

# Mitigating Circumstances Policy

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 During your studies you may encounter unforeseen or significant personal difficulties/circumstances outside of your control which have an impact on your ability to complete, submit or attend a specific assessment. The University refers to these personal difficulties as “Mitigating Circumstances” (commonly abbreviated as Mit Circs when talking about it). The mitigation is the action which the University takes to adjust some element of your academic programme such as extending assignment deadlines.
- 1.2 There is a separate procedure for suspending your studies or for changing to part-time mode of study and you should contact your personal tutor about such a request.
- 1.3 This document sets out general principles and guidance and should be read alongside the Mitigating Circumstances Procedure.
- 1.4 This policy applies to all students studying Leeds Trinity programmes, however, students studying at partner institutions seeking mitigating circumstances should consult with their partner institutions in the first instance.
- 1.5 This policy allows for consideration of applications on a case-by-case basis. We understand that our learners have differing needs, requirements and responsibilities. This policy is applicable to students on all programmes including those who are studying as part of their full-time employment roles i.e. Apprenticeship programmes. As such, we will fully consider applications made on the grounds of increased work commitments if evidenced by a Personal Tutor statement for such programmes.

## 2. University and students' responsibilities

- 2.1 The University will make this policy, and related application forms, directly and easily available to students, for example on the myLTU app. The University expects all appropriate staff, such as module coordinators, Personal Tutors and certain professional support staff, to be able to guide students in its operation.
- 2.2 The University will publish a schedule of deadline dates for applications for consideration of Mitigating Circumstances. You should submit requests for extensions and applications for mitigating circumstances as soon as you have the necessary evidence (see sections 4 and 5 below) in order to allow proper consideration. The University will try to consider applications promptly but reserves the right to request further information and/or reject applications.
- 2.3 You should read this policy before making an application. You should also be aware of:
  - regulations on late submission of coursework
  - incorrect submission of coursework
  - related policies on Academic and Professional Misconduct
  - online declarations of academic integrity at the point of assignment submission
- 2.4 You should consult your Personal Tutor or level tutor promptly for guidance and clarification or, in their absence, professional support staff.
- 2.5 Whenever necessary, you should consult your GP, Leeds Trinity Student Support Services or other relevant professional at the time the issue presents itself. Students can apply for assistance to cover the cost of providing medical evidence should that be required. Please contact [Disability Services](#) ([disability@leedstrinity.ac.uk](mailto:disability@leedstrinity.ac.uk)) for further information

### 3. General principles and procedures

- 3.1 We want consideration of mitigating circumstances to be supportive, consistent and equitable. You can request up to 5 additional working days to submit coursework and you are permitted 5 x 5 working day extensions per component of assessment and per level. In exceptional cases, academic staff may permit one of these extensions to be increased to 10 working days (see 3.5 below). If you require longer than 5 days due to the nature of the circumstances, you should submit a Mitigating Circumstances application.
- 3.2 We do not mitigate by adding marks as compensation. Mitigation usually involves additional time and opportunity for you to perform as would have been the case without the circumstances arising.

#### Extensions

- 3.3 At any time before an assessment deadline, you may apply for an extension. To ensure fairness across the University, the maximum extension normally allowed is **5 working days**. You can request 5 x 5 working day extensions per component of assessment and per level. Please note you cannot request an extension on an exam, test/quiz, End Point Assessment or Observed Clinical Skills.
- 3.4 If you wish to request an extension, you should submit a request for a 5 working day extension via your e:Vision account. There is no requirement for evidence and as long as you have not exceeded 5 extensions for your level of study, the request will be automatically granted.
- 3.5 In **exceptional** circumstances, your tutor may permit one of the 5 x 5 working day extensions to be increased to 10 working days. You should meet with your Personal Tutor to discuss your situation. Following the meeting, you must log into e:Vision and submit an additional 5 day extension request. Your Personal Tutor will consider the request and you will be notified of the decision via email.

#### Disability and chronic conditions

- 3.6 If you have declared a disability, you will be supported by the University in other specific and ongoing ways. You should not have to apply for mitigating circumstances every time you have an assignment but, like anyone else, you can apply when other circumstances are unforeseen and have had an effect on your performance.
- 3.7 You should seek support from the Dyslexia and Disability Support team to create a Student Inclusion Plan in order that reasonable adjustments can be made to support you throughout your studies.
- 3.8 If you have a disability or condition which might fluctuate or deteriorate, this might have an impact on your ability to complete, submit or attend a specific assessment or perform well, you should contact the Disability Service for advice and further support, including evidence for this change to be considered as mitigating circumstances.

### 4. Mitigating Circumstances Applications

#### 4.1 Apply

You may apply for consideration of Mitigating Circumstances in order to

- postpone (“defer”) an attempt for assessment(s) you have not yet taken or to
- request mitigation if you have already taken an exam or submitted an assignment.

In both cases, you will need to supply independent evidence of the circumstances to be considered.

## 4.2 Timing

Applications should be made promptly and you are advised to read the policy in full before submitting your application. You should contact Student Records ([records@leedstrinity.ac.uk](mailto:records@leedstrinity.ac.uk)) or Apprenticeship Student Administration ([asa@leedstrinity.ac.uk](mailto:asa@leedstrinity.ac.uk)) if you are unclear about any aspect of this policy.

Applications made significantly later than the circumstances will only be considered if you can provide a satisfactory explanation of why they were not submitted within the expected timescale. Evidence submitted with your application should support this explanation.

## 4.3 Grounds

A mitigating circumstance is one which:

- is unforeseen and out of your control;
- has (had) a significant impact on your ability to complete, submit or attend a specific assessment;
- has credibly affected you at the time relevant to the specific assessment.

## 4.4 Evidence

You will need to supply evidence to support your application and should be in English.

You can obtain evidence from within the University as follows:

- Confirmation from Leeds Trinity Student Support and/or Student Mental Health and Wellbeing team that you are accessing their support services.
- A supporting statement from your Personal Tutor.

You may also supply written evidence from a health service professional, such as your GP or a counsellor, or another independent third party who has knowledge of your circumstances. Where you do supply this additional evidence, it helps us to ensure that you are aware of the full support available and that you are accessing and receiving this. Examples are listed in section 5 below.

Supporting evidence should confirm the nature of the circumstance, when it occurred, its duration and an opinion on how it may have affected your performance or your ability to complete, submit or attend a specific assessment.

Please note that evidence which, for example, justifies a week's extension might not be sufficient to grant a deferral for three months; and that mitigation for an exam in May would not be automatically rolled forward to an exam in August, for example, unless the evidence explicitly stated that you would be unfit for both assessment periods.

You should keep all original evidence and submit/upload copies or scans. We will delete copies from our systems in line with our retention policy.

You can apply for assistance to cover the cost of providing medical evidence. Please contact [Disability Services](mailto:disability@leedstrinity.ac.uk) ([disability@leedstrinity.ac.uk](mailto:disability@leedstrinity.ac.uk)) for further information

If you are unable to provide evidence, you should contact Student Records ([records@leedstrinity.ac.uk](mailto:records@leedstrinity.ac.uk)) or Apprenticeship Student Administration ([asa@leedstrinity.ac.uk](mailto:asa@leedstrinity.ac.uk)) to discuss your circumstances and obtain advice on how best we can support you.

## 4.5 Outcomes

A list of potential outcomes when considering mitigating circumstances is set out below:

Possible Outcomes	
Outcome 1	Extension to the submission date for assessment(s)

<b>Outcome 2</b>	Alternative form of assessment
<b>Outcome 3.1</b>	A further opportunity for (re)assessment in module(s)
<b>Outcome 3.2</b>	Fail mark(s) are expunged and further first attempt(s) be allowed
<b>Outcome 3.3</b>	Submission penalties in one or more modules be reversed.
<b>Outcome 4</b>	Restart the year ( <b>NB:</b> additional fees will apply).
<b>Outcome 5</b>	Suspend studies and return the following academic year
<b>Outcome 6</b>	Mark(s) to be condoned
<b>Outcome 7</b>	Consider the effect on award classification
<b>Outcome 8</b>	Request not upheld

The Mitigating Circumstances Panel (MCP) is responsible for the consideration of Mitigating Circumstances applications and may delegate authority to Student Administration to make decisions pertaining to Outcomes 1-5. Decisions of the MCP pertaining to Outcomes 6 – 7 are reported as *recommendations* to the relevant School Progression and Award Board to be taken into account when determining progression and award. In those circumstances where it would be detrimental to the student to wait for a Mitigating Circumstances Panel, decision may be sought by Chairs Action.

## 5. Circumstances eligible for consideration and examples of evidence

Circumstances eligible for consideration under this policy are detailed below.

If you are unable to provide supporting evidence from your Personal Tutor or Leeds Trinity Student Support Services, you will need to provide another type of evidence as shown below.

The guidance is not exhaustive and if you are unable to provide evidence, you should contact Student Records ([records@leedstrinity.ac.uk](mailto:records@leedstrinity.ac.uk)) or Apprenticeship Student Administration ([asa@leedstrinity.ac.uk](mailto:asa@leedstrinity.ac.uk)) to discuss your circumstances and obtain advice on how best we can support you.

### 5.1 Illness

You must provide an official medical certificate or letter from an appropriate medical or healthcare professional or a clear copy of your relevant online medical notes. It must identify specific date(s) when you became unable to undertake formal assessment and/or study and the likely date on which you would be fit to resume studies. Photographs or scans of documents are acceptable, but it is your responsibility to ensure they are clearly legible. Photographs of medication or images of injuries are not acceptable.

### 5.2 Hospitalisation of the student

You must provide a discharge letter or certificate from the hospital or a GP. It must identify specific date(s) when you became unable to undertake formal assessment and/or study and the likely date on which you would be fit to resume studies.

### 5.3 Illness of a family member, partner or dependant

If a family member, including partner or dependant, has become ill and this has impacted on your ability to undertake your studies, we want to see evidence of this impact on you [not just of the other person's illness itself].

You must provide an official medical certificate or letter from an appropriate medical or healthcare professional or a clear copy of your relevant online medical notes. It must identify specific date(s) when you became unable to undertake formal assessment and/or study and the likely date on which you would be fit to resume studies. There is no requirement to provide evidence relating to the person's condition.

#### 5.4 Bereavement

We recognise that the impact of bereavement will vary significantly from person to person and the Mitigating Circumstances Panel applies further discretion when considering claims on these grounds.

The normal expectation is that evidence is provided in support of the claim, and this can take several forms, for example:

- A letter from funeral director or minister conducting the service.
- An Order of Service showing date, or other relevant documentation.
- A statement from a doctor or other qualified professional, or member of University staff confirming you had disclosed a bereavement.
- A corroborating statement from a family member.
- A death certificate.

We also recognise that bereavement may have an ongoing impact on students during their studies and Student Support offer a wide range of services and are available to listen and help students in these situations. Contact details of services are available from [Student Support and Wellbeing](#) and on the [Student Info Point tile](#) in myLTU.

#### 5.5 Pregnancy and related circumstances

Pregnancy is not an illness and not therefore a mitigating circumstance in itself. You should consult your Personal Tutor about the University's separate policy and support procedure for pregnant students. However, if, as a consequence of pregnancy and related complications and outcomes, you become unable to study or be assessed as normal, mitigating circumstances may apply. Some form of evidence of childbirth would be acceptable for mitigation.

#### 5.6 Victim of crime

You must provide official police communication which is more than just a crime reference number. It should be clear that you are the victim of the crime. You will need to explain how it has affected you, for example theft of possessions or car. If the crime has caused you continuing stress you may need to provide additional evidence.

#### 5.7 Domestic disruption

We recognise that some domestic disruption can be significant, unforeseen and outside a student's control. It might include material damage but also significant personal trauma, such as separation, divorce or abuse.

We want to see a letter from an appropriate independent individual or authority (e.g, a solicitor or a statement from the police). The letter should indicate not only the nature of the circumstances but also the likely impact the disruption is having on your ability to submit or attend a specific assessment or perform well, the dates when such impact would apply and the likely date on which you would be fit to resume studies.

For longer-term disruption, or where the disruption is having an impact on your wellbeing, you may wish to access services available from [Student Support and Wellbeing](#).

## 6. Circumstances which will not be considered under this policy

### 6.1 Minor ailments

Circumstances which have a short-term impact on your ability to complete assessments (for example minor illnesses such as common colds and coughs) are not usually considered as grounds for mitigating circumstances and should be covered by an application for an extension as per section 3.3 of this policy.

### 6.2 Planned personal circumstances

We do not mitigate domestic events such as house moves, family celebrations, weddings or other such events where you have some control over the date or can make alternative arrangements or choose not to attend the event or plan your work around the event, including submitting work in advance.

### 6.3 Transport issues

Credible transport issues might be eligible for short extensions to coursework, for example 24 hours. They would not normally be accepted for full mitigating circumstances unless exceptional and completely unforeseeable. You are expected to be aware of warnings of strike action or roadworks or changes to schedules, for instance, so that you could judge when to begin your journey.

### 6.4 Holidays

Personal and family holidays are not normally accepted, particularly for coursework. Exceptionally, these might be accepted as grounds for absence at an exam or equivalent event if you can provide evidence that the holiday was booked before the publication of calendar and assessment information. Calendar information is usually published in the January before the start of the forthcoming academic year. Module assessment schedules are published at the start of the academic year.

### 6.5 Paid employment or voluntary work

You are expected to manage normal and typical circumstances in your life. It is expected that you will ensure that any paid employment or voluntary work does not interfere with your ability to submit or attend a specific assessment.

### 6.6 Misreading the exam timetable or misunderstanding a coursework submission deadline

Mistaking a deadline, misreading the exam timetable or submitting the wrong assignment in error are not grounds for mitigating circumstances.

### 6.7 Exam stress and assignment deadlines

It is usual to have exam nerves and sometimes feel overwhelmed during assessment periods. Whilst these are not usually considered grounds for mitigating circumstances, Student Support offer a wide range of services and are available to listen and help students in these situations. Contact details of services are available from [Student Support and Wellbeing](#) and on the [Student Info Point tile](#) in myLTU.

### 6.8 IT and/or computer failure

It is your responsibility to ensure that all your work is well backed up, for example on your University personal drive or cloud storage. If you are unable to submit work via Moodle because of a technical problem, you should contact the [Digital Learning Team \(https://ltu.ivanticloud.com\)](https://ltu.ivanticloud.com) immediately to rectify the problem.

### 6.9 Undisclosed circumstances

We cannot mitigate completely undisclosed circumstances. All information is confidential and will be destroyed in line with our retention policy.

#### 6.10 **Withdrawal of IT facilities or other resources due to debt**

If you are in financial difficulties you are expected to take steps to prevent facilities from being withdrawn, to consult the Student Finance Adviser to discuss any debt and to respond immediately to any warning from the University in relation to the consequences of a debt.

#### 6.11 **Late programme registration**

Students are expected to engage with their studies from the first instance of scheduled teaching and learning activity. Programme registration must be completed by the fourth week of teaching. Registering on a programme after the start of term is not considered as grounds for mitigating circumstances. It is the responsibility of the School and students to understand the implications of late programme registration and agree any additional support arrangements. The School will need to ensure students are not disadvantaged by late registration and that assessments can be submitted during the published assessment periods.

#### 6.12 **Placement Issues**

Undertaking a professional placement is a compulsory part of most LTU programmes. Not securing a placement will therefore be considered as a fail/professional misconduct and is not grounds for mitigating circumstances. If insufficient hours have been logged to fulfil the requirements of a placement, this may be dealt with directly by your Module Tutor depending on the reasons for the incomplete hours. Delays to placement dates, e.g. overseas placements, are not classed as an exceptional circumstance and can be updated online without the need for mitigation. An alternative form of assessment will only be considered if you have experienced circumstances that can be evidenced as outlined in section 5, including the host being unable to honour a previously agreed placement opportunity, and you are unable to fulfil the requirements of a practical placement.