



THE
TRAFFORD
COLLEGE
GROUP

Section:	Mitigating Circumstances
Version:	2
Author:	Mark Harris
Introduction:	March 2017
Review Date:	September 2019

REVISION HISTORY

Version	Date	Author	Description
1	March 17	Mark Harris	Initial Approval
1.1	Nov 17	Tristan Edwards	Adopted by Trafford College
2	April 18	Mark Harris	Trafford College Group Approval, amendments to titles, roles

APPROVAL

Version	Committee	Approval Date	Comment
1	CMT	March 17	
1.1	Executive	November 17	
2	HECOMM	May 2018	

HIGHER EDUCATION MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES POLICY, PROCEDURE AND GUIDANCE

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This policy is made for the use of staff and students of the Trafford College Group, comprising of Trafford College and Stockport College. For convenience, and unless otherwise indicated the group of colleges are referred to as 'the College' within this document.
- 1.2. This policy outlines the procedures relating to applications for consideration of mitigating circumstances by the mitigating circumstances panel (MCP).
- 1.3. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) define mitigating circumstances as "serious or significant circumstances which are unforeseen and/or beyond a student's control and could significantly impair their academic performance in one or more assessed activities, possibly over a short period of time. Mitigating circumstances may include medical matters, bereavement, jury service, etc."
- 1.4. Mitigating circumstances do not apply to long term medical or other conditions. The College makes reasonable adjustment in line with the Equality Act 2010 for students with disabilities which may include extensions on coursework submissions, for example.
- 1.5. Generally, learners will not be able to claim mitigation for the same condition on more than one occasion. Should a learner seek mitigation for the same condition on more than one occasion, the College may undertake procedures as described in the College's Fitness to Study Policy. There may be exceptions to this which will be managed on a case by case basis.
- 1.6. The mitigating circumstances policy and procedure at the College is evidence based. Learners will be required to evidence their claims appropriately. Additionally, learners should note the grounds on which mitigating circumstances can be claimed as at section 3 of this policy and the associated arrangements for claiming.

2. Principles

2.1. This policy and the practices contained therein are guided by the following principles

- Equality
- Consistency
- Confidentiality

3. Grounds for mitigation

3.1. The grounds on which mitigation can be sought are normally limited to:

- Serious illness that is not a permanent medical condition (see paragraph 1.3). This might include, for example, an illness requiring hospitalisation, a broken arm but does not cover illnesses such as headaches, colds or upset stomachs.
- The death of an immediate family member shortly before the date of assessment (usually 28 days before the scheduled assessment).
- Other profound circumstances beyond the control of a student, which could not be reasonably be foreseen or prevented (usually 28 days before the scheduled assessment).

3.2. A student may not normally claim mitigating circumstances on the basis that their family, financial or other general life problems including employment or other workload pressures affected performance unless they can produce written evidence that their performance has been adversely affected. These claims will need to be made with supporting evidence.

3.3. Additionally, the College is not able to take into account the misreading of assessment dates and times, timetabling of examinations or coursework submission, holidays or social commitments, car breakdowns or public transport delays, computer, printer or back-up failures.

3.4. Where a learner believes they have been impacted by the circumstances described at paragraph 3.3, particularly in relation to public transport delays, bad weather etc. they should liaise with their course leader in the first instance. If approved, appropriate supporting evidence will be required to verify claims. It is only anticipated that this will apply to learners who experience difficulties in traveling to College to undertake assessment. All claims will be required to be supported by evidence.

3.5. Learners entering an examination room or submit assessed work are considered to have declared themselves fit for assessment.

4. Categories of mitigating circumstances

4.1. Extension request

Where a learner requests, in advance, an extension to a coursework submission deadline.

Extensions are usually for a relatively short period of time, usually no longer than 2 weeks.

4.2. Deferral request

Where a learner was unable to attend at, or submit for, a scheduled assessment, of any sort, and requests to move the assessment to the next available assessment opportunity.

4.3. Mitigating Circumstances Board

Where a learner has missed the submission deadline/examination or believes their performance has been adversely affected, they should submit a claim to the mitigating circumstances board.

5. Procedures for dealing with mitigating circumstances requests

5.1. Extension requests

Higher National qualifications and courses validated by Sheffield Hallam University (SHU).

Learners seeking an extension should complete form EX1 and discuss their reasons for extensions with their course leader. The course leader will either approve the request, defer a decision pending further evidence or reject the request. The learner will normally need to provide appropriate evidence at the point of submission. Course leaders will then ensure the EX1 form and evidence are reported to the Chair of the Mitigating Circumstances Panel.

Where an extension is granted, the final mark must be available at the next assessment board. If a learner requires any additional time they must defer to the next available assessment opportunity as at paragraph 4.2.

5.2. Deferral Requests

Higher National qualifications and courses validated by Sheffield Hallam University (SHU).

Learners seeking to defer a scheduled assessment should complete form DF1 and provide supporting evidence. Learners should inform their course leader and submit complete applications to appeals@stockport.ac.uk.

Should a deferral be approved the piece of work would normally be due in the next assessment period.

5.3. Applications to the Mitigating Circumstances Board

Higher National qualifications and courses validated by Sheffield Hallam University (SHU).

Learners making applications to the mitigating circumstances board should complete form MB1 and provide supporting evidence. Learners should inform their course leader and submit complete applications appeals@stockport.ac.uk.

Should the board accept the claim, the learner would be granted the opportunity to submit for assessment as a first attempt (or continued second or third attempt) during the next assessment period. If accepted, any mark the learner has attained will be forfeited. Should the learner achieve a lower mark upon their next submission, the lower mark will stand.

5.4. Mitigation and confirmed results

If results have been confirmed by assessment boards or the published deadline for receipt of mitigating circumstances claims has passed, the learner may decide they have grounds to appeal.

Learners should be directed to the Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure in this instance.

6. Acceptable forms of evidence

6.1. Medical reports

Learners must visit a doctor or a nurse whilst they have symptoms so as to obtain a signed note including precise dates of illness, a diagnosis or description of symptoms and assessment of their impact on the learner's ability to prepare and/or complete assessment.

Notes or reports from medical professionals that are imprecise and state, for example, that the illness 'may have had an impact,' or that, 'the patient informs me,' will not normally be accepted as valid evidence. Appointment letters are unacceptable.

6.2. Mental Health Advisor Reports

Learners who are receiving support from the College's wellbeing team may request a signed note (prepared by the College's wellbeing team leader/manager) that includes a description of the symptoms and an assessment of their impact on the learner's ability to prepare and/or complete assessment. Appointment letters are unacceptable.

6.3. Employer's Letters

Part time students who are also working full time who request extensions or deferrals as a result of increased workloads will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. The College is unable to take account of events that are the result of normal working practices. Letters of support from employers should be on headed paper, signed by the learner's line manager and must detail, specifically, the impact of their workplace circumstances on their ability to complete assessment.

6.4. Other

All supporting evidence that does not fall within the categories above must provide independent verification of a claim.

Process flows for mitigation claims for all partner HEIs is attached at the end of this policy document.

Your Circumstances

Please describe the nature of your mitigating circumstances and explain how they have affected your academic performance in the assessments above?

What steps are you taking (or have you taken) to minimise the effect on your work?
e.g. Action plans, liaison with tutors and Support Staff

Student Declaration

I confirm that I have read and understood the College's policy and procedure for mitigating circumstances and that I have attached independent documentary evidence that supports my request. I understand that requests submitted without evidence will not be processed.

Student Signature:

Date: