



Guide to Extension to Period of Study (‘Double Time’)

guide to double time

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introduction

This guide has been produced and distributed by CUSU, it has not been written or endorsed by the University of Cambridge. In this guide, we intend to present Extension to Period of Study in a way that is accessible to the students who are experiencing it, as students who have experienced it ourselves. The information provided is not presented neutrally - if you are in doubt about anything raised in the guide, you should absolutely refer to the University's policy as the superior source.

The purpose of this guide is to provide an account of the experience of applying for Extension to Period of Study written by students for students. However, we also hope this proves a useful resource for other students and members of staff who are unsure about the process or how to support a student through it. This guide was published in 2019 by the CUSU Part-Time Students' Representative (2018/19) and is accurate at the date of publication. If you have any question regarding the information provided you can contact CUSU's Disabled Students' Campaign (disabled@cusu.cam.ac.uk).

The University of Cambridge's guidance on Extension to Period of Study can be found here: https://www.student-registry.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/alternative_mode_of_assessment_guide_for_users.pdf

what is double time?

'Double Time' is officially referred to by the University of Cambridge as Extension to Period of Study or 'one year over two'. It is colloquially referred to as 'Double Time' by students to distinguish this mode of study from 'part time' study for postgraduate students. The difference between them is that 'Double Time' is a mode of study for undergraduates which is allowed due to personal or medical reasoning, while part time study is not and is considered administratively different in the University's procedures. The term Double Time refers to studying one year over two, though it is possible to extend study differently for different individuals. The term 'Double Time' will be used throughout this guide as the student-facing term for Extension to Period of Study.

'Double Time' is the University's procedure for students to complete their course over a longer period of time e.g. doing a three year course over the period of six years, as a reasonable adjustment for reasons of disability, chronic illness or other compelling personal reasons such as caring responsibilities.

double time at a glance



'Double Time' involves taking your course over a longer period of time.

For example, the ability to split the submission of academic papers for one year into two years of submission. In this example, Year 1 of academic study would be split over 'Year 1A' and 'Year 1B'.

For Tripos parts where there cannot be an even 50/50 split, a decision about the timing of papers will be made on a case by case basis. Generally, attempts are made to make each year approximately equal.

The onus for applying for 'Double Time' is often upon the student to request this mode of study as a reasonable adjustment. An application for 'Double Time' needs to be made through your college as an Alternative Mode of Assessment. The application process can be long, so start as soon as you can. You should provide medical evidence (e.g. from a doctor) and/or a relevant assessment from an appropriate expert, and the support of your college to complete this application. Support for your application is available from the Disability Resource Centre (DRC) <https://www.disability.admin.cam.ac.uk/about-us/contact-us> and the Students' Unions' Advice Service (SUAS) <https://www.studentadvice.cam.ac.uk/contacts/>.



who is double time for?

'Double Time' is for students who are not able to study full time for medical and/or personal reasons. Information from the Disability Resource Centre suggests that Double Time is granted mostly to students with ME or CFS (chronic fatigue syndrome). It is not possible to apply for Double Time before you have officially started an academic course.

If 'Double Time' is needed to support a medical condition, there has to be strong written evidence that the person's condition(s) affect the amount of time they have available to study. Examples of this would indicate that the full workload is not possible, such as: longer sleep requirements, taking longer to complete daily tasks, limited concentration, time spent at medical appointments, etc. 'Double Time' is awarded when other options are not appropriate, so any evidence should clarify that this is the only way for the student to continue their studies.

If 'Double Time' is needed to support other personal reasons, there should be similarly strongly worded evidence to support the application.

As Double Time involves taking your course over a longer period of time, it is not suitable for those who need to take time away from their course completely. This is called 'Intermission' (formally known as Disregarding Terms). For more information about Intermission, see the CUSU Disabled Students' Campaign Guide to Intermission <https://www.disabled.cusu.cam.ac.uk/intermission/>.

procedure for applying to double time

1. Speak to your college tutor.

The first step is to speak to your tutor. As 'Double Time' isn't a common mode of study, some college tutors may not have heard of it and might suggest Intermission instead. It may be that this is a more appropriate avenue for you: be sure to have all of the information you need to make the decision that is right for you. The CUSU Disabled Students' Campaign Guide to Intermission <https://www.disabled.cusu.cam.ac.uk/intermission/> is a helpful tool for this as well as the Exam Access and Mitigation Committee guidance notes for disregarding terms https://www.student-registry.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/guidance_notes_-_disregarding_terms_201819.pdf.

Point your tutor towards the current Code of Practice: Reasonable Adjustments for disabled students (Alternative Modes of Assessment) <https://www.educationalpolicy.admin.cam.ac.uk/supporting-students-learning-and-teaching> which explains the Alternative Modes of Assessment procedure and includes a list of the possible adjustments to exams, including taking one academic year over several years (Appendix 1, point 1). If necessary, tutors and tutorial offices can contact other tutorial offices that have already dealt with 'Double Time' successfully, e.g. Wolfson College, Fitzwilliam College or Emmanuel College.

You may wish to contact your Senior Tutor <https://www.seniortutors.admin.cam.ac.uk/senior-tutors-committee/contact/senior-tutors> or SUAS <https://www.studentadvice.cam.ac.uk/contacts/> for additional support.

2. Obtain supporting medical evidence.

Ask your GP and/or other relevant professionals to write a letter stating in the strongest possible terms that the student needs 'Double Time' in order to not be significantly disadvantaged, and that chronic health issues or personal circumstances would otherwise force them to intermit. They may also include the impact that this would have on the student. Some staff may suggest Intermission as opposed to 'Double Time'. You should look at both of these options and, if 'Double Time' is the most appropriate for you, express clearly why extended study is the most appropriate pathway as opposed to intermission.

For physical disability or reasons of mental health, a diagnosis by a consultant or specialist and the treatment plan is required. Where the reason for request is due to a Specific Learning Difficulty, an educational psychologist report dated post-16 with evidence on students' conditions'.

3. Contact the Disability Resource Centre (DRC).

You should contact the DRC <https://www.disability.admin.cam.ac.uk/about-us/contact-us> for information and support through this process. Medical evidence can be used by the DRC to write a Student Support Document (SSD), which is developed after analysis of specialist evidence and are designed to advise Colleges/Departments/Faculties of recommended support and adjustments for individual disabled students. Other support can be made available if needed, for example, Study Skills sessions.

4. Attend the case meeting.

Once your tutor submits the Alternative Modes of Assessment (AMA) application with the necessary documentation, a case meeting is called. Present are the AMA staff, tutor, Director of Studies, faculty head examiner, and other University staff. The student is only allowed to be present for part of this meeting and can only request the minutes from the parts of the meeting they are present for.

The AMA process has been renewed and new guidance will be issued in the new Academic Year, as well as changes to the application form. In some cases, usually if you have received an AMA in a previous year and are wishing to repeat the allowance with no change to medical status, a case meeting (sometimes referred to as a case conference) is not necessary and could be approved by those who would have been present without the meeting being held. All applications are considered on a case-by-case basis and the guidance notes will indicate that either process may be used, dependent on the application made.

5. Get a response.

It takes at least a few weeks to get a response after this meeting. Make sure you follow this up if needed so that you can change to 'Double Time' as soon as you're able. While awaiting an official response from the University, you should talk to your tutor about what accommodations can be made to ensure your health is not impacted by having to attempt full time study while you wait.

how long will it take?



The length of time between needing and receiving 'Double Time' can be very variable. It is therefore important to organise and counter as much of the time obstacles as you can, as soon as you know that 'Double Time' is the appropriate mode of study for you. There are many factors, including:

- 'Double Time' is a lesser known mode of study so students don't know they can seek it out when they need it
- Some tutors and faculties are unaware of 'Double Time' and who it is appropriate for
- The University can take some time to make its decision after the initial case meeting.



what about my grades?

The current precedent is for assignment and exam grades to be released during the year that the assessment has been taken, e.g. Year 1A grades would be released at the end of Year 1A and not hidden until Year 1B. However, this has not been applied consistently. A Freedom of Information Request (FOI-2018-761) yielded the following information:

For the period 2015/16-2017/18 (the period for which data is held), there were 10 students who received an AMA of taking 1 year over 2. Of those 10 students, 7 received marks at the end of their first year.

If you feel that you have been treated unfairly or not allowed the same adjustments as other students, you are entitled to make a complaint or request a review.





what about fees and loans?

The precedent has been for 'Double Time' students to pay full fees for the first year, and then to receive fee remission (no fees) for their second year, therefore effectively paying half fees each year so that overall the student pays for the amount of education they receive. The University is keen to emphasise that fee remission must be applied for on an individual basis and is not guaranteed or automatic.

Student loans and grants work as normal, provided that the Student Loan Company is kept up to date by your college about you 're-sitting' the year. You should not be living on less money per year, but you will have more student debt if you take out a maintenance loan. Your college tutorial office may not be aware of how to communicate this information to Student Finance. In previous cases, colleges with experience of this (e.g. Wolfson College, Fitzwilliam College and Emmanuel College) have provided advice to other tutorial offices.

If a tuition loan has already been applied for the following academic year, a 'change of circumstances' request needs to be made by the tutorial office to Student Finance to change the year of study and to set fee liability to zero, as per the result of your fee remission request.





where can i get support?



From your college: you can speak to your Tutor, Senior Tutor, Director of Studies, College Disabilities Officer, nurse or anyone else you are comfortable with

From the **Disability Resource Centre**: the DRC is there to support you with anything related to health and disability (email, phone or in person):
<https://www.disability.admin.cam.ac.uk/>

From the **Students' Unions' Advice Service**: among their many services, SUAS can help you find out what adjustments and support you are entitled to, or help you to make a complaint (email, phone or in person):
<https://www.studentadvice.cam.ac.uk/>

From the CUSU PTE Representative for Part Time Students and the **CUSU Disabled Students' Officer**: (disabled@cusu.cam.ac.uk)
<https://www.disabled.cusu.cam.ac.uk/contacts/>

From other students online: the Facebook groups **Cambridge University Disabled Students' Campaign Community** (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/286817838816877/>) and **Cambridge University Double Time Students** (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/172428042427742/>) are great places to get advice from other students in similar situations

From the **CUSU Disabled Students' Community** (<https://disabled.cusu.cam.ac.uk>), which has more information on other health-related issues including about Reasonable Adjustments and Student Support Documents:
<https://www.disabled.cusu.cam.ac.uk/reasonable-adjustments/>

summary of resources

Alternative Methods of Assessment information

<https://www.student-registry.admin.cam.ac.uk/examinations-further-guidance-staff/colleges/examination-arrangements#AMA>

CUSU Disabled Students' Community (DSC):

<https://disabled.cusu.cam.ac.uk>

CUSU DSC Guide to Reasonable Adjustments and Student Support Documents:

<https://www.disabled.cusu.cam.ac.uk/reasonable-adjustments/>

CUSU DSC Guide to Intermission:

<https://www.disabled.cusu.cam.ac.uk/intermission/>

CUSU DSC contact page:

<https://www.disabled.cusu.cam.ac.uk/contacts/>

Disability Resource Centre:

<https://www.disability.admin.cam.ac.uk/>

Examination Access and Mitigation Committee information, including guidance notes and application form for Fee Remission

<https://www.student-registry.admin.cam.ac.uk/about-us/EAMC>

Facebook group Cambridge Uni DSC Community:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/286817838816877/>

Facebook group Cambridge University Double Time Students:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/172428042427742/>

Code of Practice: Reasonable Adjustments (Alternative Modes of Assessment):

<https://www.educationalpolicy.admin.cam.ac.uk/supporting-students-learning-and-teaching>

Students' Unions' Advice Service:

<https://www.studentadvice.cam.ac.uk/>