

## Declaration of Extenuating Circumstances (DEC)

### Faculty of Science Guidelines

Students who miss or need to miss an assessment or evaluation during the **teaching period** should submit the [Declaration of Extenuating Circumstances form](#). **Decisions on whether to approve requested extensions or exceptions are up to the course instructor.** We recommend including a link to the form in your course syllabus, along with any specific course policies you have around missed assessments [N.B. new regulation on final exam weight limit—see next page].

For anticipated or planned absences, students are advised to submit the DEC form at least two weeks prior or within one week of knowing of the need for an absence. For unanticipated absences, students should contact the instructor within 48 hours of the absence. The DEC form also advises students that exceptions are **not** considered retroactively for materials submitted or written.

### Requesting Documentation

The academic regulations state that instructors shall not normally request medical documentation for acute illnesses. If you are dealing with an extended (IE a week or longer) or recurring request where you think documentation may be warranted, please contact Science Advising. You may also request documentation for circumstances outside of acute illness, particularly for planned absences, if you feel the request warrants supportive documentation.

### Decision Considerations

In your view, if a situation is reasonably beyond the student's control or is an acceptable pre-planned absence, the DEC should be approved. You may wish to consider the parameters outlined in the [Deferred Final Examination](#) regulation when making your decision.

### Science Advising DEC support for instructors

The Senior Academic Advisor (Courtenay Kyle) and Acting Associate Dean of Science – Student Affairs & Supports (Laura Weir) are available to support any

questions or concerns you have with the DEC process, including recommendations on decisions and how to best handle an approved extension/exception. We are also available to reach out directly to any student for which you have concerns (health, personal, etc.). This can include students you feel are using the DEC process inappropriately. Although we cannot share specific information on a student's history of DEC requests, we can look into their overall academic engagement to make a recommendation and flag concerns.

## Recommendations for approved extensions/exceptions

Depending on the weight of the assessment/evaluation, there are different ways to accommodate an approved DEC:

### 1. Reschedule midterm or test/extension of submission deadline

Use the [Science Midterm Make-up Exam Invigilation Service](#) to book a new midterm/test time, or if you prefer, you can schedule a new time directly with the student.

- Keep in mind that students may have conflicts with a proposed time and must not miss a scheduled lecture or lab to write a rescheduled assessment. We've added additional times to the service to help mitigate this as much as possible.

### 2. Reweighting of final grade

Bearing in mind [Academic Regulation 8g, h, and i](#), mentioned below, if an extension or rescheduled midterm/test time is not appropriate, you can consider dropping the weight of the assessment from the final grade (for example, if an assignment/midterm was worth 10%, you could change the grading to be out of 90%) or spreading the weight of the assessment into other course components. Many instructors choose to drop lowest grades of a set of multiple assessments (i.e. your course may have 10 quizzes, but you only include the highest 8 grades).

### 3. Transferring weight of assessment into Final Exam

[Academic Regulation 8g, h, i](#): No final examination or single assessment during the final exam period may exceed 40% of the final course grade in Fall and Winter Terms and 50% of the final course grade in Spring and Summer Terms.

Dean of Science approved exceptions to 40% maximum:

- If the student misses a fair opportunity to make up a missed midterm/test, you may then transfer the test weight to the final exam.
- If both student and instructor are in mutual agreement that transferring the missed test's weight to the final exam is acceptable. Be sure to retain an email record of this agreement.

### Support for students who miss a significant amount of coursework

Situations arise when a student misses such a significant amount of work in a course that accommodation through the DEC process is not feasible. Although it will vary from course to course, in Science Advising we typically use two weeks as a benchmark for the amount of time a student may be absent and have a reasonable chance of catching up and succeeding in a course.

If you are dealing with a student situation where you feel this point has been reached, please reach out to Science Advising so we can advise the student of their options, such as withdrawal deadlines and applying for a retroactive withdrawal via the Registration Appeal process.

### Request to Defer a Final Exam (DEF) process

When exceptions are required for exams that fall within the official final exam period, students should submit the [Request to Defer a Final exam form](#). DEF requests are reviewed and approved/declined by the Associate Dean of Science – Student Affairs and Senior Academic Advisor.