

MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES – CERTIFICATION POLICY

From this academic year (2023/24), the University has introduced an amendment to the Mitigating Circumstances policy to allow self-certification in cases where students have been unable to obtain evidence in support of their application. This has been introduced to help support students who, for example, are ill but cannot obtain a doctor's appointment:

The policy:

A summary of the policy amendment is as follows:

- If a student is unable to obtain evidence in support of an MC application, then they may self-certify for up to 7 days.
- If the circumstances affecting their studies lasts more than 7 days then self-certification is not permitted – except in particularly exceptional circumstances.
- MC applications which are self-certified, will be subject to the same rules and deadlines as other MC applications.
- The policy can be found here: <https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/students/studies/examinations/mitigating-circumstances.htm>

The process:

- Students who do not have evidence in support of their MC application will be able to complete an MC Self-certification form and upload that form in lieu of evidence.
- The form asks them for the length of time they were affected by the circumstances and the reason that they could not obtain evidence.
- The form will be triaged by the MC review team as usual.
- The form can be found on the Mitigating Circumstances link above, or click [here](#) for a direct link.
- The Academic Operations Team will monitor the usage of this policy and report to the new MC and TSS Group (MCATSS).
- MCATSS consists of student representatives and advisors, academics, and professional services staff.

Communication:

- Staff, student representatives, and student advisors are being made aware of this policy.
- Details are available on the web and in the MC policy.
- *Malaysia colleagues be aware:* care should be taken to ensure students and staff do not confuse MC self-certification with the self-certification procedure for short absences.

The University Health Service is often approached by students for medical evidence to be submitted in support of mitigating circumstances appeals. In respect of providing such evidence the following considerations will operate:

1. Medical evidence will be provided for substantive causes, and not for trivia. For instance: The student will have required prescription medication or

treatment; or the student attended other specialists eg hospital consultant / counsellors; or required hospital treatment / admission.

2. In general certification for retrospective events which are non-verifiable will **not** be provided. If there is no prior documentary evidence (eg previous practice consultations, admissions to hospital, clinic appointments) then documentation should not be provided.
3. The UHS asks that requests for evidence for mitigating circumstances or student sickness certification is requested, by registered students, via our standard request form. These can be downloaded from the Practice website or completed at the reception desk. Provided point1 above is satisfied, the doctor may provide certification without an appointment.
4. Where there is no objective evidence in history or clinical examination, we will only be able to provide a statement to such effect.
5. A standard 'medical evidence for student' form will suffice for support of mitigating circumstances in most cases. In certain circumstances the Doctor may exercise discretion to provide a more detailed letter for the School Examination Board.
6. Certification will be addressed "To Whom It May Concern" and provided to the student to attach to the Mitigating Circumstances appeal.
7. The University Health Service will not charge for sickness certification (students providing medical evidence from other Practices may be charged for such certification).
8. The UHS will provide certification in respect of students registered as patients. Registration specifically undertaken for the purpose of providing evidence will **not** be acceptable.

The key message:

- If students miss an exam or hand an assessment in late because of mitigating circumstances (i.e. exceptional circumstances) which lasted 7 days or less, they do not need evidence in support of their application for these circumstances to be taken into account. So they don't need a doctor's note.
- They do have to say why they were unable to obtain evidence.

If it has an impact more than 7 days, however, they will need evidence to support their case.

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