

Section 13 – Exceptional Circumstances

13. Provisions for Exceptional Circumstances

13.1. Exceptional Circumstances Explanation

- 13.1.1. The University recognises that there are times when students will encounter difficulties during their course of study and provisions are made as outlined in this section. In all cases, students should seek academic advice as soon as possible. Penalties may be applied to students' marks where students fail to meet agreed submission deadlines (see section 6.3 – Penalties for Late Submission of Assessment) and they have not applied for an extension or mitigation as appropriate.
- 13.1.2. An extension allows a student more time to complete a coursework assignment.
- 13.1.3. Mitigation allows a student a further resit without penalty if they fail an assessment or do not submit.
- 13.1.4. Students who have their circumstances recognised via an Individual Support Plan may make use of the provisions detailed in this section if the ISP indicates that this is available.

13.2. Self-certification

- 13.2.1. Students are able to apply for an extension or mitigation by self-certifying that they have circumstances which affect their ability to undertake the assessment. Self-certifying means that evidence does not have to be provided, although the University reserves the right to request this where it is considered that the request is not genuine.
- 13.2.2. A total of three self-certifications can be made per Academic Year. Each self-certification request can be for either an Extension or Mitigation.
- 13.2.3. The three self-certifications are not cumulative across the course of study. This means if you use three self-certification requests in one Academic Year you are still able to submit further self-certification requests in future academic years.
- 13.2.4. A student may choose whether to apply for extension or mitigation on a self-certification basis or to submit a request and provide evidence, which would not then count as one of your three self-certifications.

13.3. Extensions

- 13.3.1. Students are responsible for submitting their assessments on time.
- 13.3.2. Where students have good reason to require an extension to a deadline for coursework submission, they may self-certify for an extension on up to three occasions, provided that they have not used these opportunities by self-certifying for mitigation
- 13.3.3. A student is free to decide whether to use a self-certification opportunity for Extension, or to submit an extension request with supporting evidence for consideration by Academic Registry, which would not then count as one of your three self-certifications.
- 13.3.4. An application for an extension to be considered by Academic Registry must be made

prior to the original submission deadline and the work then submitted as soon as possible, up to 10 calendar days after the original deadline. Where this process is followed, and the extension is agreed, the work submitted late following an extension request to Academic Registry will be graded with an uncapped mark.

13.3.5. An application for an extension with supporting evidence to be considered by Academic Registry must be made **prior to the original submission deadline** and the work then submitted as soon as possible, up to 10 calendar days after the original deadline. Where this process is followed, and the extension is agreed, the work submitted late following an extension request to Academic Registry will be graded with an uncapped mark.

13.3.6. Work submitted late without an extension will be considered as follows:

- a) Up to a maximum of 10 calendar days from the original deadline: work will be marked and the assessment mark will be capped at the pass mark for the element of assessment.
- b) If the assessment is late by over 10 calendar days, the piece of work will be deemed a non-submission.

13.4. Mitigating Circumstances

13.4.1. Mitigating circumstances are circumstances that are outside a student's control which may negatively impact a student's ability to undertake or complete any assessment, such that the assessment submitted would not be a true reflection of the student's capabilities in normal circumstances.

13.4.2. Examples of circumstances likely to be accepted*:

- Serious short-term illness or injury
- Worsening of an ongoing illness or disability, including mental health conditions
- Symptoms of an infectious disease that could be harmful if passed on to others
- Death or significant illness of a close family member or friend
- Unexpected caring responsibilities for a family member or dependant
- Significant personal or family crises leading to acute stress
- Witnessing or experiencing a traumatic incident
- A crime which has had a substantial impact on the student
- Accommodation crisis such as eviction or the home becoming uninhabitable
- An emergency or crisis that prevents the student from attending an exam or accessing an online assessment
- A technical problem that prevents the student from accessing online teaching or assessment
- Safeguarding concerns

*As outlined by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

13.4.3. Examples of circumstances likely to be excluded*:

- Holidays, house moves or other events that were planned or could reasonably have been expected
- Minor illness such as common colds or hay fever, unless the symptoms are particularly severe
- Assessments that are scheduled close together
- Misreading the exam timetable
- Poor time management
- Minor transport disruption

- Computer or printer failure where the student should have backed-up their work
- Normal exam stress
- Minor life events, unless the circumstances have had a disproportionate impact

Note: The above examples are proposed by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator, for illustration only and not intended to be definitive or exhaustive.

- 13.4.4. Students are responsible for presenting themselves for assessment and examinations at the appropriate times and venues, and submitting relevant information on mitigating circumstances where required.
- 13.4.5. Where mitigation is requested or self-certified, the student is responsible for seeking academic advice and for considering the impact of the mitigation on their overall assessment load and on their progression through the course of study.
- 13.4.6. Students may apply for mitigation through self-certification for up to three attempts provided they have not used these opportunities by self-certifying for extensions.
- 13.4.7. A student is free to decide whether to use a self-certification opportunity or to submit a Mitigation request for consideration by Academic Registry.
- 13.4.8. Where a student has self-certified for an extension, there is no opportunity to apply for self-certified mitigation. However an application for mitigation consideration may still be made to Academic Registry.
- 13.4.9. Evidence is not required to be submitted with a self-certification, but it must be supplied if requested.
- 13.4.10. Evidence is not required to be submitted at the same time as the mitigation request, but it may need to be supplied before a mitigation decision can be made, and must be supplied if requested.
- 13.4.11. Mitigation cannot be requested for an assessment that has been passed.
- 13.4.12. Where mitigation is self-certified or requested, but subsequently coursework is submitted or any other assessment completed, the mitigation will not stand where a pass mark is achieved in the submitted assessment.
- 13.4.13. The application of mitigation and self-certified mitigation may be restricted to meet Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirements.
- 13.4.14. The Mitigation Process cannot consider applications for mitigation where an allegation of Academic Misconduct is proven. Students should present any extenuating circumstances to the Academic Misconduct Panels although students should note that they may do this once only.

13.5. How to Submit Mitigation and Extensions

- 13.5.1. Students should submit requests for mitigation and extensions in accordance with the published procedures as approved by Academic Board. Where appropriate, mitigation requests will be considered by a Mitigation Panel which will operate as outlined in 13.6 below.

13.5.2. Mitigation self-certification or Mitigation applications are to be submitted no later than the date of the assessment deadline.

13.5.3. Mitigation may be requested beyond this date; any application beyond the date of the assessment deadline must be evidenced.

13.6. Mitigation Requests

13.6.1. All requests for mitigation will be reviewed by Academic Registry to ensure that they meet the criteria at 13.4.2 above. Where they meet the criteria, the mitigation will be granted. Evidence may be required before a decision can be made.

13.6.2. Requests that are received late, or that when reviewed, do not clearly meet the criteria will be referred by Academic Registry to a Mitigation Panel. The Panel membership is:

- a) a trained Chair, who should be a member of academic staff, appointed on the authority of the Vice-Chancellor, normally from a different School/College to that of the student being considered;
- b) a minimum of one trained staff member, either academic or a senior member of Academic Registry.

13.6.3. A Course or Module Leader or Personal Tutor for a student whose mitigation is under consideration, shall not be a panel member for that consideration.

13.6.4. The Panel will review the application and the evidence and come to a decision on whether the mitigation request is to be accepted or rejected.

13.6.5. Where evidence is pending, the Mitigation Panel may defer a decision, and authorise the Chair to act on their behalf without calling a further Panel.

13.7. Outcome of the Mitigation Review or Mitigation Panel Consideration

13.7.1. If the application is accepted, Assessment Boards are informed by the Academic Registry to award an uncapped attempt in the affected module(s) or a further capped attempt, which shall be taken at the earliest available opportunity, in the case of coursework. The mark obtained at this attempt is recorded as final, unless the overall original module or element mark achieved was higher than the mark achieved post mitigation. This means that the highest module or element mark (best mark) shall stand.

13.7.2. If the application is rejected, the original assessment mark shall stand.

13.7.3. Where a student is unable to progress between Levels, or complete their award requirements, and there are accepted mitigating circumstances, the assessment(s), can be taken earlier than the next available attempt at the discretion of the Head/Dean of School/College. The mark obtained at this attempt is recorded as final.

13.7.4. Where a student cannot meet their award requirements due to non-completion of assessment and there are accepted mitigating circumstances, a recommendation can be made to the Assessment Board to award an uncapped resit of the assessment or retake in the affected module(s). The resit/retake shall be taken at the next available opportunity or earlier at the discretion of the Head/Dean of School/College. Any retakes

as a result of mitigation will not be charged.

13.7.5. The successful outcome from a Mitigation Review or a Mitigation Panel is a re-attempt / resit / retake (without penalty) / the penalty for late submission lifted.

13.7.6. If a student chooses not to take the re-attempt, the original mark will stand.

13.7.7. If the student does not attempt the assessment, does not self-certify, and later submits late mitigation which is rejected, then the outcome is recorded as a Non Submission.

13.7.8. A student shall receive, in writing (via email to their student University account), the decision of the Mitigation Review to the Assessment Board within 10 working days of the Mitigation Review meeting.

13.8. Appeal against the Mitigation Outcome Decision

13.8.1. The student may appeal against the recommendation of the Mitigation Panel under the Appeal Regulations – see Section 14