

Mitigating Circumstances Guidance

1. Assessments and submission deadlines are carefully scheduled to manage the sequencing of course delivery, balance student and staff workloads and enable student progression through the programme. Deadlines help staff and students to develop professionalism, plan and prioritise their work to make achievement of their goals manageable.
2. We understand that sometimes unforeseen things happen which are out of your control and which may affect your performance in an assessment, for example a recent bereavement or illness of a close relative, an illness or injury affecting yourself or other factor beyond your control. See para 10 of the General Regulations.
3. If this is the case for you, we encourage you to discuss your situation with your personal tutor or year or module lead as soon as possible and to consider submitting a claim for Mitigating Circumstances to request an extension of a deadline for coursework or a deferral of an exam. Please note that deferring an exam to the next available opportunity may mean waiting for the next academic year and delaying your progression on your course.
4. Mitigating Circumstances are considered individually on a case by case basis. The following are general guidelines but claims will be dealt with according to your particular circumstances.
5. We request evidence to support your claim for mitigating circumstances to ensure fairness and consistency. There is no right of appeal against a decision on a mitigating circumstances claim.
6. This guidance covers all undergraduate and post graduate programmes. Mitigating Circumstances are considered for summative assessments only, they do not apply to formative assessments.

Criteria for Mitigating Circumstances Claims

7. Claims for mitigating circumstances should meet each of the following criteria to be accepted:
 - a) be unforeseen
 - b) be outside of your control
 - c) impact you during the immediate lead up to an assessment or during an examination
 - d) will have a significant adverse effect on your performance in the assessment
 - e) be supported by evidence which substantiates your claim and demonstrates that you were affected at the time of the assessment – i.e. the date of the assessment or immediately before it
 - f) claims submitted after the assessment must be supported by an explanation as to why the claim could not have been submitted before the assessment or the submission deadline

Declaring yourself well enough to take the assessment

8. If you sit or submit an assessment the University considers that you are declaring yourself physically and mentally well enough to take the assessment (General Regulations 10.3). It is your individual responsibility to manage your wellness in relation to taking assessments.
9. If you have submitted a claim for mitigating circumstances but you go ahead and sit the exam or submit the assessment your mitigating circumstances claim will be disregarded.

10. If you become unwell during an exam or realise after you have taken an assessment that your performance was significantly affected by mitigating circumstances, you can still submit a claim for mitigating circumstances. Please provide an explanation of why you were unaware that you were not well enough to undertake the assessment. Your claim will be processed in the same way, please see below regarding the outcomes.

Submitting a Claim for Mitigating Circumstances

11. Please read this guidance carefully before submitting a claim for mitigating circumstances. You may also wish to discuss your mitigating circumstances with your Personal Tutor.
12. You must complete the Mitigating Circumstances claim form found [here](#).
13. Please ensure that you provide a full explanation of your circumstances and provide evidence. No other information or evidence will be considered in assessing your claim.
14. By submitting evidence in support of your claim, you are agreeing that St George's can check any documentation with the source, to substantiate that the documents are correct and/or legitimate; e.g. we may contact your GP regarding a letter submitted to support a claim.

Deadlines

15. Submit your claim as soon as you are able, this will enable us to process your claim before the assessment due date:
 - a) Submit your claim at least **7 calendar days before** the assessment deadline or date of the exam.
 - b) If your mitigating circumstances arise after this date or you become unwell during an assessment, you may submit a claim no more than **7 calendar days after** the assessment deadline or exam. You must demonstrate why you could not submit your claim 7 days in advance of the assessment deadline.
16. Claims submitted later than 7 days after the assessment deadline will not be accepted.
17. Please retain a copy of your form and evidence. Submit the original form and evidence by email to your Course Administrator.

Processing of Claims

18. Your claim will be reviewed by an Administrator to ensure that the form is completed correctly, appropriate evidence is provided and is within time. Evidence may be verified if necessary. The claim will be logged on a spreadsheet
19. The Administrator will assess your claim to see that whether it meets the **Criteria for Mitigating Circumstances Claims** stated above.
20. The Administrator may make an initial recommendation on whether the claim should be accepted or not. This will be passed to the Mitigating Circumstances Panel (see below).

How a decision will be made

21. Your claim form, evidence and initial recommendation of the Administrator will be passed to a Mitigating Circumstances Panel of 3 staff members (these may be academics and

administrators). No other evidence will be considered so please ensure that your form and evidence provide all the information needed.

22. The panel will make a decision (based on a majority) on whether your claim will be accepted or not accepted, the panel will reference the criteria above. The panel will inform the Administrator who will inform you of the decision.
23. Where your claim is submitted at least 7 days before the assessment deadline or examination we will be able to advise you of the outcome of your claim before the assessment or submission deadline.
24. If you submit a claim less than 7 days before the assessment, we may not be able to inform you of the outcome before the assessment is due. Please see the table at point 33 below.
25. If your claim is not accepted you must keep to the original assessment deadline and if you do not take the assessment you will be assigned a zero mark for the assessment.
26. If you sit the assessment and then submit a claim you must explain why you took the assessment but subsequently realised you were not well enough to sit or submit the assessment, the panel will consider your explanation and evidence you submit (see 'Declaring yourself well enough to take the assessment' above).

The Outcomes of a Claim for Mitigating Circumstances

27. If your claim is accepted:
 - For coursework, e.g. a project, presentation, viva or SSC you will usually be given a 2 week *extension* to the deadline to submit your work
 - For an exam you will be withdrawn from the current sitting and entered for the next available sitting (offered a deferred sitting). The exam you are withdrawn from will not count as an attempt and will be discounted from your total number of attempts (see General Regulations, section 10).
28. If your claim for mitigating circumstances is rejected (either because you take the assessment, your claim is too late, or for another reason) then you will either be required to take the assessment or your attempt and results will stand (if you have already taken the assessment). It is however very important that you tell us about anything which affected your performance and provide evidence at the time of the assessment, even if it is after you have taken the assessment (this may be used for what some courses term 'consideration'. Please see point 35 below.
29. If your claim is accepted your marks for the assessment will be derived from the assessment you submit at the extended deadline or deferred sitting. If you have previously failed an attempt at the assessment your mark for the assessment will be capped in accordance with the SGUL assessment regulations.
30. If your claim is not accepted you should sit or submit the assessment on the original date or deadline. The marks you gain for the assessment will stand or you will be assigned a mark of zero if you do not take the assessment.
31. Please note that the next available sitting for an exam might be in the following academic year. Board of Examiners meetings are sometimes very soon after an assessment deadline (e.g. MBBS T and F year boards can be less than two weeks after SSC deadlines) so any extension or deferral

granted may mean that you cannot be considered at the Board. For these reasons and your progression through the course or award may be delayed.

32. Your marks or outcome for an assessment will never be changed due to a claim for mitigating circumstances.

33. The following sets out how the timing of your application might affect the outcome of your mitigating circumstances application:

Timing of submission of claim	Student takes assessment	Mit Circs Decision	Outcome
Before the assessment <i>please remember if your claim is submitted less than 7 days before the assessment we may not be able to get a decision to you before the assessment</i>	No	Accepted	The attempt will be discounted and a deferral/extension for uncapped mark granted (or capped if 2nd attempt*)
	No	Rejected	0 mark assigned
	Yes	None	Mit Circs claim is disregarded, your mark/result will stand. <i>Your claim can be considered as evidence, if you submit an appeal or application for 3rd discretionary attempt</i>
After the assessment <i>claims submitted more than 7 days after the assessment will not be considered</i>	No	Accepted	The attempt will be discounted and a deferral/extension for uncapped mark granted (or capped if 2nd attempt*)
	No	Rejected	0 mark/fail assigned
	Yes & passes	Accepted	Mark/result achieved stands
	Yes & fails	Accepted	The attempt will be discounted and a deferral/extension for uncapped mark granted (or capped if 2nd attempt*)
	Yes (pass or fail)	Rejected	Mark/result achieved stands

* marks for MBBS are not capped at 2nd and 3rd attempt

34. There is no right of appeal against the decision of a Mitigating Circumstances Panel.

35. Once you have received your results, if you have grounds, you can make an Academic Appeal. See [here](#). If you reference Extenuating Circumstances in your appeal the university will expect you to have raised these previously, using the mitigating circumstances procedure (some courses term this 'consideration') at the time of the assessment and within the deadlines, or to be able to explain why you were unable to do this.

- a. Where programmes release provisional results before the Board of Examiners you can appeal these by writing to the Board of Examiners 2 weeks before the Board (or according to a deadline confirmed by your course administrator).
- b. You can appeal results which have been ratified by the Board of Examiners by submitting an Academic Appeal Application Form to the Student Conduct and Compliance Team.

Role of the Board of Examiners

36. The Board of Examiners is responsible for oversight of mitigating circumstances processes and panel decisions; the outcomes of mitigating circumstances claims will be noted and approved by the board.

Issues which might be acceptable mitigating circumstances

37. These are some of the issues which you can claim for, the list is not exhaustive and you should claim for other circumstances which have affected you personally.
- Serious personal illness or injury (**including mental illness, physical illness, hospitalization, road traffic accident, or a flare-up of a long-term medical condition or disability already made known to the University**)
 - Bereavement of a close relative or partner
 - Serious illness or injury to a close relative or partner
 - Mitigation for IT/computer failure will be restricted to issues such as an extended outage relating to a product/platform supported by St George's. These outages seldom occur but when they do they can be verified. We encourage you not to leave it to the last minute to submit, and technical issues during submissions would not normally be a sufficient reason for a mitigating circumstances application. Please see Appendix A for Guidance.
 - Other acute personal circumstances that have a severe impact on your assessment(s), such as:
 - Significant worsening of any adverse personal, family or welfare issues
 - Caring responsibilities, where pre-established arrangements break down
 - Being a victim of crime
 - Court or tribunal service attendance
 - Impact of national or global disruption
 - Representing the University or country at a significant or prestigious event.

Issues which are not considered mitigating circumstances

- Circumstances which do not affect the period of the assessment
- Minor illnesses or ailments that would not cause you to take time away from work or study
- Foreseeable and/or preventable circumstances such as:
 - Holidays, weddings and other family events
 - Sports events other than representing University or country.
 - Religious festivals and observance (please see the Religious Observance Policy)
 - Paid employment or voluntary work
 - Jury service (that can be deferred)
 - IT/computer fault other than as described above. We encourage you to ensure that your work is stored on a network or cloud storage, such as your OneDrive, so that you can still access your work from another device even in the event of a network or hardware failure on a specific device. We also encourage you to backup drafts of your work at key stages to minimise the impact of any IT failure.
 - A long-term condition or disability that the University is already aware of, unless there is a flare up. We recommend that you discuss any long-term conditions and disabilities with the disability advisor at the earliest possible opportunity during your studies (disability@sgul.ac.uk).
 - Transport difficulties (we encourage you to plan for these).

- Being unaware of assessment requirements, such as misreading the timetable, poor time management or organisation.

What evidence should I submit?

38. It is important that you provide as much information about your circumstances and how they have impacted on your study as you can. Your claim should be supported by original, independent, dated documentation that is written in English. Please ensure that dates are clearly visible and that they apply to the dates of your assessments.

Examples of supporting documentation might include:

- A letter or other correspondence from a doctor, hospital, or other healthcare professional or service who is independent of the student, i.e. is not a family member or friend of the student.
- In the case of a bereavement, a death certificate or order of service accompanied by a letter from an independent third party (not usually a family member).
- Written evidence from the police, social worker, care provider or other relevant support organization.
- SGUL or external support services who have been actively supporting you, including counselling services and statements of support from an academic member of staff who is familiar with your circumstances and has knowledge about the issue

Please note that self-certification, photographs (of a situation or medical condition) and statements from online GP services or family will not be accepted as supporting information.

What should I do if I cannot get evidence?

39. Submit your claim without evidence. Please let us know why you are unable to provide evidence, you may be required to submit your evidence at a later date.

Where can I find support?

40. You may want to discuss difficulties with assessments with your Personal Tutor or course, year or module lead and you may also find the following services helpful:

- [Student Development and Success](#) for support with your study
- The Students' Union can provide support, see the [SU Website](#)
- Resources supporting students [mental health](#) including Togetherall and Student Minds.

Record keeping

41. Please keep a copy of your mitigating circumstances claim form. A copy will be forwarded to the Mitigating Circumstances Panel for consideration.

42. Mitigating circumstances claims will be stored securely and separately from the main student file. Claims are confidential and details will not be shared beyond those involved in the decision-making process. The outcome will be shared as necessary to administer and process your results.

43. The spreadsheet logs of Mitigating Circumstances claims will be collated periodically. The information will be reviewed to ensure that claims are being dealt with consistently and correctly.

Academic Registrar
September 2022

Guidance on Mitigating Circumstances related to technology issues

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the University's Policy on mitigating circumstance.

1. IT/computer issues would not normally be accepted as grounds for mitigation unless it relates to an extended outage relating to a product/platform supported by St George's, for example, should MS Office or Turnitin or Canvas or Myprogress become inaccessible for an extended period.

NB: Extended outage refers to an outage that prevents you from accessing a product/platform supported by St George's and where this outage commenced before the submission deadline and lasted through the submission deadline.

2. You should ensure that you leave enough time to submit your work and not leave it to the last minute. This ensures that any issues can be resolved without it affecting the submission deadline.
3. Where you are experiencing technical problems during submission, please contact the Learning Technology Services team immediately at its@sgul.ac.uk. Please be aware when planning your submission that support can only be provided during normal working hours.
4. If you do not have the financial means to replace your IT equipment such as a laptop, we encourage you to apply for support/funding for a laptop or apply for a laptop loan by emailing IHardship@sgul.ac.uk. Alternatively, you can use the computers on campus to submit your work. Further details relating to technology support are available on the website [here](#).
5. If you have been informed by your Internet Service Provider, energy company, etc., of a maintenance or other scheduled downtime that will coincide with your assessment submission dates, you should immediately make an alternative arrangement such as planning your submission on-campus.
6. If you experience continuous/multiple IT issues (e.g., regular disruption of your internet provision), you should make an alternative arrangement immediately such as planning a submission on-campus.
7. If you experience a network or hardware fault at the point of submission, this is unlikely to be accepted as grounds for mitigation. We encourage you to ensure that your work is stored on a network or cloud storage (such as your OneDrive) so that you can still access your work from another device even in the event of a network or hardware failure on a specific device. We also encourage you to backup drafts of your work at key stages to minimise the impact of any IT failure. Failure to back up work regularly and leaving completion or submission of work so late that you cannot submit would not normally be accepted as grounds for mitigation.