**Mitigating Circumstances**

**Guidance for Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Students**

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## 1. Introduction

As a student at Leeds, you are expected to adhere to the terms of the Student Contract <https://students.leeds.ac.uk/studentcontract>, which includes regular attendance and participation in your studies, including assessment (coursework or exams).

We understand that you may be affected by illness and/or difficult and distressing events that are outside your control but may affect your studies. Whilst you should make every effort to manage your life and studies in conjunction with such events, it is also understood that sometimes you may need some support.

Should such circumstances begin to affect your ability to participate in your studies, it is your responsibility to let your school know as soon as possible. There is a great deal of support available across the University, and your school will provide advice regarding who to contact and how. We understand that mitigating circumstances don’t just affect coursework or examinations, which is why it is important to let your school know of any difficult circumstances, at any stage, and as early as possible.

This guidance clarifies the types of adverse events or circumstances that we will consider as a mitigating circumstance, and to set out the process by which applications are to be submitted and considered. If you are unclear about any stage of the process, ask your parent school for help. Alternatively, guidance can also be sought from the Leeds University Union (LUU) Help and Support.

## 2. Where to go for help

It’s often said that your university years are the best of your life and we hope that’s the case for you in Leeds. However, there might be times when it doesn’t always feel like that. Whatever your situation, we’re here to help, support and guide you every step of the way.

Wherever you’re from and whatever your circumstances and support needs, our expert teams can work with you during your time in Leeds.

The key services are:

* Student Counselling & Wellbeing
* Disability Services
* LUU Help and Support (www.luu.org.uk/student-help-support)
* Chaplaincy
* International Student Office
* Accommodation Office
* Security Services
* Big White Wall

See [students.leeds.ac.uk/#Support-and-wellbeing](https://students.leeds.ac.uk/#Support-and-wellbeing)

If you do think you need some help or support, you should talk to someone, such as your school student support team or your personal tutor within your parent school in the first instance.

## 3. What are mitigating circumstances?

Mitigating circumstances are normally exceptional, short term, unforeseen and unpreventable events that may have a significantly disruptive effect on your ability to study. These events are over and above the course of everyday life, and normally outside of your control. They may affect your ability to attend lectures, prepare for seminars, complete coursework, revise for and attend examinations, or any other aspect of your programme.

Mitigating circumstances must be:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Significant** | The event or circumstances must have had a serious impact on your studies. |
| **Unexpected** | You must normally have had no prior knowledge that a particular event or circumstance would occur. |
| **Unpreventable** | There must have been no reasonable steps that you could have taken to prevent the event or circumstance from occurring. |
| **Relevant** | You must be able to link the event or circumstance, and its impact, on the period for which the application is being made. |
| **Corroborated** | An application for mitigating circumstances must meet the normal requirements for independent documentary evidence *(*[*see Evidence section*](#_Mitigating_Circumstances_–)*).* |

Not all difficult or distressing events will constitute mitigating circumstances; there must be a demonstrable adverse effect on your academic performance, which may take a number of forms:

* You were unable to submit work by a deadline or attend a scheduled test, examination or practical activity.
* The event or circumstance may have caused you to underperform in an assessment, either in the preparation for the assessment, or on the day (i.e. whilst completing a piece of coursework or undertaking revision and/or sitting an examination).
* The event or circumstances impacted on your ability to attend lectures, seminars, participate in fieldwork or any other aspect of your studies, and/or to prepare for teaching activity, even if you did attend.

### 3.1. Circumstances normally accepted

Supported by evidence, these are examples of circumstances **normally accepted** as mitigating:

**This list is not exhaustive, and each application will be considered on its own merit.**

* The death of someone you are close to e.g. parent, grandparent, guardian, partner, sibling, child.
* Serious personal illness or personal injury, or a significant change or deterioration in a long-term condition.
* Victim of crime (usually with police crime number, or supporting evidence from University member of staff/professional person to whom the student has confided).
* Jury service.
* Involvement in a criminal case/witness.
* Failure in the provision of reasonable adjustments, or failure in, or inaccessibility of, school provided equipment.

### 3.2. Circumstances that may be considered

Supported by evidence, these are examples of circumstances that **may be considered** as mitigating:

**This list is not exhaustive, and each application will be considered on its own merit.**

* Personal problems/trauma/family crisis/domestic issues/unexpected issues with childcare provision.
* Illness of a close family member.
* Planned medical operation (if advance notice is provided).
* Planned hospital tests (if advance notice is provided).
* Unforeseen consequences of disability which have not been accounted for through reasonable adjustments or any impact of disability which cannot be mitigated by reasonable adjustments.
* Unforeseen accommodation issues, outside of your control (this would not include house moves caused due to the end of a lease).

## 4. What are not mitigating circumstances?

Not every event which you believe has disrupted your ability to study will be considered as mitigating circumstances. An unexpected event or illness does not automatically lead to academic underperformance. You are expected to manage your circumstances in conjunction with your studies where feasible. If you are unsure whether your circumstances will be considered, please seek guidance from your school. Examples of situations which would not normally be considered mitigating circumstances include:

**This list is not exhaustive, and each application will be considered on its own merit.**

* Short-term minor ailments (coughs, colds, etc.) even when supported by medical evidence – these should be covered by an application for an extension to the deadline. ***Check with your parent school the procedure to follow for extension requests.***
* Late submission of coursework without good reason (or where you could reasonably have been expected to apply for an extension).
* Pressures of academic work i.e. multiple deadlines, time mismanagement, non-availability of high demand books and other resources (except disability-related resource outside of your control).
* Lost or not backed-up coursework, or other computer failure.
* Financial problems, even if this is a change of circumstances (other than cases of extreme hardship).
* Domestic events such as house moves, family celebrations, holidays, weddings or other such events where you have control over the date or can choose not to attend.
* Normal academic work commitments.
* Appointments which could be rearranged (or advance notification given to the school).
* Mistaking a deadline, misreading the examination timetable or submitting the wrong assignment in error.
* Transport difficulties (i.e. strikes, traffic jams, delayed trains).
* Illness for which no contemporaneous evidence is available (i.e. evidence which demonstrates you sought medical advice or intervention at the time of the illness, or are under the care of a medical practitioner).
* Pregnancy. You should determine whether you believe you will be fit to study and undertake assessment around your expected due date. If you wish to defer your studies, you should apply to suspend study temporarily. Applications related to unexpected difficulties, impact of unplanned pregnancy, or health issues may be considered, if supported by appropriate evidence.
* Examination nerves, feeling generally anxious, suffering from low mood, stress or panic attacks (where no diagnosis of a mental health condition has been made).
* Ignorance of the regulations or examination or assessment arrangements.

## 5. Disability (including Specific Learning Difficulties (such as dyslexia), mental health conditions and long term medical conditions)

If you are disabled, you should register with Disability Services who will advise further on support and reasonable adjustments to your study and assessment.  Disability includes specific learning difficulties (such as dyslexia and dyspraxia), as well as diagnosed mental health conditions and long term medical conditions where these have a significant and long-term negative effect on your studies (12 months or more).  You can find out more about Disability Services and how to register here: <https://students.leeds.ac.uk/settingupyoursupport>.

* If you are a disabled student and you experience mitigating circumstances unrelated to your disability you should apply through this procedure.
* If you have requested reasonable adjustments and find that they have not been effective, or have not been put in place in time (particularly at the start of the year), you can also submit an application for mitigating circumstances where your studies have been impacted. It is accepted that, sometimes, it will take time to get the right support in place, for example in terms of examinations, and you should feel able to bring this to the attention of your school when it has affected your performance.

If you experience a change in your circumstances which affects your ability to study to an extent that the adjustments put in place are not sufficient, or cannot fully mitigate the impact of disability, you should contact Disability Services for advice and further support. A request for mitigation should also be considered. You will be required to provide evidence to support such claims.

## 6. How to apply for mitigating circumstances

All mitigating circumstances applications should be submitted to your parent school, even if the impacted module is taken in a different school. Your parent school is responsible for assessing the evidence and making a decision, even though that decision may relate to modules taken elsewhere. The parent school will liaise with other schools where required. Exact details of where to submit your application in your parent school are set out under [How should I complete my mitigating circumstances form](#_How_should_I)?

Please note that work will not be marked (or re-marked) taking into consideration mitigating circumstances, and your existing mark will not be changed in the event of a successful application.

Successful applications may result in the original mark being permanently removed from your record if you have failed an assessment, and fresh attempt, for an uncapped mark, offered instead. Alternatively, if you have passed your assessments, your results will be given consideration by your school’s Progression & Awards Board when determining your final degree classification.

If you wish to apply for an extension to a submission deadline for an assessment, you should contact your parent school in the first instance to discuss this, and to find out what the process is for making your application.

### 6.1. When should I inform schools of my mitigating circumstances?

You should inform your parent school of any problems that may be affecting your ability to study as soon as possible, in order to receive both advice and support. Applications for circumstances affecting your day-to-day studies should be submitted as soon as possible; applications for circumstances that you feel have affected specific pieces of coursework, or examination preparation and performance, should be lodged within 5 working days of the submission deadline, examination date, or by the deadline published by your school.

Please bear in mind that you will need to consider how to provide evidence for your application, which may require obtaining medical evidence. If you do not submit your application in a timely fashion, obtaining suitable evidence will be more difficult.

Please do not wait until you receive your results to submit an application. Retrospective applications for mitigating circumstances from students who wait until they have received their marks will not normally be accepted. Applications for mitigation should be received prior to the relevant assessment committee, and students wishing to bring matters to the attention of the school after their marks have been confirmed will need to do so via the Academic Appeals procedure. Any student raising mitigating circumstances through this route will need to provide an explanation as to why they had not done so at an earlier stage, and waiting to see your marks, or ignorance of the relevant procedures, will not be considered valid reasons.

There are some instances where students may receive, during their programme of study, the diagnosis of a health condition which would have affected their studies when they were not aware of it. In such circumstances, students should first seek advice from their parent school, or LUU Help and Support. Such issues will be considered on a case by case basis by the parent school, via the mitigating circumstances process, or the Committee on Applications, via the Academic Appeals process.

If you request to take temporary leave after the end of teaching week 8 you will also need to submit a mitigating circumstances application to defer your assessments. This is because after teaching week 8, you are still expected to complete your assessments. You should discuss this with your parent school at the time of applying for temporary leave.

**Ignorance of the mitigating circumstances procedure is not considered grounds to permit retrospective claims for mitigation.**

### 6.2. Where can I get a mitigating circumstances form?

You can obtain an application form for consideration of mitigating circumstances from your parent school or <http://students.leeds.ac.uk/mitigatingcircumstancesapplicationform>

## 7. How should I complete the application form?

Before you begin to complete your form please read through this guidance document carefully, and also the information contained on the form.

Complete each section fully.

**Section 1: Student details**   
Complete this section with your personal information and details of your programme of study.

**Section 2: Modules affected**

* Please provide details of each module and assessment for each module that have been affected by your circumstances.
* Please list each module and assessment type separately.
* For each module and/or assessment please provide details of the date the assessment took place or the submission date.
* If you were absent and missed the assessment or did not submit the piece of work, you should indicate this by ticking in the box headed ‘Absent?’ For each module and/or assessment you should state what type of mitigation you are requesting: select the relevant code (from section 3) and write this in the ‘Request’ column. Please note that the final decision regarding your application rests with the Progression and Awards Board, and the resolution you request may not be the outcome granted.

There are four types of request you can make:

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| --- | --- |
| A. Further attempt. | This applies to a first attempt (uncapped mark) or a resit attempt (capped mark). For example, if you missed the original attempt at your assessment, you may be granted a first attempt. If you missed a resit attempt at your assessment you may be granted a further resit attempt. NOTE: If you have passed your assessment, you will not normally be permitted a further attempt. |
| B. Coursework submission deadline extension. | You should contact your parent school in the first instance to discuss your extension request and what the process is for making an application in your school. You should only select this option as a mitigating circumstance if you are requesting an extension for a period of time which is longer than can be granted through the normal extension request process in your school/faculty, or if your school/faculty uses the application for consideration of mitigating circumstances form for all extension requests. |
| C. Remove penalties | This should be selected if you are requesting that a late submission penalty or penalty for exceeding a word count be waived. |
| D. Other (please state) | Select if you are making a request not covered in the categories above. You need to explain what you are asking for and why, which may include any of the [Possible Outcomes](#_10._What_are) listed in section 10, such as consideration at Progression and Awards Boards when determining your final degree classification. |

**If you are unsure about how to complete this section, or what you should request, please speak to your parent school for advice. Staff will be able to discuss your options with you.**

Example:

You have missed a practical assessment and think that you have not performed as well as usual due to illness in an exam for one of your modules. You would like to request a further attempt so you would complete section 2 as follows:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Module Code | Module Title | Assessment affected (e.g. in class test/group work/ presentation/ exam/practical/ coursework) | Date of assessment or submission deadline | Absent from exam or not submitted assessed work? (please state YES or NO) | Penalties incurred for late submission (please state YES or NO) | Request  *(insert relevant code –  see  Section 3 below)* |
| BAKE1234 | Practical baking skills | Practical | 15/01/18 | Yes | No | A |
| BAKE1234 | Practical baking skills | Exam | 17/01/18 | No | No | A |

**Section 4: Details of your circumstances**  
In this section you need to describe the nature of the circumstances which have affected you, and how this has affected your ability to prepare for, and participate, in your studies. You should give details of when the circumstances occurred and, where relevant, relate this to the assessments you have listed in Section 2. In addition, if you are submitting your application after the deadline as published by the school, you need to provide an explanation as to why your application is late so that the Committee can decide whether or not it should be considered. If you are asking for an extension to a submission deadline you should state the length of time requested.

**Section 5: Supporting evidence**  
**Types of evidence**: Please indicate what evidence you are providing. If you are unable to submit your evidence at the same time as your form, for example, if you are awaiting a medical note from your doctor, you should state this, and when you expect to be able to provide the evidence, under ‘Further details’. Other forms of evidence to those listed may be relevant and appropriate; if you are not sure, check with your school.

**Confidentiality**: All mitigating circumstances applications are treated confidentially and are seen only by those members of staff required to make a decision. If your circumstances are such, that you would like to restrict sight of your evidence to the Chair of the decision-making committee only, please submit it in a sealed envelope, clearly marked with your name and Student Identification number, and indicate that you have done so on the form using the ‘tick box’.

**Study Abroad**: Any information disclosed on this form may help us to liaise with you about a suitable placement and support for your residence/study abroad. By agreeing to the disclosure of information, you will help us to provide the best level of advice as you plan for your time abroad. It is also important that you share information with us so we can offer you full support while you are away.

**Section 6: Checklist**   
Use this section to check that you have provided all the necessary information so that the Committee can consider your application.

**Section 7: Declaration**  
Sign and date to confirm that the information you have provided is honest and accurate to the best of your knowledge. This also confirms that you have read and understood the mitigating circumstances guidelines.

**Submission**   
When your form is completed, submit it along with your supporting evidence (or details of when this will be submitted) to your parent school.

## 8. Evidence

Applications for mitigating circumstances will not normally be considered unless they are supported by independent documentary evidence. Applications will not be confirmed until this evidence has been received (applications can be submitted without this evidence, but relevant documents must be submitted within 5 working days of the form where possible).

Independent evidence would normally be an original document on headed paper and signed by an appropriate third party, giving details of the circumstances, its dates and/or duration and, where possible, its impact. (Original documentation can be returned to you if requested.) An appropriate third party would be one who knows you in a professional capacity, or one who can verify the circumstances and who is in a position to provide objective and impartial evidence. Electronic evidence will only be accepted from verifiable addresses.

All evidence must be provided in English. It is your responsibility to provide translations of any non-English documentation, and any documents not in English or without translation will not be accepted as evidence. The translation must be certified as accurate by a Public Notary or translated by an accredited translator.

The following list aims to provide guidance on the types of evidence that we would normally expect to be provided to support an application for mitigating circumstances. This list should not be considered definitive, and schools should always give reasonable consideration to other forms of documentary evidence provided.

Your school may request additional evidence to help to clarify a set of circumstances and all documentation supplied should be the originals unless otherwise stated by your school. Scanned documents may be provided in instances where time is a factor, but you MUST be prepared to present the original documents upon request at any stage of the application, including once an application has been approved.

**Guidance on Evidence**

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| Illness or accident of student (short-term) | Medical certificate signed by appropriately qualified medical practitioner, obtained whilst the illness or incident was affecting you (if you were taken ill during an examination, your parent school will need to verify from the invigilator’s report)  OR  Letter from doctor, giving dates affected by illness and containing a medical opinion on how you would have been affected.  Medical notes which demonstrate that medical advice and treatment was sought at the time of, or soon after, a bout of illness, will carry more weight than a retrospective disclosure of illness weeks or months after the fact. |
| Illness of student (long-term but lasting less than 12 months) | For conditions which pre-date admission to the University, you will need to provide relevant medical evidence to demonstrate how and when the symptoms had become acute or had changed, and explain how this affected your ability to study or impaired your performance in assessments. |
| Disability, specific learning difficulty, mental health condition or long term medical condition (lasting 12+ months) | If you are registered with Disability Services, a copy of the Support Summary Sheet completed by the Disability Advisory Team can be used as evidence.  If you are not registered with Disability Services, you will need to provide relevant medical evidence which gives a diagnosis and the date of diagnosis, states that it is long term (i.e. has lasted, or is likely to last, 12 months or more) and summarises the impact on ability to study and/or undertake assessment. You should also consider [registering with Disability Services](https://students.leeds.ac.uk/info/1000033/how_to_access_support/1065/setting_up_your_support). |
| Illness of another person, usually a close family member (this can be either short-term or chronic illness) | Medical evidence relating to the illness (clearly indicating dates of illness). You may also be required to provide evidence of their connection to the person who is ill (where that person is not a family member)  AND  Corroborating evidence to demonstrate the impact on you (this will preferably come from a member of University staff/other relevant third party, which can include family members). You will need to make clear why and how your ability to study was affected. |
| Bereavement | Evidence of bereavement can take several forms, for example:   * A letter from funeral director or minister conducting the service. * An Order of Service showing date, or other relevant documentation. * A statement from a doctor or other qualified professional, or member of University staff (e.g. personal tutor) confirming you had disclosed a bereavement. * A corroborating statement from a family member.   A death certificate is also an acceptable form of evidence but is not a requirement.  In the event that you suffer a bereavement during your studies, you are strongly encouraged to seek support from the school. The various forms of support available are listed in [section 2, Where to go for help.](#_2._Where_to) |
| Other domestic disruption (family issues, financial or accommodation difficulties, work-related issues (if you are part-time)) | Statement must provide clear details, including dates which link to the assessment(s) affected. You must also provide evidence of how you were affected and why this prevented you from completing the assessment(s) on time.  This could include a corroborating statement from professional person, i.e. counsellor, employer, landlord/agent, University staff member (i.e. personal tutor, module leader, exam invigilator). |
| Absence arising from such things as jury service or maternity, paternity or adoption leave. | Official correspondence relating to these events. |
| Victim of crime | Crime number (these are usually issued by the police for all reported crimes)  For crimes which are of a personal nature, where you find it difficult to report the matter to the police, appropriate evidence can be provided from a medical professional, counsellor or other relevant person. |

It is your responsibility to obtain evidence in support of your application. We will not be able to obtain medical, or other, evidence on your behalf (except if the evidence is your Disability Support Summary Sheet).

## 9. Consideration of mitigating circumstances

### 9.1. Who considers my application?

Your application will be considered by your parent school‘s School Special Circumstances Committee (this is likely to consist of an academic chair and member/s of the Student Education Service staff within your school). Details of membership of the Committee can be found in your school Code of Practice on Assessment. This Committee will make a recommendation (without disclosing the circumstances) to the Progression and Awards Board (and/or Assessment Board), who will make the final decision regarding the action to be taken in respect of your application.

### 9.2. How is my application considered?

The remit of the Special Circumstances Committee is as follows:

* To consider under the authority and on behalf of the Progression and Awards Board details of applications for mitigating circumstances and make recommendations on the outcome of each application to the Board.
* To determine whether the circumstances cited are acceptable grounds to grant mitigation.
* To ensure that decisions are equitable and that there is consistency of treatment across cohorts.

Account shall be taken of:

* Whether the mitigating circumstances are considered to be circumstances genuinely beyond your control or ability to foresee and whether they may seriously impair your assessment attempt.
* The impact of the event or circumstance on you and your studies.
* The length of time it lasted.
* The proximity of the event or circumstance to the assessment(s).
* Whether all/other assessment(s) might equally be affected.
* Whether there is verifiable and current third party evidence to support the request for deferral or underperformance.

The Chair of the Special Circumstances Committee is authorised to approve applications for mitigating circumstances outside formal meetings only in exceptional circumstances where the application is clearly valid under the University regulations on mitigation.

### 9.3. When will my application be considered?

Your application will be considered at a date determined by your parent school. Generally extension requests are dealt with at the time of application, and your school can advise on the expected decision timeframe. Applications requesting any other outcome (for example, first attempt resits) will be considered at meetings of the School Special Circumstances Committee, with the final outcome determined by the Progression and Awards Board. You should contact your school to understand when the outcome will be provided to you.

## 10. What are the possible outcomes?

Module marks must always reflect the actual academic performance in the assessments that you take. The school therefore does not change module marks because of mitigating circumstances, or take them into consideration when marking your work.

There are a number of possible decisions that the School Special Circumstances Committee may make when considering your application, set out below. This list is not exhaustive, and recommendations are made on an individual basis.

1. Further attempt – first attempt re-sit. If the assessment you failed or missed was the original attempt or had previously been granted as a first attempt re-sit, then the Committee may grant you a further ‘first attempt’ for an uncapped mark. In this circumstance your original mark would be permanently removed from your record and overwritten by the mark you receive for the fresh attempt whether it was higher or lower than the original attempt. **Please note that if you have passed your assessment, you will not normally be permitted a further attempt.**
2. Further attempt – resit attempt. If the assessment you failed or missed was a resit, the Committee may grant you an exceptional ‘extra’ resit attempt for a capped mark.
3. Coursework submission deadline extension for a period of time which is longer than can be granted through the normal extension request process in your school/faculty.
4. Remove penalties for late submission or exceeding the word count.
5. To give you the opportunity to re-take all or part of the year, with first attempts or resit attempts at assessments, including attending teaching.
6. Not to grant any concessions or take any action in relation to your application.
7. Consideration of your mitigating circumstances and overall profile of marks when your degree is classified, and, to depart from the normal rules for classification in order to award a higher class degree.

Where you have been granted a first or further attempt following an application for mitigating circumstances, any attempts must be taken at the next available opportunity (or within the timeframe agreed with the school). If you decline the offer of a further attempt (whether a first attempt resit or otherwise) following a successful application for mitigating circumstances, that further attempt will not be restored at a later date.

The School Special Circumstances Committee may recommend that you seek additional support either through the student support available in your parent school or from other professional services, for example Counselling Service, Medical Practice or Disability Services.

The School Special Circumstances Committee has the right to suggest an alternative outcome based on your specific circumstances.

On occasion, the School Special Circumstances Committee may ask you to submit further evidence or information if you have provided insufficient details for them to make a decision.

## 11. How will I be told the outcome?

Your parent school will contact you to inform you of the outcome of your application and what steps you will need to take next.

## 12. What if I am not satisfied with the decision?

If you are not happy with the decision, including if your application was not approved, you should contact your parent school in the first instance. Your parent school should explain the decision to you, and also explain any recommendations that have been made (e.g. why you have been advised to defer taking an examination).

The school should also explain the grounds on which your application was not approved. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your application, you can appeal the decision via the Academic Appeals process. Details of this process can be found on the Secretariat website:

<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/secretariat/student_cases.html>

The Student Cases Team can offer further advice on the appeals process. Leeds University Union Help and Support can also help you complete your appeal application.

**Your appeal must be received by the Student Cases Team within 20 working days of you being notified of the outcome of your application.**

## 13. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

**I am ill/something has happened, and my studies are being affected. What do I do?**

We understand that sometimes, something occurs which will have a negative effect on your ability to study. In such circumstances, we always encourage you to speak with someone in your parent school. There are a number of options available to you, and your parent school will be best placed to explain them to you, and advise how to request them. Those options include:

**Extensions to deadlines**– usually short-term remedies to give you a little extra time to complete a piece of coursework. Extensions should be requested before the deadline for submission. You should consider the impact an extension may have on any other deadlines. Some schools will require you to complete a mitigating circumstances form in order to request an extension. Check with your school regarding the process.

**First attempt resits (or further attempts)** – where you have attempted to continue with your studies and submitted work, or sat an exam but illness or other circumstances mean you do not think you performed to the best of your ability. This will require you to submit a mitigating circumstances application.

**Deferring assessment until a later date** – for more serious illness or circumstances which may not be resolved quickly, but will not require temporary leave. This allows you to attempt the assessment at a point where, hopefully, you are no longer being affected by the circumstances.

**Temporary leave/suspension of studies** – for longer term issues, for example (but not exclusively) an injury or illness that will take time to recover from, require treatment, and will most likely require you to be absent from campus.

Several of these can be requested via the mitigating circumstances process, on an as needed basis. However, please consider that, in some circumstances, making repeated applications for mitigating circumstances is not the best way to obtain support for your studies. Whilst you should be prepared to try and manage events in your life in conjunction with your studies, you should also be realistic that, occasionally, continuing with your studies is not the best approach for you, and some circumstances cannot be successfully mitigated against by the application of extensions or resits alone.

**I talked to my Personal Tutor about my problem, do I still need to complete a form?**

Yes, you do still need to complete a form so that your circumstances can be considered by the School Special Circumstances Committee.

**Can I ask my Personal Tutor to provide a statement to support my application?**

Yes, if you have talked to your Personal Tutor about your circumstances you can ask them to provide a supporting statement to that effect, which should be submitted directly to the parent school. The Committee may accept this as evidence, however this would be in addition to, and not instead of, professional evidence such as a medical note in the case of illness.

**I don’t think my mitigating circumstances have affected my performance, should I still submit an application?**

You should still submit an application for mitigating circumstances as you may not be fully aware of how your circumstances have actually affected your academic study and performance. You must submit an application if you wish your circumstances to be considered. It is too late to submit an application after the event and when you have seen your marks and believe they are not a reflection of your actual ability.

**I am stressed about my examinations, what should I do?**

Examination stress is a normal part of student life and if you are finding that you are particularly stressed about your examinations then you should talk to someone for some help and advice. This could be your Personal Tutor, your programme leader or a member of the Student Education Service within your parent school. They will guide you to further support within the University such as Skills@library or the Student Counselling Centre who run occasional exam stress workshops. Should you feel that you are experiencing a significant adverse effect on your wellbeing due to examination stress, you should seek medical advice and support.

Usually exam stress will not be considered as grounds for an application for mitigating circumstances unless there is evidence of an underlying mental health condition, as this is not an unexpected event.

**Something has happened, and I have an assignment due for submission/examination to take, what do I do?**

Your first action, under such circumstances, should be to contact your parent school. They will advise you of the next steps to take.

If something happens close to the deadline for an assignment, or an examination date, you should contact your parent school (your Personal Tutor, the Student Education Service, programme leader, a module tutor you feel you can approach) as soon as possible and let them know. They will advise you whether to request an extension or submit an application for mitigating circumstances, and the process you need to follow.

Normally, an application for an extension or mitigating circumstances will require evidence of some form. If you are ill, you should also contact your doctor.

You should then check the deadline for when such requests need to be made; determine what evidence you will require to support your application and begin to obtain it. Do note that evidence obtained at the time of your illness/the issue affecting your studies, will usually carry more weight than evidence obtained several weeks or months later.

**I am ill and I have an examination today**

If you fall ill on the day of an exam, contact your parent school immediately. If you are unable to attend, let them know as soon as possible, preferably before the examination. You will need to see a doctor to confirm that you were unfit to sit the examination. If you fall ill during an examination, notify the invigilator, who will complete an examination report to confirm this – this can act as a record of your illness when you apply for mitigation. You will still need to present medical evidence of your illness, and must see a doctor as soon as you can after you leave the examination room.

**I find it difficult to talk about my circumstances**

We understand that you might not be comfortable raising personal issues, particularly where the circumstances in question are private or of a sensitive nature. We cannot, however, take into account circumstances we are not told about, and retrospective applications, where circumstances are not raised until results, will not usually be considered or accepted. All applications for mitigating circumstances are treated confidentially. No details of mitigating circumstances are presented to the Assessment and Progression and Awards Boards, only that there are mitigating circumstances and the decisions made.

**Who should I ask for advice?**

You can speak to your Personal Tutor, Student Education Service staff within your parent school or your programme leader. The LUU also have a help and support service, and they can guide you on the various procedures available to you, and direct you to other sources of support (including Disability Service and the Counselling and Wellbeing Service).

**Should I apply for mitigating circumstances or an extension?**

For coursework, where you can’t meet the deadline because of a short term or minor issue that has arisen, you should submit a request for a usually short extension. Contact the Student Education Service within your parent school for advice on the process for extension requests. Please note that some schools may follow the same process for extensions as for mitigating circumstances. You should consider the impact of an extension on other deadlines you may have to ensure that you are not creating workload pressure at a later date.

In some circumstances, particularly serious health issues or significant events which may affect all aspects of your studies, an extension would not be appropriate and you should seek advice on the other options available to you. You can also apply for mitigating circumstances if you miss the opportunity to request an extension (although you will have to explain why).

**What happens if my mitigating circumstances application isn’t approved?**

You can appeal against the school’s decision not to approve an application for mitigating circumstances via the Academic Appeals procedure:

<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/secretariat/student_cases.html>

The Student Cases Team in Secretariat can provide further advice on this process.

**Will I be given additional marks, or will my marks be changed, if my case is approved?**

No. Module marks for assessments must always reflect the actual academic performance. No marks will be changed because of mitigating circumstances, nor will mitigating circumstances be taken into consideration when marking your work.

**If I am granted a first attempt resit for an assessment, can I decide not to take it?**

Yes. However, if you do decline the offer of a further attempt (first attempt or resit attempt) following a successful application for mitigating circumstances, you cannot then ask for that attempt to be restored at a later date.

Where you have been granted a first or further attempt following an application for mitigating circumstances, any attempts must be taken at the next available opportunity (or within the timeframe agreed with the school).

If you do decide not to take up the offer of a first or further resit attempt, you must inform your parent school of your decision straight away to ensure that you are not registered to take it, and that your original mark is not permanently removed from your record.

**I have taken temporary leave from my studies, do I still need to submit a mitigating circumstances application?**

If you have taken temporary leave from your studies **before** the temporary leave deadline (end of teaching week 8 in either semester), then you do not need to submit an application.

If you are requesting temporary leave after the week 8 deadline in either semester, a submission will need to be made.  This is because after teaching week 8 you are still expected to complete your assessments.

Version control

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Version | Date | Amendments | Approval |
| Version 1.0 | September 2018 |  | Standards Steering Group Sept 2018 |
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