1. Introduction

1.1 Schools will normally consider making appropriate allowance for unforeseen and unavoidable circumstances which affect your attendance and performance when they are aware of them. If you run into problems that you think have negatively affected your performance, or that will prevent you from completing an assignment on time, always contact a member of staff (e.g. Adviser of Studies, Programme Director) within the School as soon as you can.

1.2 It is your responsibility to report mitigating circumstances that may have had a significant negative impact on your performance in an assessment or examination, or caused you to miss a deadline for submission of an assignment. It is also your responsibility to ensure that any supporting documentation that is deemed appropriate to corroborate the mitigating circumstances is supplied. Your School will not pursue such material on your behalf.

1.3 It is your responsibility to ensure that the form, along with the supporting documentation, is submitted to the School Office (or other specified office as described in the School’s guidance or handbook) within the required deadlines.

1.4 Schools will provide additional guidance for students which is contextualised for the School or discipline. Such guidance will normally be provided as part of the student handbook or within a specific section of My Dundee. It will include deadlines and details for submission of applications as well as appropriate contact details.

2. Guidance on mitigating circumstances

2.1 Mitigating circumstances describe situations which temporarily prevent you undertaking an assessment or significantly impair your performance in an assessment. They are circumstances beyond your control, and the following are examples of circumstances that would be considered as mitigating circumstances:

- serious or incapacitating injury, illness or medical condition or emergency operation;
- a significant family or personal crisis (e.g. bereavement or a serious illness affecting a close family member); or
- unforeseen, unpreventable events (e.g. being a victim of a criminal act, natural disaster, including severe weather affecting travel, and military service).

2.2 Normal life throws up difficulties, problems and minor illnesses that you will have to cope with during study in the same way as everyone does at work or at home. You are expected to take appropriate steps to minimise the impact of these since such events are unlikely to be accepted as valid claims under this process. The following are examples of circumstances which would not normally be considered:

- minor illness or ailment;
- personal/domestic events that could have been planned for;
- choices in personal life (e.g. attending weddings, holidays etc.);
- participation in a sporting event;
- exam nerves or self-diagnosed stress;
• transport or travel problems (unless caused by a recorded local/national crisis or a natural disaster);
• financial difficulties;
• the language of assessment not being your main language;
• failure or theft of your computer or other equipment being used to produce the work to be assessed, including work not being backed-up;
• poor management of time or misunderstanding of deadlines/dates (including failure of others to submit group assignments); or
• long term illness or disability where earlier disclosure would have allowed appropriate adjustments to be made.

2.3 Jury duty would only be considered as a mitigating circumstance where a request (which should be accompanied by a supporting letter from the programme leader) for postponement or excusal was rejected by the Court Services.

2.4 Note that on-going or longer-term conditions or circumstances are not categorised as mitigating circumstances and may be handled by disability support and/or special assessment arrangements. They are likely to give rise to valid claims only if they first come to light or are diagnosed, or become unexpectedly and markedly worse, at assessment time. Evidence to support this worsening condition will be required.

3. Completion of the application form

3.1 The application form should be handed in to the School Office (or as described in the School’s guidance or handbook) as soon as is reasonably possible. In the case of late submission of coursework the completed form, together with the supporting documentation, should normally be handed into the School Office (or other specified office as described in the School’s guidance or handbook) either before or at the same time as the work in question. In the case of an exam, the completed form should be handed into the School Office (or other specified office as described in the School’s guidance or handbook) before the scheduled time of the exam where possible, or as soon as possible thereafter.

3.2 Most of the information requested in the application form is fairly self-explanatory.

3.3 Do not list all of the modules that you have studied—only those where you feel were adversely affected. Include the assessments that were affected—e.g. exam, essay, lab report, fieldwork report.

3.4 You must be specific about the mitigating circumstances that significantly affected your performance. You should indicate how your work was affected—e.g. lack of time to complete the work, missed tutorials, missed laboratory sessions, unable to attend a fieldtrip, unable to concentrate for revision, left examination early etc. Also indicate how long the problem lasted.

3.5 Applications MUST be accompanied by supporting evidence, which should be described in the application form. Supporting evidence of mitigating circumstances might include:

• a doctor’s note or medical certificate for the appropriate period;
• a note from a counsellor, religious leader or other appropriate professional individual who is relevant to the circumstance; or
• a self-certification form (the University form is available from the University Health Service website at http://www.dundee.ac.uk/studentservices/health/student-self-certificate/ and can be used for minor illnesses for a period of up to 7 days).

3.6 In the case of the death of a close family member or other family emergencies, Schools will be sympathetic to the fact that it is not always easy to be in touch at the time. Whilst every effort will be made to ensure that appropriate allowances are made it is important that you let a staff member (e.g. Adviser of Studies, Programme Director) in the School know as soon as you can. A letter from someone such as a health professional explaining the circumstances is helpful if other supporting documentation is unavailable.
3.7 Where letters are being submitted as supporting documentation they should be the originals on headed paper with a signature. Photocopies will not normally be accepted.

4. Consideration of mitigating circumstances applications

4.1 The Mitigating Circumstances Committee will normally comprise:

- the School Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching) or the School Associate Dean (Quality and Academic Standards) or their nominee;
- an appropriate programme representative;
- the convener of the Board of Examiners;
- the School Lead for equality and diversity; and
- an external examiner.

4.2 No details of the mitigating circumstances will be revealed to the Board of Examiners and any information provided as part of the application will remain confidential to the Committee and its secretary.

4.3 Mitigating circumstances will be considered under four categories: severe; significant; mild; no case. Where it is decided that there is ‘no case’ there will be no further consideration of the case by the Mitigating Circumstance Committee. If the Committee decides that the case fall into one of the three other categories where action may be taken, their decision will be based on your performance in other parts of the curriculum as well as the severity of the case. Details on the decision-making and the types of recommendations that the Committee can make are described in detail in Section 7 of the University’s Assessment Policy for Taught Provision: (http://www.dundee.ac.uk/governance/policies/policy-taught-provision/).

4.4 Note that for certain professionally accredited programmes there may be restrictions on how mitigating circumstances can be dealt with. Guidance will be provided by the School on whether such restrictions apply.