

# Mitigating Circumstances Procedures

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# Mitigating Circumstances Procedures

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Effective from the start of the 2023/24 academic year

## 1.0 Introduction and Purpose

- 1.1 This document sets out the procedures for considering students' requests for mitigation. This includes how Mitigating Circumstances Panels operate, within agreed School parameters, and the application of their recommendations.
- 1.2 The document should be read alongside the [\*Policy on Mitigating Circumstances and Coursework Extensions\*](#) and, where appropriate, the [\*Guidance for Dealing with Disability-Related requests for Mitigation\*](#) (produced by the Disability Advisory and Support Service (DASS)). DASS also produce [\*Guidance for Disability Advisory and Support Service \(DASS\) Related Automatic Extensions\*](#), and [\*Student guidance on DASS-related Automatic Extensions\*](#).
- 1.3 Requirements of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) or the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) which affect how requests for mitigation are considered, will take precedence over the details within this document. In this case, Schools must publish the specific arrangements within programme handbooks and any other relevant locations/formats.

## 2.0 Scope and Definitions

- 2.1 These Procedures apply to Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught students. They will only apply to Postgraduate Research students when they are studying the taught elements of a doctoral programme of study. The policy which deals with mitigating circumstances affecting Postgraduate Research students is the [\*Policy on the Circumstances Leading to Changes to Postgraduate Research Study\*](#). Students on Degree Apprenticeships, including higher apprenticeships, should refer to the [\*Procedure on Break in Learning for Degree Apprentices\*](#).
- 2.2 For definitions relating to mitigating circumstances, please see section 2.0 of the Policy on Mitigating Circumstances and Coursework Extensions.

## 3.0 Submission of Requests for Mitigation

- 3.1 Students are responsible for submitting a request for mitigation to their School according to the procedures and deadlines published by the School. Students may wish to consult the [Basic Guide to Mitigating Circumstances](#), the [Student Support page on mitigating circumstances](#) or the [Students' Union Advice Service](#) for further advice about the process. Students are encouraged to tell their School as soon as they are aware of any possible issues that may affect their progress or assessments. Early submission of requests makes it easier, for example, to offer flexibility in the arrangements for assessment.
- 3.2 If students are experiencing specific circumstances which mean they are physically unable to submit their own request for mitigation (for example, being in hospital or otherwise incapacitated), a member of School or Programme staff or a family member or friend can be asked to help submit a request.
- 3.3 Schools must tell students the deadline dates for requests for mitigation for individual course units or programmes. They must also give details to students of the location/format of the School's Request for Mitigation form or online submission system. Students should check (for example, in programme handbooks or their School intranet) the version and format of the form that needs to be completed. (As part of current work on the Student Experience Programme, SEP, a new institutional online submission system is being developed for students to request mitigation, but in the interim period, Schools are using their own forms/submission methods).
- 3.4 Requests for mitigation submitted after the School's published deadline date will not be considered without strong evidence for why the circumstances were not, or could not, have been notified before the deadline date. To allow students to submit a case for circumstances that have arisen *during the course of that assessment period*, Schools should ensure mitigation submission deadlines are set one week after the end of each assessment period. (If Schools have different arrangements for deadlines for circumstances which occurred during an assessment period, these should be clearly communicated to students).
- 3.5 Personal feelings such as embarrassment, pride or cultural concerns, or having concerns about the confidential treatment of requests for mitigation, will not be accepted as strong explanations for why students failed to submit a request for mitigation. Circumstances that could not have been made known to the School before the deadline date for requests for mitigation, will also not be accepted unless this is proven by sufficient evidence, as described in paragraph 3.6.
- 3.6 Requests should be accompanied by appropriate, independent supporting documents or evidence, which will be checked to ensure there are no doubts regarding their authenticity. In order to confirm the accuracy and effect of the circumstances described by the student,

colleagues considering the requests for mitigation should be satisfied that the evidence provided is suitably independent, accurate, and from the time that the request refers to. It would be expected, for example, that evidence is provided on letter headed paper, written in English (or certifiably translated), clearly states the name and signature of the author of the material, includes relevant dates, and has the student's name visible<sup>1</sup>. Colleagues considering requests must respect the confidentiality of any application or evidence they receive.

- 3.7 Students registered with DASS who have stated a disability-related reason for their mitigation should not repeatedly be asked to provide medical evidence to support their application, provided that this relates to the same disability for which they are registered with DASS. However, if students have stated external factors that have e.g. exacerbated their disability, evidence of these external factors should still be provided. DASS will advise the School if they consider that further disability-related evidence is required. DASS registered students applying for the reasons above must provide a detailed explanation of how their disability is affecting their studies.
- 3.8 In instances where a student has disclosed a disability or a possible health concern, then the student must be directed to appropriate University support service(s) in the same communication.
- [Referral to DASS form](#) (and [accompanying guidance](#))
  - [Referral to Occupational Health form](#) (and [accompanying guidance](#))
  - Information about access to the Counselling and Mental Health Service for routine appointments can be found on the [Counselling and Mental Health Service website](#). If colleagues have more significant concerns about a student, they should email [counselling.service@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:counselling.service@manchester.ac.uk) with their concerns and the duty staff will contact the student directly.
- 3.9 A student cannot submit the same standalone, individual circumstance as a request for mitigation more than once, unless they can show that the situation has become worse in some way, the circumstances are ongoing and unpreventable (for example, they are disability-related) or the effects on the student have lasted longer than expected.<sup>2</sup>
- 3.10 Where a student wishes to apply for mitigation, and they confirm that they have already submitted information and/or evidence for an ongoing case under the procedures listed in a-d below, the University appointed case handler may provide a statement, to be used as evidence, summarising the details of the case for consideration. The colleague considering the student's request for mitigation should contact the relevant service/colleague, e.g. Advice & Response, to confirm details of the ongoing case and/or the impact on the student:

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<sup>1</sup> For further information about evidence, please see the [Basic Guide to Mitigating Circumstances](#), seek advice from the relevant School, or see paragraph 3.6 of this document, which provides indicators of what would show that evidence is authentic.

<sup>2</sup> Schools have their own processes in place for recording relevant information. This will in future be incorporated in the University wide system.

- a. [Academic Appeals Procedure \(Regulation XIX\)](#)
- b. [Student Complaints Procedure \(Regulation XVIII\)](#)
- c. [Dignity at Work and Study Policy](#)
- d. [Conduct and Discipline of Students \(Regulation XVII\)](#)

3.11 Requests for mitigation should be submitted by a student to their Programme owning School only, even if the student is submitting a request for mitigation for a unit managed by another School. All cases will be considered and decided upon by the Programme owning School, although other Schools may be consulted at the discretion of the Mitigating Circumstances Panel. For incoming Study Abroad/Exchange students, the Placements and International Programmes Office (PIP) has a specific policy so students should contact the IPO for information of how to submit a request for mitigation.

## 4.0 Stages for considering requests for mitigation

4.1 Mitigating circumstances are considered in three stages:

- *Preliminary Stage: Identifying cases (responsibility of PS colleagues in Schools).* This stage identifies all the cases that were received:
  - a. *by the School's published deadline date for requests for mitigation.* If this is the case, these requests would move onto Stage 1.
  - b. *after the published deadline date.* If there is no acceptable and strong explanation for why requests for mitigation were submitted after the School's published deadline date\*, students must be advised that their claims cannot be considered and should be referred to the Policy on Mitigating Circumstances and Coursework Extensions, and the section in their programme handbook or other sources which refer to the submission of requests for mitigation.
 

\* Possible examples of students providing strong evidence of why they were unable to submit a request for mitigation by the published deadline date include the hospitalisation or incapacitation of the student, backed up by evidence.
- *Stage 1: Consideration of Requests/Accepting mitigation* (responsibility initially of PS colleagues with academic consideration at regular meetings/via regular communications as required). This stage establishes whether those cases received, and which have passed the preliminary stage, have sufficient grounds for mitigation (see Paragraph 6.1). If they have, the case will proceed to the next stage.

Schools will determine their own clear parameters for each course unit or programme as appropriate against which requests for mitigation will be considered, based on the following model:

- *Requests for extensions to coursework/assessment* received by the School's set deadline should be routinely considered for approval by PS staff, *within the parameters agreed by the academic programme leads*. Where a request falls outside of these parameters, individual cases will be considered with the appropriate academic lead. (Please also see [Procedure for Extensions](#)).
  - *For all other requests for mitigation*, these will be initially considered by PS staff to make a suggested decision to *accept* or *reject* the request. These would be subject to academic agreement at regular meetings (normally weekly, when required) or other communications. Records will need to be taken of these meetings/communications.
  - Where there is disagreement between colleagues regarding a specific request, the final decision will sit with an appropriate Senior Teaching and Learning Lead (e.g. Director of Teaching and Learning, Head of Education) within the School.
  - Students will be given a provisional mitigation outcome at the earliest opportunity.
  - All mitigating circumstances outcomes will be communicated to the Examination Board<sup>3</sup> for final endorsement (see Stage 3 Page 16 below).
- *Stage 2: Applying mitigation* (responsibility of the Examination Board). This stage determines what specific mitigation should be applied to the outcomes of the students' assessments, based on a holistic view of the students' performance (see section 7.0).

4.2 For a flow chart demonstrating these stages, please see **Appendix A: Mitigating Circumstances process flow chart**.

## 5.0 Handling requests for mitigation

5.1 Initial consideration of requests for coursework extensions or other requests for mitigation will be undertaken by the relevant PS colleague/s within a School. Those cases which do not fall within the agreed parameters will be discussed with the nominated academic colleagues to determine an outcome. Only in exceptional circumstances would a Mitigating Circumstances Panel be convened.

5.2 Colleagues considering students' requests for mitigation determine whether there is sufficient evidence of circumstances eligible for mitigation and, if so, decide if the circumstances had, or were likely to have had, an adverse effect on the student's performance. If so, they will make a recommendation on how to apply mitigation. It is then the role of an Examination Board to consider the effects of this and apply or adjust the recommendations.

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<sup>3</sup> Examination Boards may delegate this to a regular subgroup to ensure timely communications within agreed parameters,

- 5.3 Review meetings (if required) may meet in person, by Teams/Zoom or other online format, or endorsement of decisions can take place via email. They should be convened regularly, according to the parameters set by the School and with sufficient timeliness to be able to report to relevant Examination Boards (for Semester One, Semester Two and Resit Periods, as well as prior to the Final Award Boards for PGT students graduating in December).
- 5.4 If in exceptional circumstances a Mitigating Circumstances Panel needs to be convened, the membership will be taken from and approved by the Examination Board; it will be chaired by a member of the Examination Board and serviced by a member of PS staff, with other members as necessary. In the Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health, Progress Committees may act in this way and fulfil the same role as a Mitigating Circumstances Panel.
- 5.5 Consideration of requests for mitigation by colleagues will include considering documentary evidence and students are not normally required to attend meetings. Colleagues may at their discretion consult with relevant University support services where a student has indicated that they are receiving support. Please see paragraph 5.6 for information about cases which mention disability/DASS.
- 5.6 Where colleagues are considering rejecting a request for mitigation that mentions disability support, lack of disability support, the impact of a disability or where a student has disclosed a possible disability, they must refer the case to the Disability Advisory and Support Service (DASS). DASS will, where possible, confirm the individual circumstances, verify the information provided, and provide specialist advice on disability-related applications before the School colleague reaches a final decision. This should be the case regardless of whether or not the student is registered with the DASS, as legislative duties may still apply. Colleagues can also seek further information about potential types of disability from the DASS (<http://www.dso.manchester.ac.uk/who-do-we-support/current-students/>).
- 5.7 Schools must maintain a written record of all decisions made, which they are able to report on and which are held in accordance with the University's Records Retention Schedule. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) recommends that "A written record should be kept of any meeting held to decide the case, setting out who attended, a brief outline of the proceedings and the reasons for the decisions taken, including the outcome for the student". It is good practice to keep full notes of decisions, especially in cases where requests for mitigation are declined. The OIA may require copies of meeting notes as part of appeals cases."
- 5.8 Arrangements for dealing with mitigating circumstances should be coordinated with procedures for related student matters including disability support, attendance/engagement monitoring and wellbeing, for example, under [Regulation XX, Monitoring Attendance and Wellbeing of Students](#) (for which specific procedures should be outlined locally in programme

handbooks). Students who submit multiple requests for mitigation should be highlighted by PS colleagues, so that any necessary considerations and arrangements for support can be put in place.

## 6.0 Accepting mitigation

6.1 Initial consideration will decide whether there is sufficient strong evidence of students' circumstances that are eligible for mitigation. It will then be decided whether the circumstances will have had, or could have had, an adverse effect on the student's performance. If so, it will then be decided how significant the effect was likely to have been. If it is decided that the effect was (or would have been), significant, the mitigation request will be accepted. Mitigation requests may be accepted for a specific assessment, or in relation to more general effects on a number of assessments, or for both.

## 7.0 Applying mitigation

7.1 If a mitigation request is accepted, a recommendation will be made as to how that should be applied, according to the alpha numeric codes listed in this document (see section 8.0) and based on a view of the severity of the circumstances that affected the student. It is envisaged that these recommendations will be adopted by Examination Boards in the majority of cases. However, the remit of the review of the mitigating circumstances is to establish the severity of mitigating circumstances and to determine whether such circumstances have had a significant effect on the outcomes of an assessment. The Examination Board will have a more holistic view of the student's performance across their whole programme. It is the role of the Examination Board to determine how to apply the mitigation, given the student's assessment results as a whole. The application of mitigation is considered to be an academic judgement; therefore, the final decision on what action or code to be applied rests with an Examination Board, though it will be considering a recommendation from others in the School.

7.2 Only one recommendation/code should be made by the School and applied by the Examination Board (for example, students should not be offered *both* an extension to coursework and a first sit in the event of the student not submitting their coursework by the extended deadline).

7.3 In accordance with the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Degree Regulations, as reassessment cannot be undertaken by final year undergraduate or penultimate year Integrated Masters students, the recommendations available take into account distinct year groups alongside the types of assessment. The exception to this is Schools which have alternative progression and assessment regulations where these are required by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs).

- 7.4 In some programmes of study, discipline-specific or professional requirements may mean that the options available to the Examination Board for dealing with mitigation are very restricted, for example, permission to re-sit an examination or to re-submit a piece of assessed coursework. In such instances, students must be informed clearly in the relevant programme handbook and Schools should ensure these details are regularly checked and kept up to date. Members of the Examination Board need to be aware of any specific requirements relating to the programme of study which deviate from the usual range of mitigation codes or actions available.
- 7.5 Where a preliminary internal meeting of the Examination Board is held to review the results before they are sent to External Examiners, that meeting may conveniently be used for applying mitigation. Otherwise, the whole Board may meet, with or without External Examiners, or it may delegate the task to a sub-group of the Board. Whatever arrangements are adopted, they must be clearly defined in advance and acceptable to the External Examiners.
- 7.6 The Examination Board may agree to apply general mitigation to the overall performance of the student. In such cases, the Board will decide, according to the severity of the circumstances and of other available evidence such as prior performance, whether the student is likely to have achieved higher overall marks sufficient to demonstrate appropriate learning outcomes, if they had not experienced the specific circumstances. The Board will then determine, in the light of the available results, whether the student satisfies the published requirements for progression, for a specific degree award or classification, or for treatment under its usual procedures for a borderline candidate. The Examination Board will not adjust the mark of the student in individual units or overall, but will flag marks which have had mitigation applied so that this can be taken into account by the Examination Board in a subsequent year. (For example, when using that year's marks in computing the overall average for the programme in a subsequent year, the Examination Board will need to allow for the consequent reduction in the overall average if it falls close to a borderline.)

(NOTE: Work currently taking place as part of the SEP tech and process strand aims to produce a system that would be better able to flag up details of mitigation carried forward to subsequent years. In the meantime, Schools should ensure that any action to consider mitigating in a subsequent year is followed up.)

- 7.7 Where a request for mitigation covers a significant number of units which the Examination Board feel unable to fully mitigate, rather than a specific component of assessment, it may be more appropriate for the Examination Board to consider the student repeating the year or re-sitting with/without attendance (subject also to the student's agreement). It should be noted, however, that payment of fees may be applicable in these circumstances. Alternatively, the Board may consider the appropriateness of advising the student to consider applying to take an interruption (as per the [Policy on Interruptions to an Undergraduate or Postgraduate Taught](#)

[Programme of Study](#)); although retrospective interruptions would only normally be approved under exceptional circumstances.

7.8 When a student who is registered with DASS misses the first sit of an assessment citing disability reasons, but the level of assessment means resit opportunities are not available, (e.g. level 6 or 7 for Integrated Masters), Schools should enquire with DASS to see if the reasons can be validated. If so, the DASS’s likely recommendation would be to allow the student an opportunity to take the assessment as a first sit in a subsequent assessment period, but NOT to discount the assessment altogether without the student having the opportunity to sit it as a first sit. This is also the case when a student is not registered with the DASS but has disclosed a disability, or possible disability, through the mitigating circumstances process.

7.9 As soon as possible after the meeting of the Examination Board, the final decisions made should be conveyed by the School to students who have applied for mitigation.

## 8.0 Recommendation codes

**Please note:** *The codes below will continue to be used during 2023/24, with work being carried out as part of the SEP Tech & Process stream, aiming to condense the codes for 2024/25 onwards.*

8.1 The table below outlines potential outcomes from the review of Mitigating Circumstances that should normally be applied to each individual student case following appropriate consideration.

### Accepting mitigation: Code Outcome

A	Accepted – circumstances meet the grounds for mitigation and the School is satisfied with the supporting evidence. A recommendation based on the severity of the impairment suffered by the student is indicated by the alphanumeric codes described under Applying Mitigation.
PA	Provisionally accepted – student has referred to difficulties in obtaining evidence or DASS has recommended that further evidence should be obtained, but based on the description of the circumstances, the request is approved pending the evidence being provided (submission date must be before the Examination Board in which the mitigation is considered). A recommendation based on the severity of the impairment suffered by the student is indicated by the alphanumeric codes described under Applying Mitigation below, but it would not be applied if the requested evidence is not presented to support the case.
N codes	The following codes indicate when mitigating circumstances are not accepted, with the codes being helpful as part of the process of providing feedback to students.

N	Not accepted – circumstances provided by the student are not regarded as grounds for mitigation under the Policy on Mitigating Circumstances and Coursework Extensions.
N1	Not accepted - supporting evidence does not cover the relevant period.
N2	Not accepted - supporting evidence not supplied by an appropriate source.
N3	Not accepted - evidence is deemed insufficient to support the student's claim of seriousness of impact on their assessment performance.
N4	Not accepted - the evidence supplied does not confirm the student's claim of the circumstance adversely affecting them.
N5	Not accepted – no evidence is provided, and the student has not given any explanation as to the reasons why nor indicated when evidence could be available.
N6	Not accepted - the evidence relates to a chronic condition for and which the student is already in receipt of appropriate support from the DASS. This decision must always be confirmed by the DASS, as there are occasions when the support available will not be able to fully mitigate the student's need.
N7	Not accepted - evidence relates to a condition or circumstance previously used to claim mitigation, when on the earlier occasion the School, instructed the student that this mitigation could not be used again and may have instructed the student to obtain support from the DASS. This decision must always be confirmed by the DASS as some conditions will inevitably recur, sometimes without warning and mitigation may still be relevant.
N8	Not accepted – the request for mitigation was submitted after the School's published deadline and the student has not provided any strong reason for the delayed submission.
N9	Not accepted - other stated reason. [ <b>Note:</b> Must be recorded.]

**Note:** Examination Boards need only be informed of accepted, or provisionally accepted, requests for mitigation. The above codes must be used to provide an outcome of the decision to the student, where mitigation is not accepted. The minutes and communication with the student may detail further explanation as to why a code is allocated.

### Applying Mitigation

(Schools should recommend one of the listed codes relating to each type of work which was identified by the student as being affected by mitigating circumstances.)

- i. Coursework (including dissertations), which can be subject to reassessment

### **Code Recommendation**

- C1. Coursework to be submitted as a first attempt (deferral) in the next possible reassessment period appropriate to the programme.

- C2. Coursework to be submitted as a reassessment (referral) in the next possible reassessment period appropriate to the programme.
- C3. A reasonable extension to coursework to be granted within an assessment period (new deadline will need to be stated). This would include the removal of any late submission penalties imposed.
- C4. Exclude the coursework assessment mark(s) from the calculation of the unit average if the coursework constitutes 30% or less of the unit assessment and the ILOs have been met.

Regarding C1 to C3, if feedback for coursework has been provided to a programme cohort, Schools may request that the Programme Lead sets a new coursework question.

ii. Coursework (including dissertations), where reassessment is not practicable

Students may be unable to access or undertake some assessments once the deadline for the assessment has passed (e.g., an eLearning assessment in Blackboard or carrying out some laboratory work). In such cases, where there is no opportunity to recommend codes C1 - C3 (above), Schools should consider recommendations C5 – C7 (below).

**Code Recommendation**

- C5. Student to sit paper copy version of the eLearning assessment at a date set by the School.
- C6. Student to sit using an alternative assessment method, to be agreed with the unit coordinator, either as a referral or deferral, but the assessment must meet the same intended learning outcomes (ILOs) as the original.
- C7. Exclude the coursework assessment mark(s) from the calculation of the unit average if the coursework constitutes 30% or less of the unit assessment.

iii. Assessments where resit opportunities exist (e.g. years 1 or 2 of a 3-year programme or programmes with PSRB requirements which allow final year resits)

**Code Recommendation**

- A1. If affected assessment(s) have been passed at first attempt, but the student has significantly underperformed in relation to other assessments, the assessment(s) may be taken as a first attempt (deferral) in the next possible assessment period.
- A2. If affected reassessment(s) have been passed, but the student has significantly underperformed in relation to other assessments, the assessment(s) may be taken as a reassessment (referral) in the next possible assessment period.
- A3. If affected assessment(s) or reassessment(s) have been passed, the results of the affected assessments may be excluded from the degree classification calculation if there is evidence of underperformance compared to unaffected assessments/units.
- A4. If assessment(s) have been failed or missed, they may be taken as a first attempt (deferral) in the next possible assessment period.

- A5. If reassessment(s) have been failed or missed, they may be taken as a reassessment (referral) in the next possible assessment period. (When making this recommendation, the Board should consider the required workload.)
- A6. In exceptional circumstances, only if it is determined that more evidence (e.g., other assessment results) is required to conduct a result comparison, it could be recommended that the mitigation is carried forward to be evaluated in a future year/Examination Board.
  - iv. Assessments (including coursework) where resit opportunities cannot be offered as an option (e.g. in the final year of a programme)

### **Code Recommendation**

- A7. Where there is sufficient evidence of attainment, exclude the assessment mark(s) from the calculation of the unit average if the assessment(s) for which mitigation applies does not exceed 50% of the unit assessment.
- A8. If there is evidence of underperformance compared to unaffected units, disregard the affected *unit(s)* from the degree classification calculation (to a limit of 45 credits for the academic year).
- A9. Extend the limit of the boundary zone for students falling between degree classifications at final classification stage by a maximum of 2%. The School will determine the extent of this depending on their assessment of evidence relating to severity, duration, timing and impact of the mitigating circumstances.
- A10. In exceptional circumstances for scenarios not addressed in a recommendation above, a School may make an alternative recommendation considered to be reasonable; however, an explanation of the reasons must be fully documented.

## **9.0 Right of Appeal**

- 9.1 Since colleagues reviewing mitigation operate under delegated powers from the Examination Board (as defined in the Procedure for Mitigating Circumstances Panels), students would not normally be able to appeal their decisions unless some procedural irregularity has occurred. In the event that students believe that a procedural irregularity did occur (for example, the School failed to consider a piece of evidence the student submitted to accompany their request for mitigation), they should raise concerns with their School as soon as they are aware of the potential procedural irregularity. Schools should then look into this concern as soon as possible. If a student is subsequently not satisfied with the way their School has handled their concern, they can submit an appeal under [Regulation XIX: Academic Appeals Procedure](#) once the final decision of an Examination Board, or equivalent body, has been published.
- 9.2 Students can appeal against the final decision of an Examination Board, or equivalent body, under [Regulation XIX: Academic Appeals Procedure](#), if appropriate and in line with the grounds for appeal set out in Regulation XIX.

9.3 In cases where students did not request mitigation before the School's published deadline but believe that they have a strong explanation for this, requests for an appeal can be made following the publication of confirmed results by following [Regulation XIX: Academic Appeals Procedure](#).

## 10.0 Sources of Support and Advice

10.1 Please see details listed in section 5.0 of the [Policy on Mitigating Circumstances and Coursework Extensions](#).

## Appendix A: Mitigating Circumstances process flow chart

### Preliminary Stage: Identifying Cases

Student submits Request for Mitigation to their School.\*



\*For 2023/24, local submission processes are in place. Going forwards, a new institutional online process is planned through the SEP tech & process strand.

PS staff identify all requests that were received by the specific School deadline for the assessment. If received by the deadline, the request moves to Stage 1.



In cases where a request was received after the deadline, if there is no acceptable and strong explanation for why the request was submitted late, students must be advised that their claims cannot be considered. They should be referred to the Policy on Mitigating Circumstances and Coursework Extensions and the section in their programme handbook or other sources which refer to the submission of requests for mitigation. They should also be signposted to relevant sources of support.

### Stage 1: Consideration of Requests/Accepting Mitigation

Consideration of requests to be more streamlined and informal; it is suggested Schools could have a shared mailbox where one or two PS colleagues receive and consider requests and make initial 'agree' or 'reject' decisions, with any problematic cases referred to the appropriate academics (identified by the School).

Request is processed by PS staff under locally agreed parameters. PS staff agree to approve or reject, or refer specific cases to the appropriate academics.



Approved requests are emailed to academic colleagues/ weekly for reference.



Regular (weekly, at relevant times of the year) meeting\* or email comms between PS staff & academic colleagues to consider any requests that fall outside the responsibility of PS staff, according to School agreed parameters.



\* Meetings will not have a set institutional list of members or quoracy requirements; details will be

determined locally. However, it is envisaged that there would be an academic chair and at least one PS colleague, with other relevant academic colleagues as necessary (e.g. Programme Directors, Heads of School, Teaching, Learning and Student Experience).

During the first year, while the process is being introduced, the Academic Lead may wish to look at samples of the rejected or approved requests made by PS staff. During this year, colleagues can learn from cases to determine whether anything needs to change in relation to the School level parameters.

Students will be permitted to appeal a rejected request for mitigation, only if there are procedural irregularities (e.g. if a request is rejected with the reason that the student did not submit any evidence, yet the student can prove they did submit the required evidence.)

If a student is subsequently not satisfied with the way their School has handled their concern, they can submit an appeal under Regulation XIX: Academic Appeals Procedure once the final decision of an Examination Board, or equivalent body, has been published.

Students can appeal against the final decision of an Examination Board, or equivalent body, under Regulation XIX: Academic Appeals Procedure, if appropriate and in line with the grounds for appeal set out in Regulation XIX.

A Community of Practice/Mitigating Circumstances Network to be set up, comprising of staff members responsible for making mitigating circumstances decisions in Schools, to share experiences and contribute to operational guidance. TLD to provide support during the first year, after which it is envisaged that the Network would be run by School colleagues.

### **Stage 2: Recommendation of outcomes**

For requests agreed by PS staff/academic colleagues, decisions to be made on the specific recommendation for each case, based on the recommendation codes in the Mitigating Circumstances Procedures.

### **Stage 3: Final consideration and decision by Examination Board**

Examination Boards consider the recommendations by Schools and make final decision on the mitigation outcome. (This could be the same as the recommendation from the panel, or different, based on the Board's holistic view of the student's performance and outcomes).

Policy / Procedure title	<b>Mitigating Circumstances Procedures</b>
Date approved	June 2023
Approving Body	Senate / Academic Standards and Quality Committee (Teaching, Learning and Students)
Version	2.0 June 2023
Supersedes	June 2017 version
Previous review dates	June 2017, June 2015 (document entitled Mitigating Circumstances Panels: Terms of Reference), September 2014
Related information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Policy on Mitigating Circumstances and Coursework Extensions</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Procedure for Extensions</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Procedure on Break in Learning for Degree Apprentices</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Mitigating circumstances and extension requests (Student Support webpage)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">DASS Guidance for Dealing with Disability-Related requests for Mitigation</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Guidance for Disability Advisory and Support Service (DASS) Related Automatic Extensions</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Student guidance on DASS-related Automatic Extensions</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Basic Guide to Mitigating Circumstances</a></li> </ul>
Next review date	June 2027
Policy owner	Director of Student and Academic Services (SAS)
Lead contact	Teaching and Learning Manager (Policies and Degree Apprenticeships), Teaching and Learning Delivery, Division of SAS  <i>For any queries or questions relating to this document, please direct your email to <a href="mailto:teaching-policy@manchester.ac.uk">teaching-policy@manchester.ac.uk</a></i>

Version amendment history: Mitigating Circumstances Procedures		
Version	Date	Reason for change
2.0	June 2023	<p><b>Updates made following a review of the Policy on Mitigating Circumstances and Mitigating Circumstances Procedures</b></p> <p>Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarifying some of the temporary arrangements that had been in place during the Covid-19 pandemic, which were now built into the Procedures permanently</li> <li>• Putting the document into a new agreed format for teaching and learning policies</li> <li>• Making explicit reference to extension requests</li> <li>• Adopting a new approach to triaging and approving mitigating circumstance claims in the first instance</li> </ul>
October 2022	October 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reference to the Assessment Commitments removed from the note at the top of the page and statement amended to read: "For specific arrangements for Mitigating Circumstances during 2022/23, please see: <a href="https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/tlso/policy-guidance/assessment/reaching-decisions-from-assessment/mitigating-circumstances/">https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/tlso/policy-guidance/assessment/reaching-decisions-from-assessment/mitigating-circumstances/</a> or <a href="https://www.studentsupport.manchester.ac.uk/study-support/mitigating-circumstances/">https://www.studentsupport.manchester.ac.uk/study-support/mitigating-circumstances/</a></li> </ul>
July 2022	July 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update to document control box re Division name and contact</li> </ul>

January 2021	January 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Note added to top of document regarding arrangements during Covid-19 and the Assessment Pledge</li></ul>
October 2021	October 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Note added to top of document regarding arrangements under the Assessment Commitments 2021/22</li></ul>
June 2018	June 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• DASS web links added June 2018</li></ul>