



PACE Mitigating Circumstances Procedure

2026-27

This procedure applies to non-matriculated students enrolled on award-bearing courses offered by the Institute of Professional and Continuing Education (PACE).

Mitigating Circumstances

The mitigating circumstances process is intended to help those who have experienced severe or unexpected difficulties at the time of submitting an assignment or taking an assessment. The effect on the submission or performance of the assignment must have been seriously adverse, unanticipated and beyond your control.

This process is applicable **only after the deadline** for the assignment submission or the date of the assessment. If you are anticipating difficulty in advance of an assignment deadline, you should contact your course team to discuss available extension options. For the majority of cases, you will need to submit evidence with a mitigating circumstance request.

Examples of situations that might require mitigating circumstances include:

- significant physical or psychological illness;
- severe personal difficulties;
- serious illness or death of a member of your immediate family (or someone you are a carer for);
- sudden deterioration in a long-standing medical condition or disability;
- being the victim of a crime;
- legal proceedings requiring attendance at court (e.g. as a witness or juror);
- unexpected adoption or fostering issues;
- redundancy;
- significant and immediate change in working conditions.

The following reasons would not normally be accepted as mitigating circumstances:

- failure to read the examination timetable or assignment deadline properly;
- normal pressures of work;
- technical, software, hardware, network, or internet problems;
- minor illnesses;
- medical circumstances that:



- o are not directly related to the specified assessment period and/or cannot be attributed as having impacted the assessment outcome
 - o involve minor illnesses that would not typically lead to equivalent absence from a work environment and can normally be treated with over the counter remedies (e.g. colds, sore throat, headaches, day to day ailments)
 - o lack supporting evidence or rely on retrospective evidence (e.g. doctors note after the illness has disappeared)
- religious festivals;
- disruptions which can be anticipated (e.g. moving house, holidays);
- over-commitment of studies (e.g. studying numerous courses at the same time).

Evidence to support your request

For the majority of cases, you will need to submit evidence with a mitigating circumstances request. Supporting documentation must be provided within 14 calendar days of submitting the mitigating circumstances request.

Please be aware that the request may not be reviewed until the necessary evidence is provided. If the Quality Office does not receive any updates from you regarding the status of the supporting evidence within 14 days of the request submission, the request will be cancelled.

You are responsible for obtaining supporting evidence for your mitigating circumstances request. PACE is unable to seek evidence on your behalf.

The evidence you submit needs to:

- Explain what the circumstance is.
- Show the timeframe for the circumstances (including any relevant dates).
- Provide any relevant additional information that supports your claim and the impact on your assessment outcome.

Supporting evidence needs to be written in English. If it is originally in another language, it is your responsibility to ensure a translation is supplied.

Examples of acceptable evidence

- Medical certificate / hospital report / report from qualified medical practitioner or counsellor
- A medical report from a qualified medical practitioner, or letter from medical professional, in relation to the ill family member provided you have consent of your family member to provide the data
- Letters from Department of Works and Pensions confirming a Carers Allowance award prior to starting your course
- Documentary evidence from the court or a solicitor

- Supporting statement from Student Support Team
- Crime report and number, or evidence from alternative reporting routes as appropriate
- Evidence from employer detailing the change in working conditions and timescale of advance notice given

When evidence is not required

We understand that it can be difficult to provide evidence in certain circumstances. You should acknowledge this in your supporting statement so that the claim can still be considered.

Evidence is also not required for claims relating to:

- Significant bereavement, for example a death of a close family member or significant other
- Miscarriage or termination of a pregnancy
- Being the victim of sexual assault (including image based sexual abuse)
- Harassment based on a student's disability, faith, gender identity, race, and/or sexual orientation.
- Flare up of a declared and previously evidenced long-term condition (including long-term COVID) where any reasonable adjustments or learning support already in place are no longer sufficient to enable successful submission/completion of the assessment on time.
- Unexpected disruption to technology for a time-bound assessment that could not be avoided through advance planning.

Applying for Mitigating Circumstances

Before applying for mitigating circumstances, you must contact your course team to discuss your circumstances. They will be able to advise on the process and information required for submitting a mitigating circumstances request. If you are not comfortable discussing your circumstances with your course team, you can contact the Student Support Team instead.

You should complete a [Mitigating Circumstances Form](#) within 14 calendar days of the of the submission deadline for the assignment where severe or unexpected difficulties have significantly affected you.

Please be aware that if you do not apply for mitigating circumstances, within 14 calendar days of the assignment deadline or exam, your result may be presented to the Examiners Meeting as a fail or non-completion. Please also be aware that if you have applied for Mitigating Circumstances, your final marks may not be ratified along with the rest of your cohort.

Mitigating circumstances applications after marks have been released will not be accepted. In these instances, any appeal against a result should be handled through the Examination Review Procedure.

Second mitigating circumstances requests for the same assignment or assessment will not normally be accepted.

The request form and all supporting evidence will be treated confidentially within PACE and will only be viewed by those necessary in the decision-making process and to support you. Evidence can be redacted to protect your privacy or the privacy of others, provided the relevant information is still visible.

If you are studying for more than one course at PACE, then please complete a form for each course you are enrolled on.

Mitigating Circumstances Outcomes

The Committee makes decisions based on the information given on your form, so please provide as much detail as possible.

The Committee may approve:

- the cancellation of some or all penalties;
- that the student be permitted to re-write and resubmit the assignment (with no late submission penalty);
- that the student be permitted to submit a missed assignment (with no late submission penalty);
- that no action be taken.

The Committee does not alter individual assignment marks. If the Committee approves your mitigating circumstance request and allows you to submit a missed assignment or resubmit an assignment, you will be advised of the new submission deadline by your Course Administration team. Late assignments will incur the standard late penalties. Please be aware that this may result in not being able to receive your award at the same time of the rest of your cohort and may impact your graduation date.

Following the Committee's consideration of your case, you may be contacted by the Student Support Team if the Committee deems this appropriate.

Appeal stage

Following the Mitigating Circumstances Committee's decision, if you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you may appeal the decision and request a review by contacting the Quality Office (QA@pace.cam.ac.uk) within 14 calendar days of receiving the decision.

The review will not usually consider issues afresh or involve a further investigation. The procedure allows for a decision to be reviewed on the following grounds:



- a) Procedural irregularities that occurred during the decision-making process, which were material to the decision reached; and/or
- b) The decision is unreasonable, in that no reasonable person could have reached the same decision on the available evidence; and/or
- c) The availability of new evidence, which materially impacts the outcome and which, for valid reasons, could not have been submitted at an earlier stage.

The Reviewer will convey the outcome to you in writing and issue a Completion of Procedures letter within 14 calendar days of receiving the request, unless stated otherwise.