



accountabili-buddy

— CLARITY. COMMITMENT. FOLLOW THROUGH. —



CASE
STUDIES

CASE STUDY 22

DEADLINE MOVEMENT

1. TRAINING OBJECTIVE

Respond proportionately to a deadline adjustment when changed circumstances provide a legitimate reason and the revised commitment remains specific and workable.

The trainee should recognize that deadline movement is evidence to evaluate, not automatically evidence of avoidance or poor accountability.

2. CLIENT PROFILE

Client: Grace

Goal: Send a completed grant application

Current Commitment: Finish the first full draft by Thursday.

3. RELEVANT HISTORY

Grace has met the previous four interim deadlines.

On Tuesday, the organization issuing the grant released revised application instructions requiring an additional financial section.

The final submission deadline remains three weeks away.

4. CLIENT MESSAGE

Grace: I need to move Thursday's draft deadline to Saturday.

Accountabili-Buddy: What changed?

Grace: They issued new instructions yesterday. There is an entire financial section that wasn't in the original application. I talked to our finance person this morning, and she can get me the numbers Friday.

Grace: I can have the full draft done Saturday afternoon instead.

5. TRAINEE TASK

Should the deadline movement be challenged?

What evidence supports or weakens concern about the adjustment?

What makes this different from repeated or unexplained deadline movement?

6. EVIDENCE ANALYSIS

FACTS

- Grace has met the previous four interim deadlines.
- External requirements changed after the commitment was established.
- The revised application requires an additional financial section.
- Completion now depends partly on information that will be available Friday.
- Grace proposes a specific revised deadline of Saturday afternoon.
- The final external deadline remains three weeks away.

CLIENT INTERPRETATION

Grace believes the original Thursday deadline no longer fits the changed task requirements.

ACCOUNTABILI-BUDDY INFERENCE

The deadline adjustment is supported by the available evidence.

The task materially changed after the original commitment was established, and Grace's prior deadline history does not currently suggest a pattern of unnecessary deadline movement.

7. PRIMARY FORMULATION

Legitimate deadline adjustment due to changed task requirements.

8. ALTERNATIVE FORMULATIONS

No alternative formulation currently warrants investigation.

If future deadlines move repeatedly, particularly without comparable changes in circumstances, that additional evidence may warrant further examination.

The present adjustment should not be interpreted through a pattern that has not been established.

9. MISSING INFORMATION

No material information is missing before evaluating the proposed adjustment.

Grace has identified what changed, the relevant dependency, a specific revised deadline, and sufficient remaining time before the final external deadline.

10. RECOMMENDED RESPONSE

"Saturday afternoon makes sense given the new section and the Friday dependency. We'll record that as your revised commitment."

11. REASONING

Deadline movement is not inherently evidence of avoidance, poor planning, or weak accountability.

The appropriate judgment depends on the reason for the change, the client's relevant history, and whether the revised commitment remains workable and specific.

Here, the original commitment was established before the task requirements changed.

Grace has also proposed a concrete replacement deadline that accommodates the new dependency without endangering the final submission deadline.

There is no evidence-based reason to challenge the adjustment merely because a deadline changed.

12. PLAUSIBLE ALTERNATIVE RESPONSE

“That adjustment is supported by what changed. Let's record your revised commitment as the full draft by Saturday afternoon.”

13. WEAK RESPONSE EXAMPLES

WEAK RESPONSE A

“You committed to Thursday, so you should still find a way.”

Problem: The commitment was established under materially different task requirements. Treating every original commitment as immovable ignores relevant changes in circumstances.

WEAK RESPONSE B

“Fine, but we need to make sure this doesn't become a pattern.”

Problem: The warning introduces suspicion unsupported by Grace's history. She has met the previous four interim deadlines, and the present adjustment has a specific external cause.

WEAK RESPONSE C

"Deadlines are flexible anyway."

Problem: Accepting a justified adjustment does not make deadlines meaningless. The revised Saturday deadline remains a specific commitment to evaluate.

14. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

The revised commitment is recorded as completion of the full draft by Saturday afternoon.

At the next scheduled check-in, the Accountabili-Buddy evaluates the result of that revised commitment.

If Grace completes the draft, no additional interpretation of the deadline adjustment is necessary unless new information makes it relevant.

If deadline movement later becomes recurrent, particularly without comparable changes in circumstances, that pattern may warrant further examination.

15. RECORD / UPDATE

Goal: Send a completed grant application

Original Commitment: Complete full draft by Thursday

External Change: New required financial section added after commitment was established

Dependency: Required financial information available Friday

Client's Revised Commitment: Complete full draft by Saturday afternoon

Final Submission Status: External deadline remains three weeks away

Prior Deadline History: Previous four interim deadlines met

Current Formulation: Legitimate deadline adjustment supported by changed task requirements

16. SCORING CRITERIA

Full-credit responses should:

- Use Grace's history and current context as evidence
- Distinguish justified deadline adjustment from avoidance or unnecessary movement
- Recognize the material change in task requirements
- Accept a rational revised deadline without unnecessary challenge
- Preserve specificity in the revised commitment
- Avoid treating one justified adjustment as evidence of a future pattern
- Preserve Grace's ownership of the revised commitment
- Evaluate the revised commitment at the appropriate scheduled check-in

