

## **Quick Student Guide to Extenuating Circumstances (Extension and Mitigation)**

(HEQMP 4/2b)

You can apply for extenuating circumstances when a circumstance might impact your academic performance. The term 'extenuating circumstances' includes the request for an extension of up to **7 calendar days** as well as **mitigation**. This guide will highlight when and how you can apply for extenuating circumstances. The full policy and procedure will always take precedence over this quick guide.

### **Extension**

Higher education academic regulations at New College Durham allow you to request an assessment deadline extension of **up to 7 calendar days** from your Programme Leader/Module Tutor. These circumstances are where the impact is not expected to last *more* than 7 calendar days i.e., short term illness.

The following conditions apply:

- You must request the extension in writing (usually via email) at least 24 hours **before** the original submission deadline;
- You must have a reasonable justification for the extension request;
- You must liaise directly with your Programme Leader/Module Tutor to request the extension, generally by email stating: the assessment/module impacted; reason for the request; and the length of extension (there is no form to complete);
- The Programme Leader/Module Tutor has the authority, based on the reason you provide, to accept or reject your extension request;
- Approved extensions will be officially noted at the next Assessment Board.

### **Mitigation**

Mitigating circumstances are 'unforeseeable or unpreventable circumstances that could have, or did have, a significant adverse effect on the academic performance of a student.' This might include significant illness or injury, or the death of a close family member, for example.

Events that were planned or could reasonably have been expected, such as holidays or moving house, will not normally be regarded as grounds for mitigation.

We suggest that you discuss your reasons for applying for mitigation with your Programme Leader/Module Tutor so they can provide you with advice and support.

To apply for mitigation, you need to complete the mitigation application form, which is available on the HE Information page contained within the New College Durham website or it can be found within the student intranet. Please submit the completed form to [mitigation@newdur.ac.uk](mailto:mitigation@newdur.ac.uk). or hand it in at the University Centre reception (further information is available at the end of the application form).

You must submit your form and supporting evidence **prior** to the next Extenuating Circumstances Panel following the original submission date. Applications outside of this timeframe will only be considered under exceptional circumstances.

### To consider when you complete the mitigation application form:

- Your Programme Leader/Module Tutor is a good first point of call and may be able to answer any general queries you have about the process. Your Programme Leader/ Module Tutor can help you to complete the document, potentially working to an action plan to ensure a satisfactory outcome.
- Your Programme Leader/Module Tutor can also provide a supporting statement on the mitigation application form.
- Ensure all of your details are accurate e.g. personal contact details, programme, module title, module code, assessment number and type etc.
- Your supporting statement within the mitigation application must be clear and detailed.
- Attach appropriate, independent evidence which relates **directly** to your reason for requesting mitigation and which covers the date(s) of the assessment(s).
- If you are submitting evidence late, submit it no later than 4 days before the mitigation panel takes place. Insufficient evidence may result in your application being rejected.

### Remember:

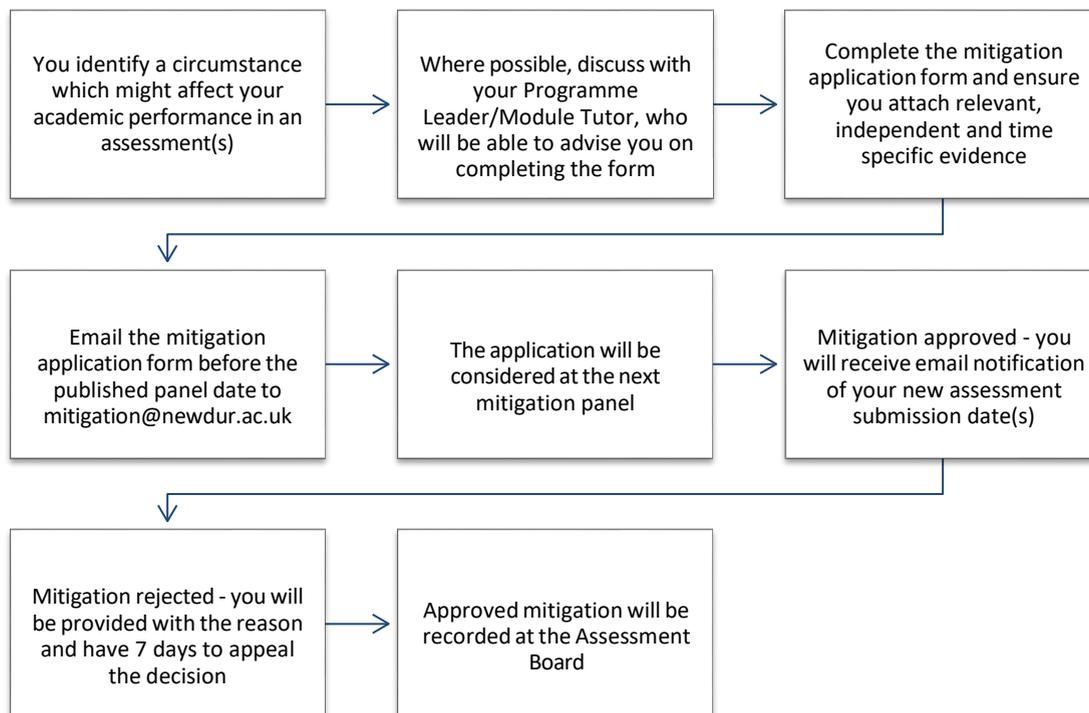
- The mitigation panel will not know you, so it is important you clarify the reason(s) for your mitigation request.
- The panel will make a decision based on the evidence provided to them on the day.
- The panel will reject your application form if it is inaccurate, the reason is insufficient or there is a lack of evidence.
- If your application is rejected, you have **7 calendar days** from receiving your outcome letter to supply additional information to the Chair of the panel, who may then overturn the initial decision. You can also appeal using the Academic Appeals Process.
- Unless the extenuating circumstances prevent you from completing the work, or if the assessment is an exam, you should continue working on your assessment(s) and submit it as soon as possible. You shouldn't wait for a Mitigation Panel decision to submit the work. When submitting the Extenuating Circumstances application, you must indicate whether you have already submitted your work.

### Additional Support

Additional support is available via Advice, Service and Careers (ASC); Personal Learning Coaches (PLCs) and the Students' Union. You can also discuss additional support requirements with your Programme Leader.



## Flow chart



### Normally Acceptable Circumstances for Mitigation:

- Bereavement
- Illness
- Other traumatic incident
- Significant close family problems
- Burglary or computer stolen (with some other evidence to confirm that the work was stolen – notes/ plans / drafts etc.)
- Car accident / other type of accident (with evidence to support this)
- Personal problems
- Attendance at Court / Involvement in legal proceedings/
- Undertaking public duties
- Unpredictable and unavoidable employer requirements

### Normally Unacceptable Circumstances for Mitigation:

- Holidays
- Weddings
- Family celebrations
- Technical problems – printing problems
- Computer failure / corrupt USB sticks etc
- Financial problems and part time working

### **Acceptable Independent Documentary Evidence:**

- Medical certificate – a prescription will not be acceptable without some other confirmation of the illness
- Letter from a medical professional treating yourself or a family member
- Proof of attendance/admittance to hospital
- Death certificate / copy of funeral order of service leaflet or similar / letter from a member of the clergy or priest or similar
- Letter from employer confirming that you had to work to cover a sick colleague
- Police report and crime number – evidence also needs to be given of previous work/ notes/rough drafts etc if work has been stolen
- Solicitor's letter
- Letter from transport company to say if the bus or train broke down or the service was interrupted
- Statement of attendance from a counsellor if personal problems are affecting your work

### **Evidence which may give rise to difficulties:**

- A personal statement
- Evidence submitted undated, without your name or without an organisation's name