

## ASSESSMENT, PROGRESSION AND AWARDED: TAUGHT PROGRAMMES HANDBOOK

### 10. Mitigation

#### 10.1 Principles

- 10.1.1 It is recognised that students can suffer illness or other adverse personal circumstances which affect their ability to complete an assessment. It is also recognised that the University measures students' actual achievement rather than potential achievement.
- 10.1.2 If a student is ill or affected by personal circumstances that potentially preclude them from undertaking an assessment on time, they **should** submit a mitigation application. This should be submitted no later than 24 hours following the affected assessment point.
- 10.1.3 Students **must** make a decision on whether to undertake the assessment on time with the knowledge that the mitigation application may or may not be successful. If students feel that their performance will be significantly affected, they **should** still submit their assessment, unless it is felt that to do so would exacerbate their condition or disrupt the examination for other students. In both cases, students can apply for mitigation. If their mitigation application is unsuccessful and they have not completed the assessment, they will automatically receive a mark of zero.
- 10.1.4 In cases where a student applies for mitigation after they have attempted an assessment, this attempt will be removed from marking. This is following the principle that the student's performance has been significantly affected so the attempt has been deemed void. In the event that the application is not successful then the assessment will be marked and will count as the student's first attempt.
- 10.1.5 Where there is evidence to suggest that the student was not able to fully engage with procedures (examples are given under 10.4.2), the initial attempt may be marked with the student given the choice between the deferral and their original mark.
- 10.1.6 An application for mitigation will be considered for:
- a. Single occasions of illness
  - b. Adverse personal circumstances
  - c. Relapses/ exacerbations of long-term fluctuating conditions/ disabilities.

- d. A requirement of Religious Observance on the day of assessment

Where mitigating circumstances become apparent or where multiple mitigation applications have been submitted during the course of the programme, staff and students **should** consider use of the Health, Wellbeing and Support for Study procedure and Chapter 13 of the Learning and Teaching Handbook; Procedures for the interruption and voluntary withdrawal of taught students. Students should seek clear guidance from their Pastoral Mentor, Academic Tutor (also known as Personal Tutor), the Student Finance Office, study skills advisers, Wellbeing Services or Penryn/ Truro Accessibility Service, and/or the Students' Guild/the Students' Union.

10.1.7 For students with Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), recommendations for support will be in place in accordance with the guidance provided in Chapter 4 - Assessing students with disabilities. However, it is acknowledged that students experiencing long term, fluctuating health conditions/ disabilities may need to apply for mitigation.

10.1.8 Students undertaking Clinical Education Development and Research (CEDAR) programmes and who are required to demonstrate clinical competencies and the application of knowledge and theory as part of their programme, are permitted to apply for Mitigation on the grounds that there are workplace or clinical circumstances preventing them from completing a clinical assessment. Details of the forms of evidence accepted in these cases can be found in APA Handbook Annex F: Mitigation.

10.1.9 Specific guidance concerning mitigation for Sports Scholars and High Performance Athletes can be found in Annex 1: Sports Scholars - Mitigation Guidance.

10.1.10 For Degree Apprenticeship programmes, please see the Special Provisions information for further guidance.

## 10.2 Information for Students

10.2.1 The Hub Information Point webpages or equivalent **must** provide procedures and clear guidance on how students can apply for mitigation. This information **should** also include details of how these applications will be considered and the implications and likely outcomes of any mitigation application. This guidance **should** include examples of what circumstances will be considered acceptable.

10.2.2 A set of [FAQs](#) for mitigation are available.

### 10.3 The Mitigation Committee

10.3.1 Mitigation Committees **must** oversee the process by which applications for mitigation are considered. These can be established for department areas, for the Hub or for the campus.

10.3.2 The membership of Mitigation Committees **should** be appropriately representative as far as possible. They must include qualified and experienced Academic/ Professional Services staff. This can include, but is not limited to, Pastoral Mentors and Education Welfare Advisors.

10.3.3 The Chair of the Mitigation Committee **must** not be the Chair of an Assessment, Progression and Awarding Committee, to ensure that there is no conflict of interest.

10.3.4 In the interests of confidentiality the number of members of Mitigation Committees **should** be kept to a minimum.

10.3.5 Where Mitigation Committees are established at Hub level it is appropriate to include a representative with experience of the teaching and assessment from each department.

10.3.6 One or more members of the committee, usually a senior administrator, **should** be appointed annually by the committee with delegated responsibility to initially consider all mitigation requests.

10.3.7 Pro-Vice Chancellors and Executive Deans of Faculties **should** not sit on Mitigation Committees in order that they can consider any appeals arising.

10.3.8 External Examiners and the relevant Assessment, Progression and Awarding Committee **should** have access to the decisions of the Mitigation Committee.

### 10.4 Applications for Mitigation

10.4.1 Applications for mitigation **should** be made prior to the assessment deadline or within 24 hours. There are two methods by which students can access mitigation. These are:

- a. 72-hour (three (3) calendar days) evidence-free extensions are only available for submissions made via ELE 2 (see 10.5). This is one 72-hour evidence-free extension per assessment. All applications for assessments not submitted via ELE 2, must be made via the evidence-based mitigation process. In some instances, regulated professional programmes may have regulations in place that prohibit access to the

evidence-free extension. Departments will advise students if this is the case for any of their assessments.

- b. Evidence-based mitigation via an application form (see 10.6).
- (NOTE: If a student requests a 72-hour evidence-free extension, but then realises an additional extension is required, they may submit an application for evidence-based mitigation. If granted, this extension will incorporate the original 72-hour extension, and the self-certified extension will be rescinded. The student's available number of 72-hour evidence-free extensions for the academic year will be readjusted accordingly).

10.4.2 Examples of exceptional circumstances which may justify consideration of retrospective or late application for mitigation, or which may justify avoidance of certain forms of mitigation, such as examination deferral or deadline extension are detailed in APA Handbook Annex F: Mitigation, section four. Examples **may** include an unexpected traumatic event, an emerging health condition, the effect of which was not clear at the time of the assessment, but would have significantly impacted on the student's ability to engage with their studies and also to engage with the support procedures or a health condition which prevents a student's ability to understand or engage with the procedures. Late applications should be made via the evidence-based mitigation process.

10.4.3 Students are responsible for making applications for mitigation to the Faculty (or delegated School) delivering the affected module or via ELE 2 for 72-hour evidence-free extensions. Where performance is believed to have been affected in modules from more than one Faculty (or delegated School) the student **must** apply separately to each Faculty (or delegated School).

10.4.4 The length of the permitted extension should be determined by the member of staff reviewing the request and evidence, using their professional judgement. Applications for extensions over two weeks **must** be considered by the Mitigation Committee or a delegated representative thereof. Records of permitted extensions **must** be kept and reviewed regularly to ensure consistency of approach over time and to enable the sharing of best practice between decision-makers.

10.4.5 For programmes involving professional placements, or where PSRB requirements are in place, the length of an extension may need to be determined in consultation with the placement provider and/or Programme Team.

## **10.5 72-hour Evidence-Free Extensions (coursework assignments only, for ELE 2 submissions only)**

- 10.5.1 For coursework assignments (and not for examinations) students can add an evidence-free extension of 72-hours directly within ELE 2.
- 10.5.2 Students can add a 72-hour evidence-free extension on four (4) occasions in an academic year. Any extensions required after the allocated maximum permitted requests have been used must be applied for through the evidence-based process.
- 10.5.3 Unused extensions will not roll-over into the next academic year.
- 10.5.4 Students with allowances for extensions on an ILP will have no limit to the number of evidence-free 72-hour extensions they can have in an academic year.
- 10.5.5 Students (including students with extensions on their ILP) can only use one 72-hour evidence-free extension per assignment. If a student requires an extension of longer than 72-hours they must apply via the evidence-based mitigation process (see 10.6 below).
- 10.5.6 A 72-hour extension will be a three (3) calendar-day extension. The new deadline (after the extension has been applied) may fall on a University closure day when support may not be available. Students should take this into account when submitting the request for an evidence-free extension.
- 10.5.7 When a student selects the option for a 72-hour evidence-free extension within ELE 2, then their submission date will be updated immediately on their assessment and they will be sent an email confirming the new submission date.
- 10.5.8 ELE 2 will display to students how many 72-hour evidence-free extensions they have left within the academic year.
- 10.5.9 Students are entitled to withdraw their request for a 72-hour evidence-free extension up to up to three working days after the assessment deadline if they have submitted the assignment before the deadline. The student's available number of 72-hour evidence-free extensions for the academic year will then be readjusted accordingly.

## **10.6 Evidence-based Mitigation Process**

- 10.6.1 For coursework assignments where an extension of more than 72-hours is required, where all of a student's 72-hour evidence-free extensions have been used and for

any assessments outside of ELE 2, and all examinations students may apply for mitigation via an application form available from [The Hub Information Point](#) webpages.

- 10.6.2 Students may apply for mitigation for a one-week (7 calendar days) or two-week (14 days) extension. In exceptional, particularly severe and complex circumstances, a third week may be granted. Annex F: Mitigation of the Assessment, Progression and Awarding Handbook provides examples of evidence which can be submitted in support of standard and exceptional extensions as well as other forms of mitigation).
- 10.6.3 Students **may** apply for mitigation for more than one module where the same circumstances have affected more than one examination/ assignment. However, students **must** use the application form and be explicit in detailing:
- The circumstances which have affected them.
  - Which examinations/ assignments have been affected and the module code of each assessment.
  - How these circumstances have affected them/ their performance.
  - Students are entitled to withdraw their mitigation application up to three working days after the assessment deadline.
- 10.6.4 Students applying for evidence-based mitigation **should** submit verifiable and/or independent evidence of the circumstances which have affected their performance. Where ill health has been sufficiently serious to have affected performance, the student **must** have obtained supporting evidence (see APA Handbook Annex F: Mitigation for examples of appropriate evidence).
- 10.6.5 For students applying for mitigation on the basis of an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) which indicates support for extensions on coursework, the ILP will suffice as evidence for an extension of one or two weeks.
- 10.6.6 For students applying for mitigation on the basis of an ILP which indicates support for extensions on coursework, there is no limit to the number of extensions for which they can apply. However, the maximum extension that can be conferred on any single assessment on the basis of an ILP alone is two weeks. Supplementary evidence (please see Annex F for details on appropriate evidence) may be submitted to request an additional extension of either one or two weeks (depending on the length of the original extension). The maximum extension (or total duration of multiple extensions) that can be conferred on any single coursework assignment is three weeks.

## **10.7 Mitigation applications received for group work assignments**

- 10.7.1 When setting group work assessments, staff should be mindful of the possibility that a student may need to apply for an extension to the assignment and should aim to make the assessment resilient in the face of mitigating circumstances which may prevent individuals from being able to contribute.
- 10.7.2 When valid and evidenced mitigation applications are received for a deferral of a piece of group work by one member of the group, deferral should be approved but it is important that any impact on remaining group members is considered. The convenor will need to consider if any adjustments need to be made for remaining group members in terms of expected contributions or if allowance can be made in marking process to take into account that the group size had decreased.
- 10.7.3 When valid and evidenced mitigation applications are received and approved for extensions to group work, consideration must be taken about whether the assessment can be divided into individual contributions to allow for one student to be granted an extension. This should only be considered if the assessment can be divided without negatively impacting the experience of the rest of the group.
- 10.7.4 An extension to the deadline for all group members can be considered, but care must be taken to ensure that all group members are in agreement with the revised deadline and that it does not cause any disadvantage to any other member of the group.
- 10.7.5 If an extension cannot be accommodated, the student should be offered a deferral of the assessment. The module convenor will need to consider if any adjustments need to be made for remaining group members in terms of expected contributions to the process and product of the assessment. It may also be necessary for allowances to be made in the marking process to take into account that the group size has decreased and the related impact on the product of the group work.
- 10.7.6 If one or more of the Intended Learning Outcomes of a module is to be assessed by group work activities, it should be identified how the group work component will be assessed if a student has mitigation approved which leads to them making an individual submission at a later date. Wherever possible, reassessment should enable a student to demonstrate the same intended learning outcomes as the first assessment.

## 10.8 Consideration of Applications

- 10.8.1 Mitigation Committees should consider applications in a timely fashion through meetings or through delegating responsibility to a member of the Mitigation Committee, in accordance with the guidance provided in APA Handbook Annex F: Mitigation.
- 10.8.2 Mitigation committees must be consulted on all non-standard cases.
- 10.8.3 The consequences for classification of any adjustments will not be a factor in Mitigation Committees' consideration.
- 10.8.4 Where an application for mitigation is made on the basis of especially sensitive information this **should** be treated confidentially and the reasons for the application **may** be considered by the Chair of the Mitigation Committee only and not shared with the rest of the Committee. Examples of this type of sensitive information include being the victim of a serious personal assault or termination of pregnancy.
- 10.8.5 Where applications for mitigation involve requests for extensions beyond two weeks, the Mitigation Committee (or delegated representative thereof) should use their discretion and professional judgement, along with the guidance provided in APA Handbook Annex F: Mitigation, in relation to the student's individual circumstances to consider the following points:
- a. Deferrals: Extensions beyond two weeks should only be granted where deferral is not possible/ appropriate or where supporting evidence/ statements specifically require or recommend such extensions. In any case, the Mitigation Committee should consider whether the option of deferral would be more or less supportive for the student than a longer extension, i.e. will the granting of a longer extension lead to the bunching of assignments or a clash of deadlines for the student? Will the granting of a deferral prevent the student from receiving beneficial feedback in advance of a subsequent related assessment?
  - b. Evidence: Has evidence been provided which supports a longer extension as opposed to a deferral? Where applications are submitted for extensions beyond two weeks, and which are supported by medical evidence or statements of support, such evidence should specify the recommendation for a longer extension.



- Records of permitted extensions beyond two weeks **must** be kept and reviewed regularly to ensure consistency of approach over time and to enable the sharing of best practice between decision-makers.
- 10.8.6 The Mitigation Committee **may** decide that there are no grounds for action because one of the following conditions applies:
- a. The evidence presented does not support the claim that the student may have been affected and no further action is required.
  - b. The evidence presented does not support the claim that the student may have been affected in excess of the normal maximum extension period of two weeks.
  - c. An application was not submitted or was made too late without compelling reasons for why the application was not made at the time of the effect on performance.
- 10.8.7 Where the Mitigation Committee decides that action is required the following options **should** be considered the most commonly applicable outcomes:
- a. Examination; Deferral of the examination. This can be decided even where the examination has been attempted if the Mitigation Committee decides that the student may have been effectively incapable of sitting the examination.
  - b. Coursework assignment; Permitting an extension to the submission deadline for assignments or in-year deferral.
- 10.8.8 In special circumstances, (see APA Handbook Annex F: Mitigation) where deferral or an extension to an assessment deadline is not appropriate, the following **may** also be considered:
- a. Setting aside the assessment mark or module mark when considering progression, classification or condonement.
  - b. Substitution of a proxy mark for any affected assessment. This is appropriate where there is sufficient evidence of a student's performance in other examination/assignment so that the Mitigation Committee can have reasonable confidence in the validity of the proxy mark – e.g. by ranked performance in similar examination/assignment in a similar subject. Where a proxy mark was derived largely from the student's performance in all the other modules in the same year (as opposed to information specific to that or similar modules) it **should not** exceed the student's stage average for that year. The substitution of a proxy mark can be problematic however for degrees with professional qualifying status and therefore may not be possible.

- c. Recommendation of Repeat Study: Where a recommendation has been received from the Welfare Team, the Mitigation Committee may recommend to the Assessment, Progression and Awarding Committee that repeat study be offered to a student. It is expected that this recommendation might be made when students have faced exceptional mitigating circumstances which has severely impacted their ability to engage with their studies during the academic year and/or where they have deferred a number of assessments and there is concern that they may not be able to successfully complete their year of study.

Where programmes are governed by PSRBs, it may not be possible for the measures listed in a-b above to be applied to students' marks. There may also be limits to the maximum length of time in which a programme can be completed which would mean repeat study might not always be available to students on PSRB regulated programmes.

- 10.8.9 The Mitigation Committee **must** clearly record every decision and the reasons for it.

All students **should** be informed of these decisions as soon as possible.

- 10.8.10 Decisions of Mitigation Committees **must** be reported to the

Programme/Department Assessment, Progression and Awarding Committee. These decisions are not then subject to change except where the Programme/Department Assessment, Progression and Awarding Committee considers that a decision to defer an examination (or coursework assignment) is unnecessary for the purpose of classification, i.e. where the likely outcome of such a deferral will not affect the overall classification.

## 10.9 Review of Mitigation and Appeals

- 10.9.1 Students have the right to request a review of the decision made with respect to their mitigation application. A request for review **must** be submitted within 10 working days of the outcome of the mitigation being communicated to the student and **may** be made only on the following grounds:

- a. Procedural error or evidence of bias or prejudice.
- b. The decision reached is one which no reasonable body, properly directing itself, could have arrived at.

- c. Students should note that the outcome of the review may not change the decision of the mitigation committee and they should not delay submitting their work until receipt of the outcome of the review.

10.9.2 Appeals **should not** be considered on the following grounds:

- a. Dissatisfaction with the reasonable judgment of the Mitigation Committee.
- b. Late submission of an application for mitigation where there are no compelling grounds for the lateness.
- c. Additional grounds for mitigation that were not part of the original mitigation application.

10.9.3 The request for a review should be submitted in writing to [mitigation-outcome-review@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:mitigation-outcome-review@exeter.ac.uk) and the review request will be considered by the Chair of the Mitigation Committee or their nominee. The Review should not be considered by any individual who was involved in making the original decision for which the review is being requested.

The Chair of the Mitigation Committee or their nominee will consider the mitigation application and the student's request for review and provide a response to the student in writing within 10 working days.

10.9.4 If a student remains dissatisfied following the review of their mitigation decision by the Chair of the Mitigation Committee or their nominee, the Student has the right to appeal against the decision made. Such appeals must be submitted within 10 working days of the student receiving their confirmed module marks following the relevant Assessment, Progression and Awarding Committee (APAC).

10.9.5 Appeals will be considered through the University's Student Academic Appeals procedure.

## 10.10 Supporting Documentation:

10.10.1 A set of FAQs for Mitigation are available. Please see section 10.2 above.