



# UNIVERSITY CODE OF PRACTICE: MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES

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## Introduction – definitions, purpose and authority

1. The purpose of this code is to set out the University's expectations relating to mitigating circumstances.
2. The University of Hull aims to provide all students with the support and guidance they need to successfully complete their programme of study. The Mitigating Circumstances Code of Practice outlines the support available should a student experience sudden, severe or unexpected circumstances.
3. Mitigating circumstances are medical or personal issues which a student cannot overcome or manage without an impact on their ability to attend teaching and undertake assessments because they occur suddenly, unexpectedly or are severe in nature. There is no definitive list of such situations and the University recognises that difficulties impact people in different ways.
4. If a student considers that their studies are being affected by mitigating circumstances, they should discuss these circumstances with their Academic Support Tutor (AST) in the first instance or by talking to someone in the faculty student hub. The earlier the University is made aware of any impacting circumstances, the earlier support options can be made available. Some of these options may become limited, or not be available at all, if a student waits until after an assessment period or until the end of an academic year before disclosing any mitigating circumstances.
5. Partner Institutions are required to have in place arrangements to support students who consider that their studies are being affected by mitigating circumstances.
6. This Code of Practice applies to extension requests, mitigating circumstances requests and exceptional circumstances.
7. This Code of Practice is **mandatory** for collaborative provision. Implementation arrangements will be local and the Annexes are for information.
8. The Education Committee is the final arbiter of the interpretation and application of this Code of Practice.

## Extension requests

### Extending a submission deadline

9. The extending of a submission deadline applies to course work submission only. Other types of assessments such as examinations, for example, are held on fixed dates and, therefore an extension is not applicable.
10. It is the responsibility of the student to manage their time according to the assessment submission schedule and ensure that work is submitted by the published deadline. Missing a deadline will generally mean that work is subject to a penalty and may not be marked at all (see University Code of Practice: Assessment Procedures).
11. If a student is unable to submit a piece of assessed work by the date published, they may apply for an extension. This application must be made prior to the published submission date and

supported by appropriate documentary evidence. Examples of acceptable forms of evidence are listed in Annex 1.

12. An Extension Request Form should be completed by the student and submitted to the faculty student hub, or equivalent in partner institutions. The student will receive notification via email if the request is approved or not. The Extension Request form should normally be received no later than 24 hours before the submission deadline for that piece of assessment. Requests received after the submission deadline will not be considered.
13. Extension requests are approved by the Faculty Hub, or equivalent in partner institutions.
14. If the request is approved an extension of up to 10 working days will be given. Where students feel that they require more than 10 working days, they would normally be advised to apply for mitigating circumstances.
15. It will be the responsibility of the student to meet the new deadline. A student should seek support from their Academic Support Tutor (AST) or faculty student hub if an application for Mitigating Circumstances would be more appropriate.
16. Extending a submission deadline may help a student ease the impact of mitigating circumstances, however, it is important that the student is aware that this could impact on other submission deadlines which could impact on their overall performance.
17. Tier 4 students are not permitted to stay in the UK beyond the expiry date stated on their visa. Although an extension to studies may be approved, it may not be appropriate or legally advisable for the student to remain at the University or in the UK to complete their programme of study. Advice regarding whether or not the University will be able to support a further visa application needs to be sought by the relevant academic unit, from the Visa Compliance Team, in advance of the case for granting the extension.

## Mitigating Circumstances

18. As stated, in para. 3 above, mitigating circumstances are medical or personal issues which a student cannot overcome or manage without an impact on their ability to attend teaching and undertake assessments because they occur suddenly, unexpectedly or are severe in nature.
19. If a student considers that their ability to complete any type of assessment might be, or has been, adversely affected, a Mitigating Circumstances Form should be completed. Mitigating Circumstances Forms should ideally be submitted before the assessment deadline but they **must** be submitted no later than 10 working days after the examination or submission deadline. The Mitigating Circumstances Form must include a clear explanation of the circumstances. All mitigating circumstances requests must be supported by appropriate documentary evidence. Examples of acceptable forms of evidence are listed in Annex 1.
20. All mitigating circumstances will be considered by the Mitigating Circumstances Committee. Where this Committee is satisfied that the evidence submitted is appropriate and the request for mitigation is approved, one of the following outcomes will be applied:

- the student will be given the opportunity to submit the affected assessment with a revised deadline for submission (e.g. the next available exam period or submission date)
- if an attempt at the affected assessment or examination has been made, the student, after having received the mark, will be offered the opportunity of a new fresh attempt. Advice and support can be sought.

\*A fresh attempt shall be interpreted to mean, in the case of a first attempt, that the candidate is offered a new first attempt, and in the case of a reassessment, that the candidate is offered a new reassessment. The original mark will be void.

21. If the mitigating circumstances claim is declined it is likely to be for one of the following reasons:
  - a) it has been submitted late (more than 10 working days from the submission deadline);
  - b) there is insufficient evidence to support the reported circumstances.
22. The student will receive an email informing them of the outcome of the mitigating circumstances claim after the Mitigating Circumstances Committee has convened.
23. The Mitigating Circumstances Committee must comprise no fewer members than a chair, a secretary and one other member of staff.
24. Where a Board of Examiners takes place in a Partner Institution, the associated Mitigating Circumstances Committee will take place in the Partner Institution.
25. Registration on a module entitles a student to an initial attempt at each form of assessment within that module and one reassessment attempt if required.

## Exceptional Circumstances

26. Many student support needs can be met by reasonable adjustments or can be catered for through either the extensions process or the mitigating circumstances outlined above. There are however, some exceptional circumstances which may need further support measures to be implemented. In such circumstances, students may not be in a position to engage with the above processes either because of a sudden deterioration in a physical or mental health issue or because of a traumatic event/series of events which may make it extremely difficult to engage with the above processes.
27. Students with such circumstances will initially be identified via the Mitigating Circumstances Committee and recorded on the student records system. Examples of Exceptional Circumstances are:
  - a) domestic violence or other forms of abuse or physical assault;
  - b) rapid deterioration in student mental health in the weeks leading up the assessment;
  - c) serious deterioration in physical health condition;
  - d) significant caring responsibilities which may impact on attendance and performance;
  - e) ongoing, long term mental or physical health issues.
28. The standard of evidence required for the above can vary and it is expected that a student should only need to submit this evidence once.

29. Once a student has had Exceptional Circumstances reported against their record, and a further extension is requested or further mitigating circumstances occur, the student will need to complete the required forms (as noted above), but any further evidence will not be required.

## Annex 1

The following provides guidance as to the type of evidence expected to support requests for Extension Requests, Mitigating Circumstances Requests and Exceptional Circumstances. This is not an exhaustive list. A student may also provide supporting evidence from a member of University of Hull staff. This may be the Academic Support Tutor or a member of staff from Student Wellbeing Learning and Welfare Support

### EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

<b>Reason for mitigation</b>	<b>Form of accepted evidence</b>
Personal illness.	Self-certification form (if up to 5 working days) (Annex 2). Letter from a medical practitioner, doctor's note, hospital letter, hospital appointment letter, copy of prescription.
Illness of a close family member/dependent or friend.	Letter from medical practitioner, doctor's note, hospital letter, hospital appointment letter, letter of confirmation from a relevant support organisation.
Serious personal accident or injury of self or close family member/friend.	Copy of accident report, doctor's letter, insurance claim letter or a letter from a medical practitioner.
Significant adverse personal or family circumstances.	Letter from any one of the following: a medical practitioner, social worker, member staff from Student Wellbeing at the University of Hull.
Serious personal disruption (e.g. victim of a crime, court attendance, relationship breakdown etc.)	Letter from any one of the following: a medical practitioner, social worker, member staff from Student Wellbeing at the University of Hull, written evidence from the police.
Bereavement of a family member/friend.	Death certificate, order of service, letter from a medical practitioner.

## Annex 2

### SELF-CERTIFICATION MEDICAL FORM

#### **What is self-certification?**

You may use the self-certification procedure to report short periods of illness (1-5 working days). This means you complete a formal written and signed declaration to confirm you have suffered a short illness lasting 1-5 consecutive working days and which was severe enough to prevent you from either attending a fixed assessment event, such as examination or presentation or submitting your course work by the deadline.

Any self-certification forms you provide must:

- relate specifically to the date and duration of the illness
- contain a clear description of the reasons for non-attendance not merely a claim that you felt unwell
- be submitted to support your Mitigating Circumstances or Extension Request Form.

#### **How to submit a self-certification form:**

- submit a self-certification form to support your Mitigating Circumstances or extension request when you have been unable to attend an examination or presentation activity or submit your course work on time.
- self-certification forms can be submitted to your faculty hub with the Mitigating Circumstances or Extension request form

#### **Limits on the use of Self Certification**

You can use the self-certification process for a maximum of two absences in a particular trimester and a maximum of three absences in an academic year. If your period of illness is longer than five days, or if you have already used the self-certification process for the number of times as stated above, then you should seek medical advice and submit evidence as appropriate with your request.

## SELF-CERTIFICATION MEDICAL FORM

<b>Surname</b>	
<b>Forename(s)</b>	
<b>Student Number</b>	
<b>Programme of Study</b>	
<b>Year of Course</b>	
I was absent from the University during the following period (enter first day and last day of absence)	
First date of absence (DD/MM/YY)	/ /
Last date of absence (DD/MM/YY)	/ /
Reason for absence (please provide full details of the nature of your illness)	
Please explain the impact of your illness on your studies	

### Declaration

I certify that the information I have given on this form is correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the University will regard providing false information as a disciplinary offence. I agree to allow the University to hold and use this data for the purposes it was submitted in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Signed		Date	
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For previous versions of regulations relating to mitigating circumstances please email [quality@hull.ac.uk](mailto:quality@hull.ac.uk)