



THE
TRAFFORD
COLLEGE
GROUP

**HE Mitigating
Circumstances
Procedure**

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Author: | Head of Higher Education and Skills |
| Consultation: | TCG Leadership Team |
| Approval: | Board of the Corporation |
| Version Date: | October 2020 |
| Approved Date: | July 2022 |
| Next Review: | June 2024 |

Contents

| | |
|--|---|
| 1. Introduction and Purpose | 3 |
| 2. Principles | 3 |
| 3. Grounds for Mitigation..... | 3 |
| 4. Categories of Mitigating Circumstances | 4 |
| 5. Procedures for Dealing with Mitigating Circumstances Requests | 4 |
| 6. Acceptable Forms of Evidence | 5 |
| HE Mitigating Circumstances Application Form | 7 |

1. Introduction and Purpose

1.1 This Procedure is made for the use of employees and students of the Trafford College Group (TCG). For convenience, and unless otherwise indicated the group of colleges are referred to as 'TCG' within this document.

1.2 This document 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. TCG 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, students will not be able to claim mitigation for the same condition on more than one occasion. Should a student seek mitigation for the same condition on more than one occasion, TCG may undertake procedures as described in the Fitness to Study Policy. There may be exceptions to this which will be managed on a case by case basis.

1.6 The Trafford College Group HE Mitigating Circumstances Procedure is evidence based:

- Students will be required to evidence their claims appropriately.
- Additionally, students should note the grounds on which mitigating circumstances can be claimed as at Section 3 of this Procedure and the associated arrangements for claiming.

2. Principles

2.1 This Procedure 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, TCG 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 student believes they have been impacted by circumstances described in 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.

Please Note: It is only anticipated that this will apply to students who experience difficulties in traveling to TCG to undertake assessment. All claims will be required to be supported by evidence.

3.5 Students 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 student requests, in advance, an extension to a coursework submission deadline. Extensions are usually for a relatively short period of time, usually no longer than 5 working days. This must be submitted within 24 hours of the published assessment deadline.

4.2 Deferral Request: Where a student is 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. This will usually be over the summer period.

4.3 Mitigating Circumstances Board: Where a student 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).

Students seeking an extension should complete the attached form and submit to HEsupport@tcg.ac.uk. The Request will either approve the request, defer a decision pending further evidence or reject the request. The student will normally need to provide appropriate evidence at the point of submission.

Where an extension is granted, the final mark must be available at the next assessment board. If a student 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).

Students seeking to defer a scheduled assessment should complete the attached form and provide supporting evidence. Students should inform their Course Leader and submit complete applications to HESupport@tcg.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).

Students making applications to the Mitigating Circumstances Board should complete the attached form and provide supporting evidence. Students should inform their Course Leader and submit complete applications HESupport@tcg.ac.uk.

Should the Board accept the claim, the student 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 student has attained will be forfeited. Should the student achieve a lower mark upon their next submission, the highest 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 student may decide they have grounds to appeal.

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

6. Acceptable Forms of Evidence

6.1 Medical Reports

Students must visit a doctor or a nurse whilst they have symptoms so 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

Students who are receiving support from the TCG Wellbeing Team may request a signed note, prepared by the TCG Wellbeing Team Leader, that includes a description of the symptoms and an assessment of their impact on the student's ability to prepare and/or complete assessment. Appointment letters are unacceptable.

6.3 Employer 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. TCG 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 student'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.

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Your Circumstances | | | |
| Please describe the nature of your mitigating circumstances and explain how they have affected your academic performance in the assessments above? Please provide evidence | | | |
| 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 Trafford College Group HE Mitigating Circumstances Procedure 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: | |
| Outcome | Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Not approved <input type="checkbox"/> | New submission date (usually within 5 working days original date) | |