# Response to request for recommendation under G20.10(c)

**Subject** Request for concession to write exam for [insert course code] at home institution

**CC** Deputy Dean (UG/ PG), Exams Office (Anthea Williams), other Faculty if course not FoH

Dear Mr/ Ms

The Dean has considered your request for a concession to write the [insert course code] exam at your home institution/ university and I regret to inform you that he will not be making a recommendation to the Vice-Chancellor in support of your request.

The University requires that all students attend for the full semester (which includes the exam session) and that all exams be written at the University with the entire class taking the exam at the scheduled time and venue.

Concessions to write at venues other than those that are scheduled are normally only awarded on exceptional or compassionate grounds, such as injury, illness or bereavement.  The Dean considers that this request does not reflect exceptional circumstances which are unforeseen or beyond your control and does not find cause for granting this concession.

Yours sincerely,

# Response to request to sit exam at home institution without deferred exam

Dear

I am writing with in response to your request for permission to sit your exams at another venue.

While I can understand the position that you have put forward, it is unfortunately not within my gift to hear this appeal or alter the outcome.

The University’s regulations are clear with respect to examination. All students enrolled in a course must attend for the full duration, including the exam period (i.e. for the full semester). The exams are scheduled by course (rather than student/ participant) and students are required to sit or take the exam at the University.

It is recognised that (i) circumstances will intervene which make it impossible for a student to take a scheduled exam and (ii) that it is not always reasonable for a student to take the exam at the University. The regulations make provision as follows:

1. Where a student is unable to write a final exam for medical reasons, or s/he has religious or political objections, or for other good cause, s/he must apply for a deferred examination. Deferred examinations are normally held in January of the following year. Applications for deferred exams are made directly to the Examinations Office (part of the Registrar’s Office) and must be accompanied by supporting/ substantiating documentation. Requests for deferred exams are considered by the institutional Deferred Exams Committee, which will take a decision on whether deferral is warranted with reference to (a) the (substantiated) reasons offered by the student and (b) the University’s regulations.
2. Where a deferred exam has already been awarded, it is recognised that it may not be possible or reasonable for a student to return to write the exam during the deferred examination session. The regulations thus specifically allow for an international semester study abroad student to seek permission to write the deferred exam at her/his home institution instead.

Deferred exams are usually awarded where there are compelling medical or compassionate grounds. So students who fall ill, sustain serious injury, or suffer a bereavement/ death in the near family would be considered for a deferred exam.

In very exceptional circumstances, the regulations allow for the Vice-Chancellor to give permission for a student to write an exam at another venue without first having been awarded a deferred exam. This authority rests with the Vice-Chancellor and is not at the discretion of the Dean or the Faculty (although a recommendation may be sought). My understanding is that these appeals are typically entertained on the same grounds as those for which deferred exams are awarded. For instance, the Dean may recommend to the Vice-Chancellor that an SSA student who has suffered a bereavement during the semester, but who is eligible to write the exam, be supported in returning home early and that should they feel able, they be allowed to sit the exam at their home institution on the same day, date and time as the scheduled exam in Cape Town.

Without wishing to overwhelm you with all regulations for exams, I have included excerpts from the General Rules and Policies handbook at the bottom of this email (the full handbook is available on the UCT website).

I hope this helps clarify. While I understand why you want to write your exams in the States, the Faculty hasn’t the authority to grant this concession. I will of course notify the Dean and draw his attention to the appeal. A copy will also be held on file.

Yours sincerely,

# Response to request for info on writing elsewhere

Dear

I understand that you are seeking advice and guidance on the writing of exams at a venue other than that scheduled for the rest of the class. Provision for this under the University’s regulations are very narrowly circumscribed. The General Rules and Policies handbook states:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *G20.10* | *Except by the permission of the Senate all examinations must be written at the University. Senate has authorised:* | | |
|  | *(a)* | *Faculties to schedule examinations outside of Cape Town in the case of:* | |
|  |  | *(i)* | *distance-mode courses;* |
|  |  | *(ii)* | *block-release mode course where a significant proportion of a class is ordinarily resident elsewhere; and* |
|  |  | *(iii)* | *blended-mode courses.* |
|  | *(b)* | *Deans to allow international semester* ***study abroad students*** *to write supplementary or deferred examinations at their home institutions; and* | |
|  | *(c)* | *The Vice-Chancellor to permit exceptions to this rule in exceptional circumstances.* | |

While it is possible to seek permission, we do not encourage this and will only offer a recommendation in support of the request where the circumstances are exceptional and considered to be beyond your control. The reason is two-fold:

1. In the interests of fairness and consistency, it is important that all students be offered the same opportunities and be held to the same requirements. The University’s regulations stipulate that students must attend all scheduled meetings for each course for which they are registered, and this includes exams. Allowing students to make their own examination arrangements compromises this consistency and potentially undermines the University’s attendance requirements. The Dean (or his nominee) will give very careful consideration to this when considering applications for a concession.
2. Where a concession is granted on the grounds of exceptional circumstances, it is restricted to the venue. It does not confer permission to write the exam at another time. As such, you would be expected to write the exam at the same time and on the same date as the rest of the class and no concession can be given for the impact on the local time of the exam arising from time zone differences. It could be necessary for you to sit the exam at 03:00 (am) local time, or at a time which would necessitate time away from your work/ internship.

In view of this, we strongly urge you to make arrangements such that you are able to fulfil the attendance requirements of the course by making yourself available for the scheduled exam. If you are unable to do so, and are able to offer compelling evidence of circumstances beyond your control that place it beyond your ability to attend the course for its full duration (including the exam), the Dean may consider supporting a request to the Vice-Chancellor for permission to write at a venue other than that scheduled for the rest of the class.

Were you to be given such permission, it would be incumbent on you to return to your home institution, and find and pay for an exam invigilator (proctor) who would need to undertake to be present throughout, and invigilate, the exam on the date and at the time (South African Standard Time) that it is written at UCT.

Regards,

# Response to request for info on writing elsewhere (alternative text)

Generally, the Faculty does not support students in seeking concessions to write their exams elsewhere. It believes that special arrangements of this nature undermine the spirit and letter of the SSA programme, which is clear about the dates that SSA students are required to attend the University. Such arrangements also potentially place students sitting the exams for the same course at a disadvantage by offering incoming SSA students special dispensations which are not available to all students registered for the course and which we would not entertain for full degree studies students. Examinations are a key component of courses and the requirement that students sit them in a consistent and regular manner is central to safeguarding the academic standards of the Faculty’s provision.

Students unable to sit the exam with the rest of the class for medical or compassionate reasons, are encouraged to defer their exam and sit it during the deferred exams session (which is normally scheduled for January of the following year). But it is rare for a concession to be given for other reasons.

# General rules and policies - extracts

**Rules relating to examinations**

**Examination sessions and class tests**

G20.1 The University examination sessions are held towards the end of the first and second semesters in each year. Supplementary and deferred examinations are normally held in January but may, in certain cases, be held at another time agreed to by the departments concerned.

NOTE: Students who have religious objections to writing class tests on particular days during the year should notify the lecturers concerned of the days in question as soon as possible after the beginning of the academic year. In the case of this occurring in relation to formal examinations see G28.2. Senate does not undertake to reschedule tests to accommodate religious observances. See also “Rules on Conduct for Students” in this handbook.

G20.10 Except by the permission of the Senate all examinations must be written at the University. Senate has authorised:

(a) Faculties to schedule examinations outside of Cape Town in the case of:

(i) distance-mode courses;

(ii) block-release mode course where a significant proportion of a class is ordinarily resident elsewhere; and

(iii) blended-mode courses.

(b) Deans to allow international semester study abroad students to write supplementary or deferred examinations at their home institutions; and

(c) The Vice-Chancellor to permit exceptions to this rule in exceptional circumstances

**Deferred final examinations**

G27.1 Senate may allow a student to write a deferred examination where he or she is unable to write a final examination for medical reasons, or has religious objections, or political objections, or other good cause for not writing on the scheduled day or days. The granting of this permission is entirely at the discretion of Senate, irrespective of the grounds (including medical) on which the application is made. No deferred examination may be granted for a supplementary examination or examination without attendance. If a student is unable to sit the supplementary examination for any reason, the supplementary examination is forfeited and the original result stands. If a student is unable to sit the deferred examination on the appointed day, the result will be AB. The exam cannot again be deferred.

G27.2 Senate:

(a) will accept that, where a student has obtained a duly performed certificate for a course, he or she has met the test for having performed adequately for his or her application to be considered on the grounds advanced, without further consideration of his or her academic performance.

(b) will not grant permission to a student to write a deferred examination in a course in which he or she has been refused a duly performed certificate. If permission is granted and a duly performed certificate is subsequently refused, the permission will lapse.

(c) may refuse permission to a student who has shown unsatisfactory progress in a course for which no duly performed requirement is set.

G27.3 A student who has not heard the decision on his or her application by the date of the examination:

(a) should take the examination;

(b) shall, if he or she takes the examination, retain the result if the deferment is refused; and shall lose the result if the deferment is granted.

NOTE: Where a student writes the examination and hears after writing that he or she is granted the deferment, the grant of the deferred examination stands and the result of the examination written may not be substituted. A pass result for an examination written will not be considered grounds for an appeal against the decision to grant the deferment.

G27.4 A student who is granted a deferred examination and has been informed of this before the examination may nonetheless elect to take the examination. If he or she takes the examination he or she must lose the grant of the deferred examination.

**Deferred examinations for reasons of illness or other good cause**

G28.1 The following rules apply:

(a) A student who by reason of illness before, at the time of, or during an examination, or a recurring medical complaint, or a history of illness, or a physical disability, or other good cause has been, or will be, unable to take an examination, may apply for permission to take a deferred examination.

(b) Any such application must be submitted to Student Records Office, Level 4, Masingene Building, Middle Campus on the prescribed form (obtainable from the Student Records Office or the website), not later than seven days after the day scheduled for the examination concerned, supported by a medical certificate or other documentary evidence.

NOTE: Students who attended the scheduled examination cannot apply for a deferred examination after the scheduled examination except in the circumstances detailed in G28.1(d).

(c) The production of a medical certificate will not necessarily be sufficient to secure the granting of a deferred examination.

(d) Illness during an examination will only be considered if the student shows: that he or she went directly from the examination venue to the Student Wellness Service to report the illness; or that he or she was unable to do so.

(e) A recurring medical complaint or a history of illness, or a physical disability will only be considered if the student has reported the complaint, the history, or the disability to the Student Wellness Services at least three weeks before the day scheduled for the examination concerned and has satisfied the Student Wellness Service that every effort is being made to avert a recurrence of the complaint or illness, or overcome the disability.

(f) Illness, or unfitness to take an examination, caused by taking drugs of any kind except on the advice of a medical practitioner, may be rejected as grounds for the granting of a deferred examination.

(g) A serious illness or the death of a near relative at the time of an examination may be accepted as good cause.

(h) A period of suspension, resulting from an order by the Vice-Chancellor or nominee in terms of rule DJP3, may be accepted as good cause if:

(i) Senate finds that the student’s preparation for, or the writing of, the examination has been materially hindered by the suspension; and

(ii) the student is not charged with any offence, or

(iii) the student is charged and is acquitted, or found guilty of a lesser offence than charged for which, in the view of Senate, a suspension order would not have been justified. (In deciding whether the suspension order would have been justified Senate may consult the presiding officer of any court which dealt with the matter).

**Deferred examinations on grounds of religious objections**

G28.2 The following rules exist:

(a) A student who objects on religious grounds to taking an examination on the day specified in the examination timetable, may apply for permission to take a deferred examination.

(b) Any such application must be submitted on the prescribed form (obtainable at the Student Records Office/UCT website), not later than seven days after the final examination timetable is published.

(c) Any such application must be supported by: a certificate from the student’s minister of religion confirming that he or she is an observing member of the minister’s congregation and that his or her religious convictions prevent him or her from taking an examination on the day, or days in question; and a certificate from the head of department that the head of department has been consulted and informed of the application.

**Deferred examinations on grounds of political objections**

G28.3 The following rules exist:

(a) A student who, in exceptional circumstances objects on grounds of political conviction or conscience to taking an examination on the day specified in the examination timetable may apply for permission to take a deferred examination.

(b) Any such application must be submitted on the prescribed form (obtainable from the Student Records Office/UCT website) not later than ten days before the examination.

(c) Any such application must be supported by a statement showing why he or she believes there are exceptional circumstances, and why him or her, objects to taking the examination on the day, or days, in question.