



Hull York Medical School

Policy on Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances affecting Assessment and Examination

This document gives a brief overview of the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Policy. The full Policy can be assessed [here](#).

Students are encouraged to speak to their Academic Advisor and/or Programme Director or Student Support for advice about submitting a mitigation or exceptional circumstance claim.

What are mitigating or exceptional circumstances?

Mitigating circumstances are medical or personal issues that a student may encounter, which are **serious** and **unusual**, and go beyond the normal daily challenges experienced in academic study. **Exceptional circumstances** take place in **close proximity** to an assessment or deadline and have **seriously impaired** a student's academic performance during the assessment period for which they are claiming. They are usually **unpredictable** (i.e. the student could not reasonably have been expected either to avoid or to allow for them in planning for or preparing assessment work).

Who can apply for mitigating or exceptional circumstances?

Students **registered** to a Hull York Medical School Programme undertaking a module at a host department within the University of Hull or the University of York should adhere to the policy and procedures of the Hull York Medical School Mitigation and Exceptional Circumstances Committee.

Students **not registered** to a Hull York Medical School Programme, but taking a Hull York Medical School module, should adhere to the mitigation and exceptional circumstances policy of the relevant department or institution that hosts the Programme the student is registered for.

Students **registered** to a Hull York Medical School Programme undertaking an **intercalated degree** at a different institution or a host department within the

University of Hull or the University of York and is **registered with that department or institution for the duration of their intercalated study**, any claim of mitigating or exceptional circumstances should be applied for with, and processed by, the relevant host department or institution in accordance with their mitigating and exceptional circumstances policy and procedure.

I have a student support plan/reasonable adjustment plan, can I still apply for mitigating or exceptional circumstances?

If there is an exacerbation in the student's circumstances and the student support plan/reasonable adjustment plan has not been accordingly updated to account for the change in circumstances, a mitigating or exceptional circumstances claim can be made. Students with student support plans/reasonable adjustment plans can apply for mitigating or exceptional circumstances not related to their student support plan/reasonable adjustment plan. Students with a student support/reasonable adjustment plan who wish an extension for an assessment should fill in the claim form indicating the reason for the claim is related to their approved student support/reasonable adjustment plan.

Can I make repeated claims for mitigating or exceptional circumstances?

Repeated claims for mitigating or exceptional circumstances can be made if the reasons for the claims are distinct from each other. Repeated claims for the same circumstances are unlikely to be supported unless there is an exacerbation of the circumstances that lead to the previous claim(s).

What is the deadline for submission of a mitigating or exceptional circumstance claim?

Students submitting a mitigating or exceptional circumstance claim for an **assignment** must submit the claim **no later than 5 working days** post the assessment deadline.

Students submitting a mitigating or exceptional circumstance claim for a **non-clinical** exam must submit the claim **no later than 5 working days** post the examination date. In the student is taken ill during the exam, they should notify the exam invigilator who will report to the Board of Examiners. If the student cannot complete the examination, they can submit a mitigating or exceptional circumstance claim **no later than 5 working days** from the date of the examination.

Mitigating or exceptional circumstance for a **clinical exam** (e.g. OSCEs, OSLEs) can only be submitted if the student did not sit the examination. If a student takes ill during the clinical examination and cannot continue, they should inform the lead examiner or invigilator who will submit a report to the Board of Studies. The student should then submit a claim for mitigating or exceptional circumstances **no later than 5 working days** post the examination.

Do I need evidence to support my mitigating or exceptional circumstance claim?

Yes, all claims for mitigating or exceptional circumstances must be submitted with appropriate evidence to support the circumstances. **Self-certification** can be used as a form of evidence for:

- Bereavement of a close family relative
- Short illness of 1-5 days before an assessment that impacts on the student's ability to prepare for the assessment. **Self-certification cannot be used for clinical exams.**

What mitigating or exceptional circumstances are supported and what evidence is required to support my claim?

The following examples are indicative but not exhaustive.

Circumstances normally accepted	Examples of evidence that would support a claim based on this circumstance (original documents required)
<p>Compassionate grounds (e.g. exceptional personal/emotional circumstances)</p>	<p>A letter from the Open Door Team at the University of York, Student Wellbeing, Learning and Welfare Support at the University of Hull, a counsellor, a senior member of HYMS Student Support Team where the student has actively been engaging with Student Support Services, a Programme Director or Academic Tutor where the student has been actively engaging with them for pastoral support, or a relevant independent third-party explaining that, <i>in their professional opinion</i>, the circumstances have had a serious impact on the student's ability to engage with academic work effectively during the assessment period in question.</p>
<p>Primary Caring Responsibilities for a Vulnerable Person (a vulnerable person is defined as a child, elderly person, someone living with a disability or chronic illness)</p>	<p>A letter from HYMS Student Support Team where the student has actively been engaging with Student Support Services, a Programme Director or Academic Tutor where the student has been actively engaging with them for pastoral support. A letter from an educational establishment e.g. for a child, detailing the need for the child to remain at home for a defined period. The student should document how their primary caring responsibilities impacted on their studies. Students who do not define themselves as a primary carer but can show evidence (as detailed above) of significant caring responsibilities for a vulnerable person that impacts on their assessments</p>

	can claim for mitigating and exceptional circumstances.
Key Workers (a key worker is defined as a Health Care Professional)	A letter from the workplace line manager (on official paper) detailing the unexpected increase in the student's rota hours over the normal hours expected for the paid employment, and the reason for this increase in hours.
Exceptional Medical grounds (e.g. serious or incapacitating illness, injury or medical condition, sudden and significant deterioration of on-going/longer-term medical condition, or emergency operation on or shortly before the day of an examination or assessment deadline, or during the revision period)	<p>Self-certification as a form of evidence will be applicable only if the period of personal illness was 1-5 days prior to the assessment deadline. For exceptional medical grounds outside this time period, evidence as defined as an original medical certificate or letter (on headed paper) from a suitably qualified medical practitioner (normally a GP or hospital specialist, who is registered with the General Medical Council in the UK or the equivalent overseas practitioner), psychiatrist or educational psychologist as appropriate is required. The person providing the medical evidence should normally be a relevantly qualified professional, with no personal or family relationship with the claimant. The student should have had a consultation with this individual during the period of illness for diagnosis or treatment and is therefore able to attest to the student's condition at the time and the impact of the circumstances on their academic performance.</p> <p>Retrospective certification of a condition will not normally be accepted (that is, a note from the doctor/practitioner indicating that the illness/condition was presented to them after the event but the student was not seen at the time of the illness).</p> <p>In the case of hospitalisation, the student should provide documentation showing the date of the admission and discharge from hospital and details of the condition that resulted in admission. The documentation should also detail any health issues that may follow on from this hospitalisation.</p>

<p>Sudden serious illness or death of a dependent or close family member (The following relatives are accepted as ‘close’ without further evidence: partner, child, parent, sibling, grandparent, and grandchild. For other individuals, evidence of dependence or closeness in the form of a statement from a third-party should also be provided).</p>	<p>For bereavement, students may self-certify as a form of evidence. In the case of serious illness of a dependent or close family member, evidence must be provided as an original medical certificate or letter (on headed paper) from a suitably qualified medical practitioner (normally a GP or hospital specialist, who is registered with the General Medical Council in the UK or the equivalent overseas practitioner), psychiatrist or educational psychologist as appropriate. The person providing the medical evidence should normally be a relevantly qualified professional, with no personal or family relationship with the claimant. The student should document how the serious illness of the dependent or close family member has impacted on the student’s ability to study and/or complete an assessment/examination should be clearly indicated, (e.g. visiting relative in a hospice, having to shoulder extra responsibilities, etc.).</p>
<p>Victim of a serious crime, involvement in accident, or any other incident involving the emergency services</p>	<p>Written statement of events, supported by written evidence from the relevant emergency service (e.g. police report) OR a crime reference number OR an insurance claim OR a valid medical report.</p>
<p>Disabilities for which reasonable adjustments are not yet in place and where the delay in their implementation is not the fault of the student</p>	<p>A letter from a home university Disability Service OR relevant Medical Evidence.</p>
<p>Exceptional and unforeseeable transport difficulties (major transport incident, cancelled flights but not every-day issues e.g. traffic congestion, missed train or bus)</p>	<p>A letter from the relevant transport company or evidence of a major road accident (e.g. a copy of online or newspaper reports on the accident/delay). For long distance travel, original travel tickets/documents should be provided which indicate an intention to travel to arrive at least one hour before the examination or deadline for submission of work. Documents for revised travel arrangements should also be provided.</p>
<p>Jury Service (UK citizens only)</p>	<p>The Courts will permit Jury Service to be deferred for students in higher education on one occasion. Jury Service will therefore only be considered as an acceptable exceptional circumstance if a deferral has been refused in which case the student should provide a letter from the Court with proof that their request for a deferral was rejected or with proof that a previous request was accepted.</p>

Legal proceedings requiring attendance (e.g. being charged with criminal offence)	Official correspondence from a solicitor or the Court confirming the date and time of required attendance.
Divorce or significant relationship breakdown (parental or self)	If a student is involved in divorce proceedings and misses an assessment, the student needs to provide official correspondence from the Court confirming the date and time of the required attendance. If parents are involved in divorce proceedings and this has impacted significantly on a student's ability to study, the student will need to provide appropriate evidence of this (see Compassionate Grounds).
Interviews for work placements or for employment which cannot be changed	Evidence showing that the interview date cannot be rearranged.
Paid work commitments or constraints arising from paid employment (for part-time students only)	If a student is studying part-time while in full- or part-time employment, it is expected that the student will have informed their employer of this and of the need for the student to be present for assessments at certain times of the year. There may, however, be extraordinary circumstances at work, which will mean that it is impossible for the student to be present. In such cases, the student will need to provide evidence of employment explaining that the circumstances have had a serious impact on their ability to engage with academic work effectively during the assessment period in question.

What is not regarded as a mitigating or exceptional circumstance?

The following examples are indicative but not exhaustive.

Mitigating and exceptional circumstances not normally deemed to be acceptable	Explanation
A claim without appropriate, independent supporting evidence	It is the student's responsibility to provide appropriate, independent supporting evidence. Letters from family, fellow students, academic supervisors, tutors or mentors are not normally sufficient on their own.

<p>A claim which fails to make clear to the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee which assessments have been affected or the way in which they have been significantly affected</p>	<p>It is the student's responsibility to make clear to the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee how their circumstances have adversely affected their academic performance.</p>
<p>A claim submitted more than five working days after the assessment for which the claim is made</p>	<p>Deadlines are clearly communicated to students by the School.</p>
<p>A claim is submitted after the assessment marks have been ratified by the Board of Examiners.</p>	<p>The claim is submitted after the assessment marks have been ratified by the Board of Examiners. Claims submitted after ratification cannot be considered by the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee. Such claims must be considered as formal appeals and students should refer to the Hull York Medical School Code of Practice on Academic and Fitness to Practise Appeals.</p>
<p>Reluctance to disclose circumstances as they are personal, sensitive or confidential</p>	<p>The Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee can only consider circumstances if they are disclosed in line with this Policy. The student's circumstances are considered by a small group of Committee members which considers all cases in strictest confidence. As educated citizens, students are responsible for their own wellbeing and should proactively seek academic and pastoral support from the School's Student Support Team at the earliest opportunity when they have encountered problems during their studies. In certain circumstances disclosures may be made in confidence to a member of the School's Student Support Team, who will liaise with the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee in support of a claim.</p>
<p>Circumstances are not in close proximity to the assessment OR over and above normal difficulties</p>	<p>The timing of the circumstances cited would not have adversely affected the specified assessment(s) or examination(s). The nature of the circumstances cited is not over and above the normal difficulties experienced in life or the evidence submitted does not support the claim that the nature of the circumstances was over and above the normal difficulties experienced in life.</p>
<p>Circumstances have already been used in a previous claim</p>	<p>Sufficient adjustment has already been made for the same circumstances; the evidence has already been used to support adjustment for the same</p>

	assessment or examination and no new evidence has been provided.
Minor illnesses (e.g. coughs, cold, hay-fever)	Students are expected to manage these and they do not normally have a significant impact on academic performance.
Pregnancy	<p>Pregnancy is not an exceptional circumstance, unless the pregnancy results in a medical condition, in which case appropriate evidence should be submitted.</p> <p>If pregnancy results in a medical condition that affects assessment or examination, students are encouraged to approach University Disability Services who will discuss each case in relation to possible reasonable adjustments. For further information please see:</p> <p>York policy on pregnancy, maternity, paternity and adoption Hull policy on pregnancy, maternity and adoption</p>
Self-diagnosed examination nerves, stress, insomnia	Most students experience these and similar symptoms ahead of and during assessment periods. These are not therefore normally considered as acceptable mitigating and exceptional circumstances unless a medical diagnosis of illness has been made, in which case a letter from a medical practitioner should be provided.
Disabilities for which reasonable adjustments have been made or where the student has experience and sufficient time to manage the situation	Reasonable adjustments made by the School should have addressed the needs of diagnosed disabilities.
Long-term illness or disability where earlier disclosure would have enabled Disability Services to have put reasonable adjustments in place	Unless the disability was diagnosed part way through a student's studies and consideration needs to be given to the period when reasonable adjustments were not in place. It is a student's responsibility to proactively disclose and seek help for their long-term illness and/or disabilities.
Refusals to take up support offered by the Disability Services	If students do not take up support offered, they cannot later expect the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee to take into account difficulties they may experience and which impacted on their studies.

<p>Personal/domestic events that could have been anticipated and/or arrangements made or choices in a student's personal life (e.g. family holidays, family celebrations, weddings, attending or taking part in sporting, social or extra-curricular activities, moving house, routine childcare)</p>	<p>These are not normally accepted as mitigating and exceptional circumstances as such events can be anticipated and alternative arrangements made.</p> <p>If personal/domestic events coincide with submission deadlines it is the responsibility of the student to submit work before the stated submission deadline or inform the School an examination will be missed. In the case of missed examinations, the Board of Examiners may permit a student to re-sit but this would count as a second attempt and the results will be capped.</p>
<p>Oversleeping</p>	<p>It is a student's responsibility to ensure that they submit work by the published submission deadline and/or arrive at scheduled examination venues before the scheduled start time.</p>
<p>Misreading the timetable</p>	<p>It is a student's responsibility to ensure that they are aware of the location of an examination as well as the start time and duration, or the deadline for a written assessment.</p>
<p>Examinations/deadlines which are scheduled close together or on the same day</p>	<p>These are unlikely to constitute acceptable mitigating and exceptional circumstances as students are aware of such scheduling in advance and are expected to manage their time accordingly.</p>
<p>Academic workload</p>	<p>Students are expected to manage their academic workload.</p>
<p>Paid employment/voluntary work or constraints arising from paid employment/ voluntary work for full-time students</p>	<p>Full-time students are only permitted to work part-time, i.e. for a maximum of 20 hours per week to support their studies and should arrange such work or voluntary work so that it does not conflict with their responsibilities as a student.</p>
<p>IT and/or computer issues, (e.g. submission of incorrect document, file type or file size, computer crash, loss of work not backed-up or printing problems close to the deadline, upload after a submission deadline, technical issues without proof of error message or system failure)</p>	<p>Loss or corruption of files is not an acceptable exceptional circumstance as students are expected to keep a back-up copy of work which is electronically generated and stored.</p> <p>Students are expected to submit work electronically with care to avoid mistakes. Students should submit work electronically before a deadline, allowing sufficient time to troubleshoot and resolve any problems they may encounter before the deadline.</p>
<p>Problems in group work where other members of the group do not cooperate</p>	<p>This should have been raised with the School and resolved at the time.</p>

<p>Minor, local transport problems (e.g. normal rush hour traffic, not allowing enough time in travel plans for minor unanticipated delays, missed public transport)</p>	<p>Students are expected to plan travel to campus / placement / assessment site in such a way that there is some contingency for unanticipated delays due to road works, a minor accident, etc.</p>
<p>Visa problems which prevent a student from returning to the UK for examinations</p>	<p>It is a student's responsibility to take steps to apply for a visa well ahead of their return and to anticipate that there may be some minor delays. If, however, an application was submitted in a timely fashion and the delay occurred at the UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI) Office or other relevant agencies, the student will need to provide evidence of the date of their request for a visa and any other documentation from the UKVI relating to the processing of their visa.</p>
<p>Cultural celebrations</p>	<p>If these coincide with submission deadlines, it is a student's responsibility to submit work or inform the School an examination will be missed ahead of such events. In the case of missed examinations, the Board of Examiners may permit a student to re-sit but this would count as a second attempt and the results will be capped.</p>
<p>Driving test</p>	<p>If a driving test interferes with studies (i.e. prevents a student taking an examination or submitting work on time), this is both foreseeable and preventable and students are expected to reschedule.</p>
<p>Planned health appointments</p>	<p>These are foreseeable and clashes should be avoidable. Students are expected to reschedule appointments. The School will consider cases where such appointments cannot be moved (eg. surgery).</p>
<p>Financial difficulties</p>	<p>These are not normally mitigating and exceptional circumstances. The acceptance of financial difficulties as mitigating and exceptional circumstances will require evidence not only that they occurred, but also that they were unforeseeable, unavoidable and had a significant impact on the student's assessment. Students should inform the School of these difficulties at the earliest opportunity so that appropriate support is available.</p>
<p>Unavailability of course books/resources</p>	<p>It is a student's responsibility to ensure that they have access to learning materials made available by the School.</p>

Breakdown of personal relationships	Unless these lead to compassionate circumstances in which case appropriate evidence detailed above should be provided (see Compassionate Grounds).
--	--