

In preparation for the opening of our I-Grade system this Friday, we would like to bring to your attention the changes to how we will support students who have encountered issues related to COVID-19 that have impacted on your ability to complete your assessments.

This communication supersedes any other communication in relation to the I-Grade process during COVID-19.

An I-Grade is of benefit when you are not able to complete all the assessments for a module during the normal semester timelines. An I-Grade provides you with the opportunity to undertake the assessment(s) again over the summer with no academic penalty. The requirements to clear an I-Grade are set at module level and as such will be available from your module coordinator.

The I-Grade process is designed to support students who find themselves in an immediate crisis and, where relevant, takes actions to avert recurrence. Our normal Academic Regulations require that a student has either engaged with, and has the support from, our professional services (Counselling, Medical, or Chaplaincy) or has submitted adequate third-party evidence to those professional services for consideration.

However, to support those of you who find yourselves in an immediate crisis due to COVID-19 and, where relevant, have taken reasonable action, the institution has created an I-Grade which covers all non-health, non-counselling, and non-chaplaincy issues related specifically to COVID-19.

Applications for all I-Grades

All applications must be submitted through the online I-Grade portal here - <https://ulsites.ul.ie/studentaffairs/i-grade-applications>. The I-Grade portal will open on Friday 1st May at 1200 and close promptly on Wednesday May 20th at 1700, which is five days after the final deadline for assessment submissions.

All applicants must complete all sections of the application process regardless of which category of I-Grade you are selecting. The four categories available are – Student Health Centre, Counselling Department, Chaplaincy Department, or COVID-19 Exceptional Application.

When submitting an application for consideration under any of the categories you will be required to provide some basic information – this includes your current year of study, the current semester, and more importantly the modules your application will cover. The portal will allow you to add more than one module using the 'Insert Module' option.

The University I-Grade Committee will meet to review all I-Grade applications after the end of semester. You will be able to view whether your I-Grade application was approved when your semester two results are published.

The New COVID-19 Exceptional I-Grade

To support those of you who may find yourselves in an immediate crisis due to COVID-19 and, where relevant, have taken reasonable action, the institution has created an I-Grade which covers all **non-health, non-counselling, and non-chaplaincy** issues related specifically to COVID-19. This category may cover, for example, students with a change in any home care arrangement, an inability to engage in remote assessment due to a change in personal circumstances, inability to access LENS related learning supports remotely, or students who lack access to a digital infrastructure with no alternative assessment mode (it should be noted that this list is indicative only). For the avoidance of doubt this category does not include any health-related issues pertaining to COVID-19, in this instance please use the Student Health Centre I-Grade Application.

Before making your application, you will also be asked to certify that your application has been made in good faith and is a truthful and accurate representation of the facts at this time.

When making an application under the COVID-19 category you will be requested to enter the reason why you are submitting this application for consideration, this must include the full details of the COVID-19 related issue and reference any third-party certification that supports the application. There is no need to submit copies of any third-party certification to the University at this stage but you should retain copies for future use if required. Where no third-party certification is available it is vitally important to state that you are **self-certifying**.

Changes to the Student Health Centre I-Grade Application

Due to an unprecedented call on our front-line healthcare workers, the University is keen to minimise the impact of our internal processes on the countries health system and services. As such, where you are submitting an application for a Student Health Centre I-Grade for consideration and you do not already have third-party certification that supports the application, there is no requirement to seek such certification. The application must include the full details of the medical related issue and, where available, reference any third-party certification that supports the application. There is no need to submit copies of any third-party certification to the University at this stage but you should retain copies for future use if required. Where no third-party certification is available, it is vitally important to state that you are **self-certifying**.

For the avoidance of doubt this category includes health related issues pertaining to COVID-19, for all non-health related COVID-19 issues please use the COVID-19 Exceptional Application.

The Chaplaincy and Counselling I-Grade

There have been no changes to either the Counselling Department or Chaplaincy Department I-Grades. Both services continue to operate remotely and both services will require that a student has either engaged with, and has the support from, the relevant professional services; this may include the requirement to submit adequate third-party evidence for consideration. It should be noted that if you make a submission without having engaged directly with the Counselling Department or Chaplaincy Department your application will be rejected.

Summary

The University will support our students who find themselves in crisis during these difficult times. It is important that you engage with the process as outlined above in a timely manner and be sure to read the application process outlined on the application portal when considering an application. The regulations pertaining to the I-Grade process are covered within section 4.2.3 of our Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures which is available here - <https://ulsites.ul.ie/executive/academic-council-policies-procedures>