University of Dundee

Mitigating Circumstances
Frequently Asked Questions

Where can I find the University guidance on mitigating circumstances?

The University’s approved guidance and application form can be found on the University website: Guidance notes on mitigating circumstances. You can phone or ask at the Enquiry Centre, DUSA or your School Office if you need more help.

What are mitigating circumstances?

Significant things that are unforeseen or unavoidable, which affect your attendance and performance in your academic studies. Mitigating circumstances are usually beyond your control and describe situations which temporarily prevent you undertaking an assessment or significantly impair your performance in an assessment.

Examples of mitigating circumstances:
- Serious or incapacitating injury, illness or medical condition or emergency operation;
- Significant family or personal crisis e.g. bereavement or a serious illness affecting a close family member;
- Jury duty where a request (supported by a letter from a member of staff from your School) for postponement or excusal was rejected by the Court Services; or
- Unforeseen, unpreventable events (e.g. being a victim of a criminal act, natural disaster, including severe weather affecting travel, employer demands and military service).

What are not normally considered to be mitigating circumstances?

Normal life throws up difficulties, problems and minor illnesses that you have to cope with during study in the same way as everyone does at home or at work. As a student you are expected to take appropriate steps to minimise the impact of these since such events are unlikely to be accepted as mitigating circumstances.

Examples of what is not normally considered to be mitigating circumstances:
- Minor illness or ailment;
- Personal/domestic events that could have been planned for;
- Personal choices (e.g. attending weddings, holidays etc);
- Participation in a sporting event;
- Exam nerves or self-diagnosed stress/anxiety;
- 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; or
- Long term illness or disability where earlier disclosure would have allowed appropriate adjustments to be made.

When should I report mitigating circumstance?

If you think that events in your life have affected your ability to study and complete your assessment(s) then you must notify the School as soon as possible. By doing this the School can help to support you when you need it most. Speak to a member of staff in the School such as your Adviser of Studies, as soon as possible to make them aware of the situation.
The School will have a deadline for submission of mitigating circumstances – this will be before the Exam Board meets to consider the overall results for the year.

**What is the deadline date for submitting mitigating circumstances?**

The School sets the deadline dates. The deadline dates for all Schools is available from the University website: [Deadline dates for mitigating circumstances applications](#).

**What if I miss the deadline date?**

Contact your Adviser of Studies to let them know that you have missed the deadline for mitigating circumstances, and submit your mitigating circumstances form and supporting evidence, as soon as possible. You should state in your application why you missed the deadline.

**How do I report mitigating circumstances?**

You will need to complete the Mitigating Circumstances application form and provide supporting evidence before the deadline date which is set by your School. The application form is on the University website: [Mitigating Circumstances Application Form](#).

You should download the form and complete it with as much information as you can. You also need to include evidence to support your application. An example of a completed mitigating circumstances form is included at the end of this document.

**What do I do if I submit coursework after the deadline date?**

If you submit your coursework after the deadline, and you think mitigating circumstances have impacted on your ability to get your work in on time, you should complete a mitigating circumstances application form and submit this with your coursework.

**What do I do if I miss an exam or perform badly in an exam because of mitigating circumstances?**

If your exam performance has been affected or you miss an exam because of events in your life (mitigating circumstances) you should submit a mitigating circumstances application form as soon as possible.

**What evidence do I need to provide?**

Evidence is needed to demonstrate or provide confirmation of the circumstances. The type of evidence depends on your situation. The evidence needs to be relevant and clarify the information you have written in the application form and should be originals, photocopies are not normally accepted.

Examples of the types of evidence which you might use to support an application for mitigating circumstances:

- A doctor’s note or medical certificate for the period;
- A note from a counsellor, religious leader or other appropriate professional individual who is relevant to the circumstance;
- Copy of a death certificate or order of service;
- In some instances, a self-certification form (the University form is available from the University Health Service website and can be used for illnesses for a period of up to 7 days). [Self-certification form](#).
What if I don’t have evidence?

The School Mitigating Circumstances Committee needs evidence to support your application for mitigating circumstances – the Committee needs this to validate your request. It is important that the evidence is submitted at the same time as your application form. On rare occasions the Mitigating Circumstances Committee will consider applications without evidence, but this is unusual. If you do not have evidence you should speak to your Adviser of Studies to explain why and include an explanation in your mitigating circumstances application form.

Where do I hand in my mitigating circumstances form and evidence?

The School Office, as described in the School Handbook/Study Guide. If you are in doubt please ask at the School Office if you are handing in the form to the correct School.

You should submit a hard copy of your completed mitigating circumstances application form and the relevant evidence in a sealed envelope, marked Mitigating Circumstances – Private and Confidential.

Who will consider my mitigating circumstances?

The School Mitigating Circumstances Committee, who are made up of appropriate staff from the School. Your mitigating circumstances form and evidence will be seen by staff involved in processing the application forms and members of the Mitigating Circumstances Committee. Mitigating circumstances are anonymised and treated as confidential. The Mitigating Circumstances Committee provide a recommendation to the Exam Board. The details of your application are not shared with the Exam Board.

What will the School Mitigating Circumstances Committee look at?

Your application form explaining why you think circumstances beyond your control have adversely affected your performance in summative assessment(s) and the evidence you have provided. The Committee will take into account the evidence, the effect of the event(s), the timing of the event(s), and your performance in the assessment.

What recommendations can the School Mitigating Circumstances make?

The Committee makes recommendations to the Exam Board, who will use this to consider your overall academic performance.

The recommendations available to the School Mitigating Circumstances Committee are: no change to the grade; additional opportunity to retake the assessment; first attempt of the assessment; condonement or compensation; mark adjustment; or credit awarded.

What if I am sick on the day of the exam?

If you are not well enough to attend the exam, please notify the School Office as soon as possible and submit a mitigating circumstances form as soon as you are able.

If you are able to attend the exam then do, but if you feel you have not performed as well as you might have, had you not been unwell, then you can submit a mitigating circumstances form explaining the situation.

When do I find out the decision that has been made?
The School Office will email the decision to you as soon as possible after the School Mitigating Circumstances Committee.

**Is there an appeals process?**

You can appeal the decision of the Exam Board if it falls into one of these categories:

(a) extenuating circumstances affecting your performance and of which the examiners were unaware when their decision was taken, or

(b) procedural irregularities (including administrative error) in the conduct of a written or oral examination of such a nature as to give rise to reasonable doubt whether the examiners would have reached the same conclusion had they not occurred, or

(c) prejudice or bias on the part of one or more of the examiners.

Further information is available on the University website: [Appeals](#)

**Who should I contact if I need help or advice about any of this?**

Please get in touch with your Adviser of Studies or contact the School Office. Help and support is always available from DUSA or the Enquiry Centre, so you can pop in and speak to someone in confidence.

November 2019
Example of a completed mitigating circumstances application form:

Application for Consideration of Mitigating Circumstances

Please read the attached guidance notes (Appendix 1) carefully to assist you with the completion of this application form. The application should be submitted as a hard copy, accompanied by the appropriate evidence, to the School Office of your home School (or as described in the School’s guidance or handbook). All material must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked ‘Mitigating Circumstances - Private and Confidential’. Students studying on distance learning programmes should contact the School Office about possible alternative submission arrangements. Please note that this application does not cover requests to extend assessment deadlines.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>A N OTHER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contact phone number</td>
<td>xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matriculation number</td>
<td>xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme of study</td>
<td>xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode of study (e.g. full time, part time, distance learning)</td>
<td>Full</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year of study</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adviser of studies (or equivalent)</td>
<td>xx</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Which assessments/examinations were/will be affected? Please list below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module title and code(^1)</th>
<th>Examination/assessment item(s)</th>
<th>Exam/assessment submission date</th>
<th>Date assessment submitted (if applicable)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>XXXXXXX</td>
<td>xxxxx</td>
<td>11/3/XX</td>
<td>13/3/XX</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) For programmes that are not modularised (e.g. the MBChB and BDS) a module code does not need to be entered.
Details of the circumstances that have significantly affected your performance (see guidance notes). Please provide details of the impact for each element listed above.

My mid-term assignment was affected due to a concussion that I suffered whilst playing rugby on 6 March. I developed severe headaches which prevented me from concentrating and working effectively for any substantial period of time. The inability to revise and work effectively during this period of time affected the work I was able to produce and prevented me from meeting the deadline.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The period(s) of time that you were affected</th>
<th>From: 6 March</th>
<th>To: 31 March</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From:</td>
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<td>From:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Have these circumstances been allowed for in other ways (e.g. disability adjustments)?

Yes  No

Circle the correct answer

If yes, please provide details:

Evidence provided in support of your application (see guidance notes). Please specify what evidence is attached or if to follow.

Letter from my GP (attached).

What is your preferred outcome from this process?

For any late penalties to be waived and for consideration to be given to the fact that my performance in this assignment has been affected.

I consent to the information I have given in this form being discussed with my Adviser of Studies.

Yes  No

Delete as applicable

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge, the information I have provided is correct and complete, and consent to this information being used by the Mitigating Circumstances Committee.

Signed: Date: 31 March

The deadlines for submission of applications for consideration of mitigating circumstances are available from the University Student Services website and also described in the relevant student handbooks or in specific guidance provided by the School and made available on My Dundee.
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Mitigating Circumstances Advice and Support Flow

Have you experienced significant, unforeseen or unavoidable issues which have affected your recent academic performance?

- **Contact** the School and let them know – this way we can help support you when you need it most.

- It is likely that you will need to complete a Mitigating Circumstances Application Form and submit this with related evidence to your School Office before the **deadline date**

- **Do you need help with submitting your mitigating circumstances?**

  - Make **contact** with one or more of the following:
    - **DUSA**: advice@dusa.co.uk
    - School Adviser of Studies or School Office
    - Enquiry Centre: [Enquiry Centre](#)

- **Engage** with the support on offer and follow the advice you are given; this might be a meeting with the DUSA VPA or Adviser of Studies, or a talk with a Student Support Adviser in the Enquiry Centre

- **Compete** your mitigating circumstances application form and **submit** to the School Office along with your evidence to support your application.
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Mitigating Circumstances Process Flow

Submit your completed Mitigating Circumstances Application Form and related evidence to your School Office before the deadline date

MC Form and evidence is reviewed by the School MC Committee. Students do not attend in person

School MC Committee reviews: your evidence, the effect of the event, the timing of the event, your performance in the assessment

MCs are considered under 4 categories: Severe, Significant, Mild, No Case

Severe, Significant or Mild cases means action will be taken based on your overall academic performance and the severity of the case

No Case means no further consideration and no action is taken

School MC Committee will make a recommendation e.g. no change, additional opportunity, first attempt, condonement or compensation, mark adjustment or credit awarded

School MC Committee informs the Exam Board of its recommendation

Exam Board considers the recommendation and makes a decision based on your overall performance in your assessments

Students are informed by the School Office of MC outcome, action to be taken and support available