

## Mitigating Circumstances related to IT Issues

### *Temporary COVID-19 guidance*

University guidance on mitigating circumstances states that Computer/IT issues are not accepted as grounds for mitigation. However, as stated in the current [COVID-19 FAQs](#), during the current pandemic, computer/IT/WIFI issues can be considered as a grounds for mitigation.

The following guidance is intended to assist Schools in identifying evidence that may be considered in IT-related mitigation cases.

- Any student who is experiencing technical problems in accessing online content or assessment should be directed to the [Helpmegetonline](#) service. This service can provide technical support and equipment loans and logs all contacts and actions. If a reported and unresolved technical issue interferes with the submission of assessments, these contact logs can be retrieved for consideration. Faculty eLearning teams can assist in retrieving contact histories and action logs.
- If a student is informed by their IT Service provider, power company, etc. of maintenance or other scheduled downtime that will coincide with assessment submission dates, they should contact their Schools immediately so that alternative arrangements can be made. In such cases, copies of correspondence from the service provider or utility company may be requested.
- If a student experiences a network or hardware fault at the point of submission, they should take a screenshot or photograph any error message. They should then submit their assignment as soon as possible once the fault is resolved and send a copy of the captured error message to the School for consideration.
  - In such cases, students should be informed not to re-save their documents after the submission deadline has passed. Even if the submission is late, the document header can be interrogated to see if it was last saved before or after the deadline. Faculty eLearning teams can assist in retrieving document header information.
  - Faculty eLearning Teams can also provide records of a student's Blackboard usage immediately prior to submission to confirm whether or not they were logged on.
- In the case of a catastrophic failure that prevents the recovery of work intended for submission (e.g. a failed hard drive), it may be necessary to offer the student an alternative assessment. For this reason, students should be recommended to use cloud-based storage services and save their work regularly.
- Staff and students might wish to consider submitting part completed work prior to the deadline so that there is some record of achievement should there be an IT failure – this is not a requirement but is good practice and would provide evidence of work completed.
- Students are reminded to make regular backups of the work they are undertaking to minimise the impact of any IT failure – preferably to remote storage.