   i. Any use of unauthorised material.
   ii. Any unauthorised communication or attempted communication with other students or third parties in relation to the assessment.
   iii. Discussion or sharing of assessment content with other students or third parties.
   iv. Unauthorised collaboration with other students or third parties.
   v. Copying or attempting to copy from another student’s work.
   vi. Any attempt to confer with or gain access to the script of any other candidate during the period of the assessment.

7. Other applicable forms of Academic Misconduct include but are not limited to:
   a) Plagiarism: defined as the representation of other people’s work or ideas as the student’s own without appropriate referencing or acknowledgement.
   b) Self-Plagiarism: defined as the reproduction or resubmission of a student’s own work which has been submitted for assessment at UCL or any other institution. This does not include earlier formative drafts of the particular assessment, or instances where the department has explicitly permitted the re-use of formative assessments but does include all other formative work except where permitted.
   c) Collusion: defined as the unauthorised collaboration by two or more students on any assessment.
   d) Any attempt to gain access to the assessed coursework of any other candidate with or without the knowledge of the other candidate, unless authorisation to do so has been given by the module convenor.
   e) Falsification: defined as the fraudulent creation, alteration or misrepresentation of data, or any other information. This includes falsification of word count.
   f) Contract Cheating: defined as commissioning a piece of assessment to be carried out by a third party or knowingly using a commissioned piece of assessment.
   g) Falsification of Extenuating Circumstances.
   h) Any conduct that is likely to affect the security of assessments.
   i) Any attempt to tamper with coursework after submission.
   j) Impersonation (including attempted, solicited or attempts at soliciting impersonation) in any form of assessment.
   k) Any other conduct that would give an unfair academic advantage to a student.

8. UCL will investigate and penalise any conduct which is considered to breach UCL’s assessment regulations under UCL’s Student Academic Misconduct Procedures.
7 Handing-in your work

7.1 How to submit

1. In order to protect the integrity of UCL’s assessments:
   a) You must only hand in digital files via the approved digital assessment platform. If you hand in via any other channel your work will not be marked.
   b) Your submission will not count as an Assessable Attempt unless it is fully downloaded to the UCL server i.e. you receive an email confirmation of your successful submission to your UCL email address.

2. If you need to submit artefacts or other physical items, your department is responsible for letting you know about the requirements for submitting these.
3. You may also be asked to submit a hard-copy version of your Dissertation or Research Project. Your department is responsible for letting you know about the requirements for submitting these.

7.2 Uploading digital files

1. The assessment instructions will explain the number and type of documents that you need to upload.
2. If a file type is not specified, you should submit a PDF (Portable Document Format).
3. You may only need to upload one or two small files, but some assessments require multiple files and/or large-format files. You may also be required to take photographs of handwritten answers or convert files to PDF before you can upload them. Make sure that you leave yourself at least 20 minutes for this activity and do not leave handing in until the last few minutes. If you miss the deadline you will receive a mark of 0.00%/ Grade F for the assessment.
4. You should name your files clearly and store them in an easily accessible location.
5. Uploading the wrong files will not be considered valid grounds for Extenuating Circumstances.

7.3 No Upload Window for Dissertations and Research Projects

1. The deadline for Dissertation and Research Project submissions is absolute. There is no additional ‘Upload Window’ because extra time is already built into the nature of the assessment.

7.4 Late submission penalties

1. UCL’s digital assessment platforms will allow you to hand in your Dissertation or Research Project in late. However late submissions will be subject to the penalties in UCL’s Coursework Deadlines and Late Submissions regulations, unless you submit a valid claim for Extenuating Circumstances.

8 Technical issues in Dissertations and Research Projects

8.1 Technical issues

1. Planning, time-management and the meeting of deadlines are part of the personal and professional skills expected of all UCL graduates. As students have a number of weeks or months to complete Dissertations and Research Projects, technical issues will not be considered as valid grounds for missing the deadline, or as valid grounds for Extenuating Circumstances.

8.2 Trouble-shooting in AssessmentUCL

1. The following guidance applies to assessments submitted via the AssessmentUCL platform.
   Multiple Submission Function
2. You can correct most minor problems by using the Multiple Submission Function. This allows you to hand in multiple times before the assessment deadline.
3. To hand in again you will need to withdraw your submission. You will receive a notification to your UCL email address confirming your withdrawal.
4. You will then need to reupload your documents and press the “Click Here to Hand In” button again. You will receive a notification to your UCL email address confirming your new submission.
5. **Any new version will overwrite all previous versions.** The markers will only have access to the last version that you hand in. AssessmentUCL does not retain any previous versions.

   **If you Upload but do not Hand In**

6. If you upload your files but do not press the “Click Here to Hand In” button in time, or you do not receive a confirmation message, the Central Assessment Team should be able to hand in your uploaded files on your behalf. You will need to complete an AssessmentUCL Query Form. Please note: You will not receive a reply immediately.

7. If you have not uploaded any files, the Central Assessment Team will not be able to hand in on your behalf. You must not send your files to the Central Assessment Team or your Department via email or any other channel. Files submitted outside of AssessmentUCL will not be marked.

   **If you cannot solve the problem yourself**

8. If you cannot fix the problem yourself, you can notify us using the AssessmentUCL Query Form.

9. **Please note: You will not receive a reply immediately.** You should therefore do your best to finish and hand in your work.

9. **Deferring Dissertations or Research Projects**

   1. If your Extenuating Circumstances claim is accepted, you may be offered a Deferral without Tuition allowing you to submit your Dissertation or Research Project as if for the first time and without penalty at the next normal occasion.

   2. The ‘next normal occasion’ is usually the Late Summer Central Assessment Period, but your deferral may need to take place at a different time. For example:

      a) Deferrals for Taught Postgraduate Masters Dissertations and Research Projects will need to be submitted by 31 January (for September-start programmes) or by 30 April (for January-start programmes).

      b) If you are submitting an assessment in the Late Summer Central Assessment Period, any deferral of that assessment will normally have to take place in the next Main Summer Central Assessment Period. If you are expecting to progress to another year of study, your Board of Examiners may permit you to ‘trail’ such a deferral under the regulations for Provisional Progression. If this is not possible, you may have to take a year out to complete the deferred assessment.

   3. ‘Without penalty’ means that:

      a) If you defer your first attempt at an assessment, your module mark will be ‘uncapped’ i.e. you will receive the full mark for your work.

      b) If you defer your second attempt at an assessment (i.e. you defer a Resit or Repeat), your module mark will continue to be ‘capped’ at the Pass Mark (i.e. the existing cap will not be removed but you will receive no further penalty).

   4. ‘Without Tuition’ means that you will not attend any further classes or receive any further instruction; you will just retake the assessment. If you have particularly severe circumstances you may be offered the opportunity to take a Deferral with Tuition which means returning next year to re-attend classes.

   5. Full details of the regulations for Deferrals can be found in the UCL Academic Manual, Chapter 4, Section 6.10: Deferred Assessment.

10. **If you do not make an Assessable Attempt**

   1. If you do not make a “Assessable Attempt”, and you do not have valid grounds for making an Extenuating Circumstances or claim, you will receive a mark of 0.00%/ Grade F for that assessment.

   2. You will not be considered to have made an Assessable Attempt if:

      a) You do not submit the assessment by the published deadline.

      b) You submit the assessment but attempt so little of the task that it cannot be assessed.

      c) Your handwritten answers, typed answers, images, scans or any other documents that you upload are illegible.
3. If you receive a mark of 0.00% Grade F for the assessment:
   a) If your module includes multiple components, you may be eligible for Component-level
       Condonement.
   b) If your overall module mark is at least 1.00% Grade E, you may be eligible for Module-level
       Condonement.
   c) If you are not eligible for Condonement, and you have a remaining assessment attempt, you will
       be required to Resit or Repeat the assessment. The mark for any modules successfully
       completed at the second attempt will be capped at the Pass Mark.
   d) If you do not have a remaining assessment attempt you will be required to leave the programme.