

UCEN Manchester

Extensions and Mitigating Circumstances

Policy and Procedures

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1. Background

- 1.1** UCEN Manchester is committed to creating an inclusive, supportive and equitable learning environment for all students. It recognises the significant impact that students' physical health, mental wellbeing, and personal circumstances can have on their ability to engage fully with their studies and achieve their academic potential. UCEN Manchester seeks to develop a supportive policy that enables students to engage with their studies and achieve to the best of their ability.
- 1.2** This Extensions and Mitigating Circumstances Policy provides a structured and compassionate framework to support students who experience short-term, unforeseen circumstances that affect their ability to complete or submit summative assessments. The policy ensures that students can access timely, fair, and consistent support when unexpected difficulties arise, enabling them to continue their studies without being disadvantaged by events outside their control.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy and Procedures is to set out UCEN Manchester's regulations for managing extensions and mitigating circumstances (MCs) for students enrolled on Higher Education programmes at UCEN Manchester. It provides clear guidance on what qualifies as mitigating circumstances, the options available to students, and the process for applying. The policy ensures that all requests are considered consistently, fairly, and in line with awarding-body requirements. This policy applies only to summative assessments submitted for marking and credit.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all full-time and part-time students enrolled on Higher Education programmes at UCEN Manchester. It covers requests for extensions and mitigating circumstances relating to **summative assessments only**.

For programmes delivered in partnership with a university, the relevant partner institution's regulations apply. Students on programmes validated by Manchester Metropolitan University or Sheffield Hallam University must follow the assessment-related procedures published by those partners.

For **Manchester Metropolitan University**, please refer to the Assessments Extension Procedure: [Manchester Met Policies](#)

For **Sheffield Hallam University**, please refer to the Extensions and Exceptional Circumstances Policy: [Sheffield Hallam Policies](#)

4. Linked Policies

The following policies should be read in conjunction with this policy:

Students on Higher Education programmes validated by UCEN Manchester:

- **UCEN Manchester Higher Education Academic Regulations**
<https://www.ucenmanchester.ac.uk/about/degree-course-policies/ucen-manchester/>

Students on EdExcel Pearson Higher Education programmes:

- **Academic Regulations – Pearson Higher Nationals**
[ucen-manchester-pearson-academic-regulations.pdf](#)

All students:

- **Break In Study**
[ucen_manchester_break_in_study_policy_and_procedure.pdf](#)

5. Main Aims

5.1 To provide clarity on what constitutes mitigating circumstances and the options available to students.

5.2 To provide supportive and effective process to support students and academic success – to enable students to engage effectively with their studies by providing clear guidance in the event of being faced with unforeseen challenges, that promote positive outcomes, including achievement, progression and high grades.

5.3 To provide a clear, consistent and supportive decision-making framework – to reassure students of the consistent and fair process for all.

5.4 To balance student support with institutional responsibilities - to ensure that UCEN Manchester meets its duty of care to students, while maintaining academic standards, and confidence among key stakeholders.

6. How this policy contributes to the UCEN Manchester Strategy

6.1 The Extensions and Mitigating Circumstances Policy supports UCEN Manchester's vision of being "*Rooted in the North: delivering excellence in Creative and Technical Higher Education*" by ensuring that students can continue to engage with their studies during periods of unforeseen difficulty.

6.2 The policy underpins our commitment to delivering sector-leading student support by providing a clear, fair and consistent framework that enables students to manage unexpected challenges safely, effectively and successfully.

7. Definitions and Key Principles

7.1 Mitigating Circumstances

(MCs) are short-term, unexpected events outside the student's control that seriously affect their ability to attend or submit an assessment on time. They must:

- be unplanned and unforeseen;
- be outside the student's control and not preventable by reasonable actions;
- occur close in time to the assessment; and
- have a substantial, evidenced impact on the assessment.

This policy and procedure explain what a student must do if faced with such circumstances which impact the ability to engage with assessments.

7.2 Fit to sit / fit to submit principle

UCEN Manchester operates a Fit to Sit / Fit to Submit principle. By sitting an exam, undertaking a practical assessment, or submitting work, a student confirms they are fit to attempt that assessment. Applications relating to that attempt will not normally be considered unless there are exceptional circumstances (e.g. a student becomes acutely unwell during a timed assessment).

7.3 Exceptions during timed assessments

If a student becomes ill or is injured during a timed/practical assessment, they should:

- submit a deferral request within 5 working days of the assessment date;
- include a supporting statement from the relevant tutor;
- on receipt of the outcome, the student may choose to accept the mark achieved or attempt the assessment at the next available opportunity (the student must notify their tutor and Academic Services team within 2 weeks of the outcome being received).
- where the student chooses to defer and re-attempt, this will be assessed as for the first time.

8 Examples of Mitigating Circumstances

8.1 Examples that are normally acceptable

- Illness lasting several days; acute onset of serious illness during a timed assessment;
- Bereavement;
- Serious illness of a close family member with increased care responsibilities;
- Injury or accident;
- Jury service or other national service;
- Severe, unforeseeable financial difficulties;
- Severe disruption to public transport affects attendance or submission.

8.2 Examples that are normally unacceptable

- Lack of access to books or resources;
- IT issues not related to UCEN Manchester systems;
- Failure to save or back up work;
- Misreading a submission or exam timetable;
- Oversleeping;
- Avoidable transport issues;
- Minor ailments (except those preventing attendance at a timed assessment);
- Holidays or house moves;
- Work commitments;
- Ongoing conditions addressed through a Personal Learning Plan (unless there is a documented, acute exacerbation).

9 Students With Disabilities / Long-Term Health Conditions

Students who have a disability or chronic medical condition which they believe will affect their performance in assessments should make an appointment to see the Disability Officer. Where appropriate, a Reasonable Adjustment/Personal Learning Plan (PLP) will be created. This will document any special arrangements for assessment for all tutors to be able to review and make the necessary arrangements. Candidates must inform the Programme Leader or Personal Tutor of any impairment/ disability as soon as is evident and, in any case, not less than 2 weeks before the onset of the examination period if special arrangements are being requested for formal examinations.

For SEG programmes, students should seek support from their Personal Tutor.

Reasons already covered by a PLP will not normally be considered under this Policy unless there is a significant exacerbation that is evidenced.

10 Ongoing Circumstances

Mitigating Circumstances are intended for short-term, unexpected events. The same circumstances will not normally be accepted across more than one academic year. Students experiencing significant ongoing difficulties should discuss options with their tutor. (e.g., a Break in Study or, where available, a change to part-time study).

11. Options To Manage Assessments Deadlines: Extensions And Deferrals

Students experiencing short-term difficulties that affect their ability to meet an assessment deadline may request either:

- An automatic extension (no evidence required)
- An evidence-based extension (Mitigating Circumstances)
- A Deferral (Mitigating Circumstances evidence required)

11.1 Automatic extensions (no evidence required)

Students are entitled to automatic extensions for eligible assessments, subject to the rules below:

- Allowance: **Up to two (2) automatic extensions per 120 credits / academic year of study**. For part-time students (normally 60 credits per academic year), this equates to one (1) automatic extension per academic year;
- Only **one extension per assessment** is allowed.
- Duration: Each automatic extension provides **7 calendar days**;¹
- Scope: Automatic extensions apply to **non-time-constrained** assessments (e.g. coursework) They cannot be used for event-based assessments (e.g. exams, tests, performances).

¹ For clarification, 7 calendar days excludes Bank holidays and Official Campus Closure days

- How to request: Students must submit the **Automatic Extension Request Form before the original submission deadline**. This is accessible via <https://www.ucenmanchester.ac.uk/about/degree-course-policies/ucen-manchester/>
- The Academic Services Office will confirm the revised deadline.

If automatic extensions are exhausted, students may submit an evidenced-based Mitigating Circumstances Extension Request. See section 11.2 below.

If a longer period is required, students can defer the assessment attempt to later in the academic year. If more time is needed, students must submit an evidence-based request or consider a deferral.

11.2 Evidence-based extension requests (mitigating circumstances)

Evidence-based extensions are for situations where mitigating circumstances affect a student's ability to submit work on time. They are not intended to give additional time to *start* an assessment.

- Allowance: students can apply **as and when required**.
- Duration: Provides **7 calendar days** from the original deadline
- The time frame may be shortened if required to meet Assessment Board timelines, or a deferral may be offered instead.
- Scope: Evidence-based extensions apply to non-time-constrained assessments (e.g. coursework) They cannot be used for event-based assessments (e.g. exams, tests, performances).
- How to request: Students must submit a Mitigating Circumstances application form and supporting evidence. This is accessible via <https://www.ucenmanchester.ac.uk/about/degree-course-policies/ucen-manchester/>
- The application should be submitted from the students' UCEN Manchester email account to MC@ucenmanchester.ac.uk
- Students must continue working towards the original deadline while awaiting an outcome.

If the outcome to the request is not received by the deadline, students are strongly advised to submit the assessment. If later approved, a resubmission to the revised deadline will be permitted.

11.3 Deferral requests (evidence based mitigating circumstances)

A deferral moves the assessment to the **next available opportunity** and is appropriate when circumstances prevent completion even with additional time.

- A student **cannot both submit and defer** for the same attempt (Fit to Sit/Submit principle).
- Allowance: students can apply as and when needed but may only be deferred **up to two times** for the same assessment. A third deferral request requires compelling evidence.
- In advance requests may be made for unavoidable pre-scheduled events (e.g. jury service, planned surgery).
- If the Panel determines circumstances allow completion with extra time, up to **7 calendar days** from the date of the outcome may be granted instead of a deferral.
- How to Request: Students must submit a Mitigating Circumstances application form selecting deferral request. The application must be submitted **no later than 5 working days of the assessment submission deadline**. Application forms can be found on the following link:
<https://www.ucenmanchester.ac.uk/about/degree-course-policies/ucen-manchester/>
- The application should be submitted from the students' UCEN Manchester email account to: MC@ucenmanchester.ac.uk
- Requests submitted after Assessment Board ratification will **not** be considered.

12. Mitigating Circumstances impacting Group Assessment

In a scenario where a student is unable to be assessed due to mitigating circumstances, and this impacts on the wider group, where no alternative can be made, then the Programme Leader will submit an extension on behalf of that group, stating the names of those students affected and communicate with the students if that is the case.

13. Evidenced Based Mitigating Circumstances Application

- Evidence Requirements

Applications must include independent evidence (from someone with no personal connection, acting in a professional capacity). Evidence must:

- be on official letterheaded paper and dated.
- be in English (official certified translation is required if not in English).
- relate to the timeframe of the assessment or demonstrate ongoing impact relevant to the submission; and
- be submitted with the application. If evidence is unavailable at the time, students have up to 5 working days from submitting the application to provide it, with a compelling reason for the delay.

Examples of acceptable evidence include:

- Medical: GP/counsellor/other medical professional letter; hospital admission/discharge notes.
- Bereavement: Death certificate; GP/counsellor letter; order of service.
- Legal/Crime: Police crime reference number; court or solicitor correspondence.

- Housing: Tenancy agreement; housing officer communications; eviction notices.
- National Service: Formal confirmation that attendance is required.

14. Consideration And Outcomes

All applications are considered by the Academic Services Panel (chaired by the Head of Registry) which meets a minimum of three times per week.

Outcomes are issued within three working days of full consideration to the students UCEN Manchester email address.

14.1 If an extension request (evidence-based) is approved:

Duration: up to 7 calendar days from the original deadline will be permitted

Where required to meet Assessment Board timelines, a shorter extension may be approved, or a deferral may be offered instead.

While awaiting an outcome, the original deadline applies. If an outcome is not received by the deadline, students are strongly advised to submit. If the request is approved, students will be permitted to resubmit by the revised deadline.

14.2 If an extension requests is not approved

- Work submitted within 5 working days of the deadline: the mark is capped at a Pass (as per late submission rule in the Academic Regulations).
- No submission: a mark of zero (0) is recorded for non-submission

14.3 If a deferral is approved

- The assessment will be due at the next available opportunity.
- A new assessment brief will normally be issued near the time (for large individual projects, the original brief may be retained where a new brief would be unachievable in the time available – your tutor will advise).
- Marks are not capped unless academic misconduct is upheld or the assessment is a retake, in which case marks are capped at Pass in line with Academic Regulations.

14.4 If a deferral is not approved

- Work submitted within 5 working days of the original deadline: mark will be capped at Pass (as per late submission rule in Academic Regulations).
- No submission: mark of zero (0) recorded for non-submission.

15. Appeals

If the application is not approved, appeals may be submitted within two (2) weeks of receiving the outcome, where the reason meets the grounds for appeal. Refer to the Higher Education Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure for details.

[Higher education academic appeals policy and procedure.](#)

16. Tuition fees

Mitigating circumstances applications do not affect tuition fees, regardless of the outcome.

Summary Table: Extension vs Defer Options

Option	When to Use	Deadline to Apply	Evidence Required?	Outcome if Approved	Notes
Automatic Extension (7 days)	Short delay needed for non-timed assessments	Before submission date	No evidence required	+7 calendar days	Max 2 per 120 credits ; only for non-time-constrained assessments
Extension via MC Panel	Mitigating circumstances impact ability to submit on time	Before submission date	Yes – independent evidence	+7 calendar days (or fewer if board timelines require)	Only for non-time-constrained assessments. Must continue working until outcome received
Defer Assessment	Circumstances prevent student from completing the assessment even with extra time	Within 5 working days after submission date	Yes – independent evidence	Attempt moved to next available opportunity	New brief normally issued; marks not capped unless retake/misconduct
Exceptional Advance Defer	When a pre-known event (e.g., surgery, jury service) will prevent submission	In advance of assessment	Yes – evidence	Assessment moved to next opportunity	Only for pre-scheduled unavoidable events
Appeal	If extension/defer request is not approved	Within 2 weeks of outcome	Depends on grounds	Outcome may be overturned	Must meet grounds set in Academic Appeals Policy

UCEN Manchester

Extensions and Mitigating Circumstances Policy and Procedure

Document Control								
Document Type					Policy			
Date Approved					18/06/2026			
Approved by					Academic Board			
Review Date					July 2028			
Department					Academic Services			
Policy Owner					Head of Registry			
Principalship Lead					Vice Dean, UCEN Manchester			
Accessible to Students					Yes			
	Summary Article	Website Policy	Interactive Training	Video & Summary	Student Guide	CPD Day Training	Other	Date Completed
Website		x						
Intranet								
Thrive								
Staff Comms		x						
Student Comms								

Revision History

Version	New/Replacement	Summary of Changes
1	NEW Revised May 25 – Policy to be Effective from September 26	1. Following a comprehensive review of the Mitigating Circumstances Policy and Procedure relating to Higher National Pearson EdExcel and Skills and Education Group provision, it is proposed that the policy be revised and adopted as a UCEN Manchester-wide policy. This revision extends its applicability across all Higher Education provision delivered at UCEN Manchester where no awarding body-specific policy exists, including UCEN Manchester validated programmes.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Part 1 – Due regard template - to be completed for all policies / changes

SECTION 1	
Name of activity / proposal / change	An impact assessment of UCEN Manchester Extensions and Mitigating Circumstances policy and Procedures which has been updated for the academic year 2026-27 and incorporates UCEN Manchester validated programmes, Pearson provision and SEG provision.
Is this a new or existing policy / practice / project?	New Policy
Date screening commenced	August 2026
Function / department / service carrying out the assessment	Registry and Academic Services /Student Experience and Engagement
Project/policy/practice owner (person responsible for the change)	Nasima Manjra Head of Registry
Name and role of person undertaking this assessment (may be the same as above)	Wendy Pennington Director of Student Experience and Engagement
Give an overview of the aims, objectives and purpose of the proposal:	
AIMS: To provide a fair, transparent and supportive framework for managing assessment extensions and mitigating circumstances for Higher Education students at UCEN Manchester.	
OBJECTIVES: • Ensure students experiencing unforeseen circumstances have access to appropriate academic support. • Promote consistency and fairness in decision-making. • Maintain academic standards while supporting student success and wellbeing. • Provide clear guidance on extension and deferral processes. • Ensure compliance with awarding body and regulatory requirements	
PURPOSE: The policy sets out the regulations and procedures for managing assessment extensions and mitigating circumstances, ensuring students are not disadvantaged by short-term unforeseen events while maintaining the integrity of academic assessment.	
SECTION 2	
Protected characteristic	Will/Does the implementation of the policy result in different impacts for protected groups and the general population of the organisation?
Age	No adverse impact identified. The policy applies equally to all students regardless of age and provides consistent access to extensions and mitigating circumstances processes.

Disability	Positive impact. The policy complements reasonable adjustments and Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) and provides additional support where there is an evidenced exacerbation of a condition.
Gender reassignment	No adverse impact identified. The policy is applied consistently to all students.
Marriage & Civil Partnership	No adverse impact identified. The policy is applied consistently to all students.
Pregnancy and Maternity	Positive impact. The policy provides mechanisms for students experiencing pregnancy-related illness, maternity-related circumstances, or caring responsibilities to seek support where appropriate.
Race	No adverse impact identified. Evidence requirements permit certified translated documentation where evidence is not in English, helping remove potential barriers.
Religion and belief	No adverse impact identified. The policy is applied consistently to all students.
Sex	No adverse impact identified. The policy is applied consistently to all students.
Sexual orientation	No adverse impact identified. The policy is applied consistently to all students.
Other equality groups	No adverse impact identified. The policy is applied consistently to all students.

SECTION 3

Does this activity propose major changes in terms of scale or significance for LTE Group? For example, is there a clear indication that, although the proposal is minor it is likely to have a major affect for people from an equality group/s? Please tick appropriate box below.

YES		NO	x
High risk: complete a full Equality Impact Assessment (see Part 2)		Low risk: go to section 4	

SECTION 4

If this proposal is low risk please give evidence or justification for how you reached this decision:

The policy has been assessed as low risk from an equality perspective because:

- It applies consistently to all Higher Education students.
- It provides additional support for students experiencing unforeseen difficulties and aims to reduce disadvantage arising from circumstances outside a student's control.

- Students with disabilities and long-term health conditions continue to be supported through Reasonable Adjustments and Personal Learning Plans, with mitigating circumstances available where there is a significant exacerbation of a condition.
- The policy includes clear evidence and appeals processes, promoting transparency and fairness.
- No protected group is excluded from accessing the provisions of the policy.
- The policy is expected to have an overall positive impact on student wellbeing, retention, progression and academic achievement.

Signed by reviewer / assessor <i>NManjra</i>	NAME: Nasima Manjra	DATE: 14/08/26
Approval that this proposal is low risk and does not require a full Equality Assessment analysis		
For and on behalf of the LTE Group EDI committee:	NAME: Wendy Pennington	DATE: 14/08/26
TITLE: Director of Student Experience and Engagement	SIGNATURE: <i>W. Pennington</i>	