

At TheWRD we accept there are times when it has not been possible to submit work to a deadline due to reasons outside of someone's control. Below is the procedure and guidance around mitigating circumstances.

1. General Information on Mitigating Circumstances

- 1.1. TheWRD considers individual mitigating circumstances to be **sudden** and **unforeseen** conditions that **temporarily** prevent a student from undertaking an assessment, or significantly impact on student performance in an assessment, including late submission. As such, the measure of severity is not about the impact on the student but the impact on the assessment. All applications, including supporting evidence, are regarded as highly confidential.
- 1.2. A mitigating evidence claim may be made against the following circumstances:
 - a) **Late or non-submission** of assessment.
 - b) Assessment submitted on time taken on scheduled date – but assessment performance is **seriously** and **unexpectedly impaired**.
- 1.3. A claim can only be submitted for the current academic year within 14 days before the assessment(s) in question or 7 days after the deadline.
- 1.4. Pre-existing conditions and other long-term conditions or disabilities are not considered as mitigating circumstances automatically, as they can be supported through reasonable adjustments co-ordinated with staff at TheWRD responsible for student support.
- 1.5. Students shall be responsible for submitting assessments on time and submitting relevant information on mitigating circumstances. Events relating to human error, such as misreading deadlines, forgetting to set reminders, computer or internet failure or misjudging the time needed to complete the work shall not be considered mitigating circumstances.

1.6. Other examples of circumstances that are inadmissible as mitigation claims include:

- a) the occurrence of multiple deadlines in close succession;
- b) circumstances that could have been reasonably foreseen or prevented (such as student suspension, intoxication or conviction for illegal activity);
- c) minor illness or ailment (cold which has not required treatment, minor allergy);
- d) holiday arrangements;
- e) financial issues;
- f) personal computer breakdown
- g) internet outage where a student is submitting close to the deadline
- h) data loss where no back up has been created

2. Advice for Students to ensure successful mitigation claims:

- Back up your work on cloud storage in order to prevent USB or Laptop failures.
- Submit any work online more than 1 working day in advance of a deadline so you have time to contact someone in the event of a difficulty. Work submitted close to the deadline (within 1 working day) will not be considered as mitigation in the event of a technical failure.
- If you need to visit the doctors for an illness, request a fit note in the event you may need it for evidence in a mitigation claim.

2.1. Mitigation Claims will be considered by a panel of TheWRD staff chaired by the Director of Student Experience known as the Mitigating Evidence Committee (MEC). Staff considering any application will not be responsible for the module being mitigated.

2.2. Teaching staff do not typically have access to the details of a claim. The Chair of the MEC handles most claims. More complex cases, or where evidence is less clear, will be anonymised and discussed by the MEC. The process is highly confidential, with forms and evidence kept securely.

3. How to Submit a Mitigation Claim

3.1. The evidence submitted to support a claim must be independent and robust and cover the period related to the assessment date(s).

3.2. Examples of acceptable evidence include:

- a) Medical certificate with dates of consultation and diagnosis;
- b) Death certificate of close relative or significant other - in the absence of a death certificate a letter from a relative (with full contact details to corroborate) confirming relationship to deceased will be acceptable;
- c) Hospital admissions report or appointment letter;
- d) A letter from a psychological or counselling service with consultation dates and statement of impact on assessment;
- e) A letter confirming that 'reasonable adjustments' are not yet in place or are in need of revision due to an acute flare-up of a long-term stable condition. For the latter, a GP certificate would constitute evidence if the condition was usually stable. Claims may be rejected if a student fails to declare a condition that requires reasonable adjustments. Multiple claims cannot be made for a period of instability of a long-term condition that should be managed by a 'reasonable adjustment'.

All documents submitted should be written in English; any evidence in another language must be accompanied by a translated version.

- 3.3. In making a Mitigation Claim, the student needs to describe how the sudden, unforeseen and temporary circumstances significantly impacted on their performance in assessment. The student's personal statement on the claim form should describe how the individual module assessment(s) has been affected by the illness/event supported by accurate dates, which correspond to the evidence supplied. The dates are particularly important, as individual mitigating evidence is not about the severity of the impact of the circumstances on the student personally, but on their ability to perform in assessment.
- 3.4. The claim should be made as early as possible, either before or normally no later than 7 days after the assessment deadline. Claims may be made 'in advance' for known absence/non-submission (for example a scheduled operation), but the student must ensure that the period cited is covered by the evidence supplied.
- 3.5. Late claims shall not be considered unless there are genuine grounds for lateness and must be accompanied by documentary evidence. Students must explain the reasons for late submission in their application.

4. Possible Outcomes of a Mitigation Claim

- 4.1. When evaluating mitigation claims, the MEC will consider the following:
 - The severity of the circumstances claimed.
 - The timing of the circumstances claimed.
 - The validity of the evidence provided.
 - The extent to which the circumstances claimed would have affected the assessment(s).
 - The implications of any extension of time on the whole assessment cycle and the impact this may have on progression.
- 4.2. Mitigation claims will be judged to be either accepted, rejected or lacking sufficient evidence. If the evidence is insufficient, additional evidence may be requested by the Director of Student Experience, which must be submitted typically within 7 days of the request. If the claim is rejected, there may be no further opportunity to submit evidence.
- 4.3. Examples of rejected evidence may include:
 - a) a statement that indicates the existence of an acute medical condition, but no medical evidence is submitted or the medical certificate lacks detail to support the claim, such as a 'retrospective' medical note, where consultation dates do not support the claim.
 - b) long-term events and conditions which have already been claimed for and reasonable adjustments deemed to be appropriate have already been awarded.
- 4.4. Claims that appear to relate to ongoing issues/conditions, which potentially generate repeat claims, will be referred to staff, who will contact the student with information about appropriate services at TheWRD and/or the procedures for seeking support external to TheWRD.
- 4.5. A successful mitigation claim may result in the removal of a late cap if work has been handed in already after a deadline.
- 4.6. New deadlines set as a result of a successful mitigation claim will normally be no more than 2 weeks after the original deadline has been set.
- 4.7. Where work is due at the end of the academic year, it may not be possible to extend deadlines where the final course deadline is earlier than a requested

mitigation deadline. Where a student is unable to complete work in time for a final course deadline, suspension or deferral of studies may be the option available.

- 4.8. In the event that the circumstances claimed, or evidence thereof, do not support a claim for multiple assessments, claims may be accepted for some but not all of the assessments listed.
- 4.9. There are circumstances where, despite the validity of the claim, the MEC may not approve new deadlines for assessments. These include the following:
 - a) Where a deadline beyond the maximum period of 6 weeks is required
 - b) Where a student requests a deadline beyond the final course deadline.
 - c) Where a student still has outstanding extended deadlines for multiple assessments and it would be judged unrealistic for a student to complete in time. In this case alternative academic options will be considered such as deferral of studies
- 4.10. In the event a student has submitted their work and a claim for mitigation, where a student has received grades of a pass or above, they will not be permitted to re-submit their work to achieve a better grade.
- 4.11. A student shall be informed in writing (to their student email account) of the outcome of their mitigation claim within 5 working days of the MEC meeting.
- 4.12. If a student with identified support issues has disclosed a disability or has registered for additional support with TheWRD, and if their claim meets the MEC criteria, it will be considered and decisions made in accordance with the usual principles of the MEC.

5. Appeal against the Mitigating Evidence Committee Decision

The student may appeal against the recommendation of the Mitigating Evidence Committee under the Appeals process, details of which are available online at studythewrd.org/aboutus and look for the complaints and appeals document.

6. Deferral or Intermission of Studies

- 6.1. Deferral is where a student opts to take a year out of their studies. A period of deferral is a temporary postponement of studies from the end of one academic year to the beginning of another.

- 6.2. Students who wish to defer between levels will be required to have fulfilled the progression requirements before deferral and must submit their request prior to the end of the enrolment period at the start of an academic year.
- 6.3. Intermission of studies is where a student is unable to undertake or complete a semester or year of study due to circumstances beyond their control. A period of intermission is a temporary postponement of studies from an agreed point in one academic year to normally the same point in the next.
- 6.4. Examples of circumstances that could be grounds for intermission include the following:
- a) physical or mental ill-health;
 - b) severe financial hardship;
 - c) emotional/personal difficulties, e.g., bereavement;
 - d) where student's disability comes to light for the first time at the assessment;
 - e) unavoidable absence from TheWRD, e.g., requirements of employer;
 - f) unavoidable absence from domicile, e.g., eviction;
 - g) loss of immigration status;
 - h) inability to meet progression requirements before the start of the academic year due to having incomplete Sits or Re-sits on more than one module;
 - i) other serious circumstances which could not be foreseen by the student.
- 6.5. The circumstances surrounding a student's intermission request are regarded as confidential.
- 6.6. A situation whereby a student is unable to attend lessons and/or submit for assessment but will be able to submit at the next assessment point is covered by Mitigating Circumstances.
- 6.7. Any student who has deferred or intermitted will be classified in accordance with the weighting scheme and assessment criteria which relate to the year in which the student is finally assessed and classified for award, and not the scheme in operation when the student initially registered on the course.
- 6.8. Deferral or intermission will initially only be permitted for a maximum period of twelve months. Where a student subsequently requests an extension of

their deferral or intermission, this will require approval by the Academic Registrar. If approved, TheWRD reserves the right to reassess the student's case before readmitting them to the course. This will ensure any unforeseen circumstances, such as changes to the course structure, will not hinder successful progression through the remainder of the course.

- 6.9. Students who fail to return to their course of study at the end of the agreed period of deferral or intermission shall be withdrawn and, where applicable, receive an exit award. Where such a student subsequently wishes to return to complete their course, they will need to apply for RPL.