Guidelines for requesting ‘Exceptional Approval’ for actions notwithstanding UoL’s Ordinances, Regulations and Codes of Practice
Approved 30th August 2016

General Principles:
In exceptional circumstances, a School/Institute may consider it appropriate to request approval for actions relating to an individual student that are notwithstanding the University’s (hereafter referred to as UoL) Ordinances, Regulations and Codes of Practice. In making application the School/Institute must carefully exercise their academic judgment on an individual case-by-case basis taking into account the student’s academic progress. A request is not a matter of student choice i.e. only a School/Institute is permitted to submit a request based on their consideration of the individual circumstances.

In discussing the circumstances with a student, Schools/Institutes should make it clear to the student that a request may not be approved by UoL. They should also advise the student of any potential financial and academic implications; the School/Institute should consult the Fees Support Team in SAS if they are unclear on the financial impact. The student must agree in writing to any financial outcomes associated with the request prior to that request being sent to the Faculty; the School/Institute must confirm on the form that this has occurred.

As the circumstances must be exceptional it is most unlikely that a second further application would be approved on the same grounds unless it was demonstrated that there was an evidenced marked deterioration in the circumstances (e.g. health-related).

Requests for approval must be made prior to any deadlines e.g. the maximum registration period for the award for a student. Normally retrospective requests will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the exceptional circumstances prevented the request being made prior to the deadline. The timing of requests must take into account the academic coherency of the student’s studies e.g. it would not normally be appropriate to make a request for extension of a maximum period of registration to permit a student to submit their dissertation when the student has not yet completed their taught modules and has not yet commenced their dissertation.

A Pro-Vice-Chancellor (P-V-C) or nominee (Associate P-V-C), on behalf of Senate, will exercise their academic judgment in carefully considering the request. They may consider that it is in the best interests of the student to not approve the application, e.g. where it might impose a substantial burden on the student for their future study. Parity across the whole student body will also be carefully considered.

There is no right of appeal against a decision not to approve the request or a conditional approval.

Criteria:
To submit a request the following criteria must be met:

1. a) Extenuating circumstances must be evidenced and the burden of proof required is the same as for any claim for extenuating circumstances for taught or PGR programmes in accordance with the Appendices to the CoPA or PGR CoP;

Or

b) It must be demonstrated that errors had been made by UoL (e.g. the Faculty or School/Institute) or its partners (eg Laureate or during study abroad), that require remedy.

2. That the normal rules would be disadvantageous for the individual student, given the particular circumstances.
3. That the request, if approved, does not create an unreasonable advantage to the individual student over other students.

Procedure:
The request must be made as follows:

1. The School/Institute must complete the request form and send it with the attached evidence to the Faculty Student Experience Manager (FSEM) for review.

2. The form must be fully completed by the School/Institute i.e. should specify the correct Ordinance (in place at the time of the student’s registration) or Code of Practice (usually the one in place at the time of request) and the relevant section. A copy of the Programme Specification must be provided if appropriate. If the request requires specific action regarding individual modules the module codes should be specified on the form. Where an extension to registration is requested, the form must always specify the requested end date and not the ‘from’ date; in a number of cases where only the ‘from’ date is supplied with a request e.g. ‘for 6 months extension from …’ the end date is not always clear, especially when interruptions to study are involved. The approval, when granted, is for the new permitted end of registration date.

3. The FSEM will review the request, ensure that the form is fully completed and appropriately evidenced and then endorse/not endorse the request.

4. The FSEM will send the documentation to the Academic Compliance Team (ACT) in Student Administration and Support for recording and recommendation to the P-V-C.

5. Having recorded the request and ensured that all relevant documentation has been submitted, the ACT will make recommendation to the appropriate P-V-C either to approve, conditionally approve or not approve the request and this will be recorded on the request form.

6. The P-V-C will approve, not approve or conditionally approve the request and this will be recorded on the request form.

7. The ACT will formally write to the Faculty (copied to the appropriate colleagues in SAS) advising them of the P-V-C’s decision. The Faculty will then notify the School/Institute of the outcome, who will then notify the student in writing accordingly. If the approval is conditional it is the responsibility of the School/Institute to notify the student of these conditions.

Useful weblinks:
Student Administration and Support for the weblink to this document and the request form:
https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/student-administration/student-administration-centre/policies-procedures/

Corporate Governance and Support Office (for Ordinances):
https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/corporate-governance-and-support-office/calendar/

Academic Quality Support Division for the Code of Practice on Assessment for taught programmes:
https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/aqsd/academic-codes-of-practice/code-of-practice-on-assessment/ and the
PGR Code of Practice and Appendices
https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/aqsd/academic-codes-of-practice/pgr-code-of-practice/