COVID-19 Response – 2020/21 Mitigating Circumstances
Guidance for Staff

Updated: 6 May 2021

Introduction
This document provides guidance for staff about the arrangements for the submission of mitigating circumstances claims in the 2020/21 academic year. It should be read in conjunction with the Mitigating Circumstances Policy and Procedure. A No Detriment Policy was introduced mid-way through the 2019/20 academic year, as the impact of COVID-19 impacted assessments to varying degrees depending on their nature and when they were scheduled. Our existing Mitigating Circumstance Policy and Procedure allows for Coronavirus impacts to be mitigated in 2020/21 by Sub Boards of Examiners throughout the current academic year.

This guidance will be in place for the whole of the 2020/21 academic year. The College will continue to monitor the impact of the pandemic on our taught students and can make amendments to policy and guidance if and when required. These will normally be discussed at Education Strategy Group (ESG). If you wish to raise an academic policy matter please contact your Assistant Dean for Education in the first instance, as ESG meets regularly.

All Mitigating Circumstance requests should be made through www.bbk.ac.uk/ask

1. PRINCIPLES

1.1. The College Mitigating Circumstances Policy and guidance continue to apply, however additional circumstances have been identified as acceptable. These arrangements will remain in place for the duration of the 2020/21 academic year. The additional circumstances that have been identified as acceptable grounds for a claim include:

   i. Bereavement due to COVID-19
   ii. Hospitalisation due to contracting COVID-19
   iii. Self-isolation due to having COVID-19 or COVID-19 like symptoms.
   iv. Financial impacts due to furlough, loss of work or redundancy
   v. Difficulties in completing work because of limited access to a computer, internet or quiet study space
   vi. Reduced capacity to study due to having to home-school, children/or caring for vulnerable relatives etc.
   vii. Taking on extra work in employment to cover staff absences/ extra shifts as a key worker
   viii. Deterioration of existing mental ill health conditions or development of such conditions

1.2. All claims should be submitted online.
1.3. Students are **not** expected to submit evidence for **any** mitigating circumstances claims made from the 11th January for the remainder of the 2020/21 academic year.

1.4. Mitigating circumstances claims can be submitted for non-submission of an assessment, late submission of an assessment, and impaired performance, in line with the existing policy for mitigating circumstances.

2. **CONSIDERATION OF CLAIMS**

2.1. Students have been advised that mitigating circumstances claims should be submitted only in cases where a student: has suffered “**unforeseen circumstances or circumstances that are outside the student’s control, and that significantly disrupt the student’s performance in assessment**” in line with the Mitigating Circumstances Policy. This includes significant personal or family illness, bereavement, or serious personal, emotional or financial challenges as a result of COVID-19.

Text for students

“The College recognises that the ongoing Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is resulting in a great deal of stress and disruption to all our lives. We are working to try to ensure that your academic progression and achievement is not disadvantaged by the crisis. Our no detriment approach also supports academic standards and the value of your University of London qualification. The guarantee of online learning and assessment for the whole of academic year 2020/21 is a College-wide mitigation to the pandemic and has been applied equally to all taught students who do not have a requirement for a practice-based component of study. Department Mitigating Circumstances Panels do not require formal evidence to be submitted for any claims. If you have suffered significant personal or family illness, bereavement or serious personal, emotional or financial challenges as a result of COVID-19 or other unforeseen circumstances unrelated to COVID-19 then you may wish to submit a claim for Mitigating Circumstances. Claims should be submitted if these factors have impacted on your ability to submit the assessment or on your ability to perform well on the assessment. The Sub Board of Examiners will then take the Mitigating Circumstances into account during the confirmation of marks and in consultation with External Examiners.”

2.2. Students are asked in which way they have been impacted:

   a) Bereavement
   b) Health or disability
   c) Financial
   d) IT or computer
   e) Increased caring responsibilities
   f) Employment
   g) Housing
   h) Other

3. **OUTCOMES OF ACCEPTED MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES CLAIMS**

3.1. As per the existing mitigating circumstances policy (paragraph 28) possible options for students are;
a) **Reassessment without penalty (deferral)** – no increase of attempt number and no capping applied [please note that new regulations around UG progression and reassessment have been introduced for 20/21. See Regulations and Policies Update for details]
b) **Allowing late submission** – late submission of coursework will not be penalised and the ‘true’ mark should be allowed for the element in question.
c) **Use other completed elements to determine module result** – should only use the marks from non-affected elements of the assessment to decide the module result
d) **Classification of finalists** – should have their final classification raised (if all credits achieved and the overall weighted average mark is within 2.00% of a borderline).

3.2. Where a decision is taken to use other completed elements to determine the module result (outcome ‘c’ above), this should only be applied in exceptional circumstances. The following parameters should also be considered:

   i. Affected element(s) of the assessment should have already been completed and passed before consideration is given to using marks from non-affected elements of assessment to decide the module result (i.e. students should be encouraged to attempt the assessment)

   ii. Consideration should be given to the relative weightings of assessment elements for the module i.e. using the marks from an assessment element that only makes up 10% of the module assessment weighting to decide the overall module result would not be appropriate. As such, any mark based on non-affected elements of assessment must constitute at least 40% or more of the module assessment weighting.

   iii. Consideration should be given to whether the module learning objectives have been covered if marks are based on the non-affected elements of the assessment to decide the module result. If all learning objectives have not been demonstrated in the non-affected elements of the assessment it would not be appropriate to base marks solely on this assessment(s) as all learning objectives for the module would not have been met.

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

Please contact your Assistant Dean for Education if you have a query relating to this guidance or the implementation of College policy in the first instance.

*Registry Services*
*May 2021*