



Alternative Assessment

Procedure

This procedure applies to:

- All students on the University of the Built Environment taught programmes
- London School of Architecture students

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Alternative Assessment

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Alternative Assessment

1. Introduction

University of the Built Environment defines an alternative assessment as any assessment that takes a different form to the standard to accommodate individual or groups of student's specific needs. An alternative assessment may be considered on an individual level due to a disability, neurodiversity, or health condition or for a group for example due to religious observance. Reasonable adjustments, for example extra time in computer marked assessments, are not considered alternative assessments and should be arranged as part of the University's duty under the [Code of Practice chapter Neurodiversity, Disability and Long-Term Health chapter \(opens new window\)](#).

An important concept in deciding the appropriateness of an alternative assessment is the competency standards of the assessment, module, or programme. The University defines competency standards as a particular level of competence or ability that a student must demonstrate to be accepted on to, progress within and successfully complete a course or programme of study. Competence standards are defined for each module of study at the University and may differ from the competence standards of the accrediting bodies.

This document details the University of the Built Environment procedure for anyone requesting, approving, and delivering alternative assessments to those that have been set for a particular module.

This procedure sets out:

- the criteria and procedure for applying for an alternative assessment;
- the procedure for approving requests for alternative assessments to be provided;
- the process for completing the alternative assessment; and
- the responsibilities of the members of the University's staff who may be responsible for assessing requests for, and facilitating the provision of, alternative assessments.

2. Purpose

The aim of this procedure is to ensure assessment is consistent, fair, valid, and inclusive. In line with the University's [Code of Practice Chapter on Neurodiversity, Disability and Long-Term Health \(opens new window\)](#), the University is committed to equal education opportunities for all and will endeavour to meet specific needs and circumstances a student may have without compromising the competency standards of individual assessment, module, or course.

Alternative Assessment

Alternative assessments will only be offered in exceptional circumstances where the student's or cohort's needs for assessment cannot be met through:

- the standard assessment offering,
- other reasonable adjustments considered under the [Neurodiversity, Disability and Welfare Procedure \(opens new window\)](#), or
- the [Mitigating Circumstances Procedure \(opens new window\)](#).

The essential characteristic of alternative assessment is that they should ensure that the students concerned are neither unfairly advantaged nor disadvantaged in being able to meet relevant learning outcomes and competency standards are not compromised, thus ensuring that overall academic standards are maintained.

3. Request an alternative assessment

3.1 Neurodiversity, disability, and health

Students who are neurodiverse or have a disability or long-term health condition may be eligible for an alternative assessment. Additionally, the University recognises caring responsibilities can impact a student's ability to complete an assessment. If a student is the named carer of a family member or loved one with a disability or long-term health condition, they may also be eligible for an alternative assessment. In addition to recognised disabilities, the University can make reasonable adjustments for short-term circumstances that have a significant impact on a student's ability to study. This includes short-term health conditions and Pregnancy, Adoption, and Parental Leave.

There may be circumstances where reasonable adjustments cannot be made; in such cases, students can consider applying for mitigating circumstances or a break in learning, as detailed in the Academic Programme Regulations.

Further information about the University's policy on disability and additional needs is outlined in the [Neurodiversity, Disability, and Long-term Health procedure \(opens new window\)](#).

Students requesting an alternative assessment should first discuss their needs with the Disability and Welfare Team to consider all possible reasonable adjustments. If reasonable adjustments to an existing assessment are not sufficient students should make a request for an alternative assessment through raising an enquiry on Student Central.

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An alternative assessment may be considered in exceptional circumstances, where existing assessment options, with reasonable adjustments, continue to present barriers. It is unlikely an alternative assessment will be considered before a student has attempted assessments with reasonable adjustments. As with any adjustment to assessments, alternative assessment arrangements must be reasonable and take account of the equity and parity of assessment practice.

Alternative assessments will only be considered following receipt of appropriate supporting evidence that confirms the impact of a disability, neurodiversity, or health condition on a student's ability to complete an assessment in its standard format. Appropriate supporting evidence is documentation provided by a doctor or appropriate specialist, and to be dated no more than 6 months prior to the assessment. This evidence must be provided no later than 6 weeks prior to the assessment. Late requests for an alternative assessment will not normally be considered unless directly related to a student's disability or health condition.

Upon receipt of evidence, the Disability and Welfare Team will discuss the specific needs with the student and work with the Module Leader and Programme Leader to agree on an appropriate format for an alternative assessment.

Students should be aware that even if evidence is provided confirming the need for an alternative assessment, the University may still determine that an alternative assessment is not appropriate due to academic requirements and competency standards.

3.2 Religious observance or belief

The University respects the rights and religious views of all its students. An alternative assessment may be necessary if the original assessment is time limited and must be taken during a specific time-period, and this clashes with religious observance.

If a student thinks they may need an alternative assessment, they should raise an enquiry on Student Central outlining the assessments which are affected by the religious observance and what dates/times they are unavailable due to religious observance. They must also include supporting evidence from their religious leader (usually in the form of a letter) to confirm that due to strict religious observance they are unable to undertake assessments at the specified time. This must be done no later than 6 weeks prior to the assessment deadline.

Upon receipt of the evidence the Head of Academic Registry, or nominated deputy, will discuss the circumstances with the Module Leader and Programme Leader to agree on whether an alternative assessment is appropriate.

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The University encourages students to make contact as soon as possible with an alternative assessment request. Alternative assessment arrangements must be in place no later than 6 weeks prior to the assessment date. Please note:

- Deadlines for submission of coursework, including projects and dissertations, will not normally be extended due to religious observance and students must schedule in their work accordingly.
- This procedure only covers aspects of religious observance that occur at times known in advance. Other aspects that are unforeseeable (such as the death of a close relative where specified times of mourning are required) should be dealt with through the [Mitigating Circumstances Procedure \(opens new window\)](#).
- Even if an alternative assessment is considered, the University may still determine that an alternative assessment is not appropriate due to academic requirements.

3.3 Factors outside of the University's control

For factors outside the University's control, the Head of School (or nominee) has final approval.

Students should be notified of any changes to how the assessment will take place within 5 working days of the influencing factors becoming known to the University.

In the case of programme closure, the Academic Board determines if alternative assessment is appropriate, in consultation with external examiners. Students should be notified of any changes to how the assessment will take place prior to re-registration for the semester in which the assessment will take place.

4. Procedure for approving alternative assessment provision

If it is decided an alternative assessment is appropriate, the Disability and Welfare Team will work with the relevant Programme Leader and Module Leader to agree a suitable assessment. Once the format has been agreed an alternative assessment proposal will be drafted and final sign-off will be required from the Head of School. Once all the University staff stakeholders are in agreement, the alternative assessment proposal will be sent to the student to sign.

A signed copy of the alternative assessment proposal must be returned by the student within 5 working days of it being sent. Should a signed copy be returned later it may impact the University's ability to provide the alternative assessment.

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Students should be aware that competency standards will differ between programme, module, and assessment, and that an alternative assessment for one assessment may not be appropriate later in their course.

Previous provision of an alternative assessment should not be taken as confirmation of eligibility for future alternative assessments unless specifically agreed between the University and the student.

If an alternative assessment is deemed inappropriate, students will be informed within 10 working days of the request. A decision not to offer an alternative assessment will not prejudice the rights of the student to apply for consideration of their situation under the University [Mitigating Circumstances Procedure \(opens new window\)](#).

Students can appeal any decision not to provide an alternative assessment by following the [Student Appeals Procedure \(opens new window\)](#).

5. Alternative assessment format

The format of alternative assessments will vary on a case-by-case basis depending on each student's specific needs, the learning outcomes and competency standards of the assessment, the administrative burden on the University, and the original format of the assessment. To ensure a consistent and fair approach the following guidelines must be adhered to:

- Wherever possible an alternative assessment must be prepared by the author(s) of the assessment they replace;
- The alternative assessment must be of the same academic standard and must assess the same learning outcomes as those covered by the original;
- The alternative assessment will clearly state any applicable word limit, deadline, or time limit;
- An alternative assessment proposal must be completed for all individual assessments;
- Any competency standards that prevent an alternative assessment must be clearly defined and justified;
- Where possible the alternative assessment should be marked by the Module Leader or other appropriate internal marker; and
- The alternative assessment will be marked in line with the normal marking process using the assessment criteria and moderation will occur as normal.

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- Results will normally be released within the normal timeframes along with all other results for the relating module/programme. However, where this is not possible due to the student's circumstances, results will be listed as Result Not Yet Available (RNYA) until marking and moderation has been completed.

6. Resubmissions and retakes

Generally, the University expects that, where alternative assessments are required, they will be provided for the first time at a first sit or at a retake. If an alternative assessment was not agreed for a first sit or retake but an alternative assessment is requested for the resubmission, it may not be possible to provide due to the shorter timescales for resubmissions. In such circumstances students should be referred to the [Mitigating Circumstances Procedure \(opens new window\)](#) and an alternative assessment should then be considered for any required retakes.

If a student fails with an alternative assessment and is required to resubmit, the alternative assessment arrangements remain the same for the resubmission. If a student fails a module with alternative assessment at resubmission, the student should also be provided an alternative assessment for the retake. However, the format of the alternative assessment should be reviewed, and a new Alternative Assessment Agreement created to reflect the fact a new assessment will have been set for the module.

7. Reporting, monitoring, and review

Alternative assessments should not be seen as the norm and should only be considered in exceptional circumstances. The Disability and Welfare Team should report annually on the number of alternative assessment requests, the total number of alternative assessments provided and their outcomes.

Boards of Examiners must be advised when alternative assessment has been provided on a module and the details of the assessment made available. The University will monitor and review its provision for alternative assessment in upon request from the Board of Examiners, to ensure all students' educational needs are addressed fairly and consistently.

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8. Associated documents

Code of Practice Chapter Neurodiversity, Disability, and Wellbeing.

Mitigating Circumstances Procedure.

External Examining Policy.

Student Appeals Procedure.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion commitment statement.

9. Benchmarking

[University of Worcester – Policy and procedure on inclusive assessment, reasonable adjustments, and alternative assessment arrangements for students with impairments or disabilities](#)

[Liverpool John Moores University – Alternative Assessment Policy](#)

[York St John University – Alternative assessment policy and procedure](#)

[Advance HE Competence Standards and Reasonable Adjustments](#)

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Appendix A

