ASSESSMENT, PROGRESSION AND AWARDING: TAUGHT PROGRAMMES HANDBOOK

10. Mitigation

10.1 Principles

- 10.1.1 It is recognised that students can suffer illness or other adverse personal circumstances which affect their ability to complete an assessment. It is also recognised that the University measures students' actual achievement rather than potential achievement.
- 10.1.2 If a student is ill or affected by personal circumstances that potentially preclude them from undertaking an assessment on time, they should submit a mitigation application. This should be submitted no later than 24 hours following the affected assessment point.
- 10.1.3 Students must make a decision on whether to undertake the assessment on time with the knowledge that the mitigation application may or may not be successful. If students feel that their performance will be significantly affected, they **should** still submit their assessment, unless it is felt that to do so would exacerbate their condition or disrupt the examination for other students. In both cases, students can apply for mitigation. If their mitigation application is unsuccessful and they have not completed the assessment, they will automatically receive a mark of zero.
- 10.1.4 In cases where a student applies for mitigation after they have attempted an assessment, this attempt will be removed from marking. This is following the principle that the student's performance has been significantly affected so the attempt has been deemed void. In the event that the application is not successful then the assessment will be marked and will count as the student's first attempt.
- 10.1.5 Where there is evidence to suggest that the student was not able to fully engage with procedures (examples are given under 10.4.2), the initial attempt may be marked with the student given the choice between the deferral and their original mark.
- 10.1.6 An application for mitigation will be considered for:
- a. Single occasions of illness
- b. Adverse personal circumstances
- Relapses/ exacerbations of long-term fluctuating conditions/ disabilities. c.

- d. Religious A requirement of Observance on the day of assessment
 - Where mitigating circumstances become apparent or where multiple mitigation applications have been submitted during the course of the programme, staff and students **should** consider use of the Health, Wellbeing and Support for Study procedure and Chapter 13 of the Learning and Teaching Support Handbook; Procedures for the interruption and voluntary withdrawal of taught students. Students should seek clear guidance from their Pastoral Mentor, Academic Tutor (also known as Personal Tutor), the Student Finance Office, study skills advisers, Wellbeing Services or Penryn/Truro Accessibility Service, and/or the Students' Guild/the Students' Union.
- 10.1.7 For students with Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), recommendations for support will be in place in accordance with the guidance provided in <u>Chapter 4</u> - Assessing students with disabilities. However, it is acknowledged that students experiencing long term, fluctuating health conditions/ disabilities may need to apply for mitigation.
- 10.1.8 Students undertaking Clinical Education Development and Research (CEDAR) programmes and who are required to demonstrate clinical competencies and the application of knowledge and theory as part of their programme, are permitted to apply for Mitigation on the grounds that there are workplace or clinical circumstances preventing them from completing a clinical assessment. Details of the forms of evidence accepted in these cases can be found in APA Handbook Annex F - Mitigation.
- 10.1.9 Specific guidance concerning mitigation for Sports Scholars and High Performance Athletes can be found in <u>Annex 1 Sports Scholars Mitigation Guidance</u>.
- 10.1.10 For Degree Apprenticeship programmes, please see the Special Provisions for Degree Apprenticeships for further guidance.

10.2 Information for Students

- 10.2.1 The Hub Information Point webpages or equivalent must provide procedures and clear guidance on how students can apply for mitigation. This information should also include details of how these applications will be considered and the implications and likely outcomes of any mitigation application. This guidance should include examples of what circumstances will be considered acceptable.
- 10.2.2 A set of <u>FAQs</u> for mitigation are available.

10.3 **The Mitigation Committee**

- 10.3.1 Mitigation Committees **must** oversee the process by which applications for mitigation are considered. These can be established for department areas, for the Hub or for the campus.
- 10.3.2 The membership of Mitigation Committees should be appropriately representative as far as possible. They must include qualified and experienced Academic/ Professional Services staff. This can include, but is not limited to, Pastoral Mentors and Education Welfare Advisors.
- 10.3.3 The Chair of the Mitigation Committee must not be the Chair of an Assessment, Progression and Awarding Committee, to ensure that there is no conflict of interest.
- 10.3.4 In the interests of confidentiality the number of members of Mitigation Committees **should** be kept to a minimum.
- 10.3.5 Where Mitigation Committees are established at Hub level it is appropriate to include a representative with experience of the teaching and assessment from each department.
- 10.3.6 One or more members of the committee, usually a senior administrator, should be appointed annually by the committee with delegated responsibility to initially consider all mitigation requests.
- 10.3.7 Pro-Vice Chancellors and Executive Deans of Faculties should not sit on Mitigation Committees in order that they can consider any appeals arising.
- 10.3.8 External Examiners and the relevant Assessment, Progression and Awarding Committee **should** have access to the decisions of the Mitigation Committee.

10.4 Applications for Mitigation

- 10.4.1 Applications for mitigation **should** be made prior to the assessment deadline or within 24 hours. There are two methods by which students can access mitigation. These are:
- One-week evidence-free extensions are only available for submissions made via ELE a. 2 (see 10.5). This is one -one-week evidence-free extension per assessment. All applications for assessments not submitted via ELE 2, must be made via the evidencebased mitigation process. In some instances, regulated professional programmes may have regulations in place that prohibit access to the evidence-free extension. Departments will advise students if this is the case for any of their assessments.
- b. Evidence-based mitigation via an application form (see 10.6).

- (NOTE: If a student requests a one-week evidence-free extension, but then realises an additional extension is required, they may submit an application for evidence-based mitigation. If granted, this extension will incorporate the original one-week extension, with a maximum of two-weeks being granted from the original submission deadline.
- 10.4.2 Examples of exceptional circumstances which may justify consideration of retrospective or late application for mitigation are detailed in APA Handbook Annex F - Mitigation, section four. Examples **may** include an unexpected traumatic event, an emerging health condition, the effect of which was not clear at the time of the assessment, but would have significantly impacted on the student's ability to engage with their studies and also to engage with the support procedures or a health condition which prevents a student's ability to understand or engage with the procedures. Late / retrospective applications must be made via the evidence-based mitigation process.

10.4.2.1 Late Applications

Late applications are those which are received within three weeks of the assessment deadline, prior to marks and feedback for the cohort being released to students.

10.4.2.2 Retrospective applications pre-APAC

Applications for retrospective mitigation received in time to be considered by the Mitigation Committee prior to being reported to the Assessment, Progression and Awarding Committee. Applications for retrospective mitigation under this category must be received at least two weeks prior to the Assessment Progression and Committee meeting. Applications under this category will not be considered for extensions.

10.4.2.3 Retrospective application post-APAC

Applications for retrospective mitigation made after the Assessment, Progression and Awarding Committee has sat and results have been released to students must be made via an appeal. Applications under this category will not be considered for extensions.

10.4.3 Students are responsible for making applications for mitigation to the Faculty (or delegated School) delivering the affected module or via ELE 2 for one-week evidencefree extensions.

- 10.4.4 The length of the permitted extension should be determined by the member of staff reviewing the request and evidence, using their professional judgement. Records of permitted extensions must be kept and reviewed regularly to ensure consistency of approach over time and to enable the sharing of best practice between decisionmakers.
- 10.4.5 For programmes involving professional placements, or where PSRB requirements are in place, the length of an extension may need to be determined in consultation with the placement provider and/or Programme Team.

10.5 One-week Evidence-Free Extensions (coursework assignments only, for ELE 2 submissions only)

- 10.5.1 For coursework assignments (and not for examinations) students can add an evidence-free extension of one-week directly within ELE 2.
- 10.5.2 Students can add a one-week evidence-free extension on four (4) occasions in an academic year. Any extensions required after the allocated maximum permitted requests have been used must be applied for through the evidence-based process.
- 10.5.3 Unused extensions will not roll-over into the next academic year.
- 10.5.4 Students with allowances for extensions on an ILP will have no limit to the number of evidence-free one-week extensions they can have in an academic year.
- 10.5.5 Students (including students with extensions on their ILP) can only use one one-week evidence-free extension per assignment. If a student requires an extension of longer than one-week they must apply via the evidence-based mitigation process (see 10.6 below).
- 10.5.6 A one-week extension will be a -seven calendar day extension. The new deadline (after the extension has been applied) may fall on a University closure day when support may not be available. Students should take this into account when submitting the request for an evidence-free extension.
- 10.5.7 When a student selects the option for a one-week evidence-free extension within ELE 2, then their submission date will be updated immediately on their assessment and they will be sent an email confirming the new submission date.
- 10.5.8 ELE 2 will display to students how many one-week evidence-free extensions they have left within the academic year.

10.5.9 Students are entitled to withdraw their request for a one-week evidence-free extension up to up to three working days after the assessment deadline if they have submitted the assignment before the deadline. The student's available number of oneweek evidence-free extensions for the academic year will then be readjusted accordingly.

10.6 Evidence-based Mitigation Process

- 10.6.1 For coursework assignments where an extension of more than one-week is required. where all of a student's one-week evidence-free extensions have been used and for any assessments outside of ELE 2, and all examinations, students may apply for mitigation via an application form available from The Hub Information Point webpages.
- 10.6.2 Students may apply for evidence-based mitigation for a one-week (7 calendar days) or two-week (14 days) extension. Annex F: Mitigation of the Assessment, Progression and Awarding Handbook provides examples of evidence which can be submitted in support of extensions as well as other forms of mitigation).
- 10.6.3 Students may apply for mitigation for more than one module where the same circumstances have affected more than one examination/ assignment. However, students **must** use the application form and be explicit in detailing:
- a. The circumstances which have affected them.
- Which examinations/ assignments have been affected and the module code of each b. assessment.
- How these circumstances have affected them/ their performance. c.
- d. Students are entitled to withdraw their mitigation application up to three working days after the assessment deadline.
- 10.6.4 Students applying for evidence-based mitigation should submit verifiable and/or independent evidence of the circumstances which have affected their performance. Where ill health has been sufficiently serious to have affected performance, the student must have obtained supporting evidence (see APA Handbook Annex F: Mitigation for examples of appropriate evidence).
- 10.6.5 For students applying for mitigation on the basis of an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) which indicates support for extensions on coursework, the ILP will suffice as evidence for an extension of one or two weeks.

10.6.6 For students applying for mitigation on the basis of an ILP which indicates support for extensions on coursework, there is no limit to the number of extensions for which they can apply.

10.7 Mitigation applications received for group work assignments

- 10.7.1 When setting group work assessments, staff should be mindful of the possibility that a student may need to apply for an extension to the assignment and should aim to make the assessment resilient in the face of mitigating circumstances which may prevent individuals from being able to contribute.
- 10.7.2 When valid and evidenced mitigation applications are received for a deferral of a piece of group work by one member of the group, deferral should be approved but it is important that any impact on remaining group members is considered. The convenor will need to consider if any adjustments need to be made for remaining group members in terms of expected contributions or if allowance can be made in marking process to take into account that the group size had decreased.
- 10.7.3 When valid and evidenced mitigation applications are received and approved for extensions to group work, consideration must be taken about whether the assessment can be divided into individual contributions to allow for one student to be granted an extension. This should only be considered if the assessment can be divided without negatively impacting the experience of the rest of the group.
- 10.7.4 An extension to the deadline for all group members can be considered, but care must be taken to ensure that all group members are in agreement with the revised deadline and that it does not cause any disadvantage to any other member of the group.
- 10.7.5 If an extension cannot be accommodated, the student should be offered a deferral of the assessment. The module convenor will need to consider if any adjustments need to be made for remaining group members in terms of expected contributions to the process and product of the assessment. It may also be necessary for allowances to be made in the marking process to take into account that the group size has decreased and the related impact on the product of the group work.
- 10.7.6 If one or more of the Intended Learning Outcomes of a module is to be assessed by group work activities, it should be identified how the group work component will be assessed if a student has mitigation approved which leads to them making an individual

submission at a later date. Wherever possible, reassessment should enable a student to demonstrate the same intended learning outcomes as the first assessment.

10.8 Consideration of Applications

- 10.8.1 Mitigation Committees should consider applications in a timely fashion through meetings or through delegating responsibility to a member of the Mitigation Committee, in accordance with the guidance provided in APA Handbook Annex F: Mitigation.
- 10.8.2 Mitigation committees must be consulted on all non-standard cases.
- 10.8.3 The consequences for classification of any adjustments will not be a factor in Mitigation Committees' consideration.
- 10.8.4 Where an application for mitigation is made on the basis of especially sensitive information this **should** be treated confidentially and the reasons for the application may be considered by the Chair of the Mitigation Committee only and not shared with the rest of the Committee. Examples of this type of sensitive information include being the victim of a serious personal assault or termination of pregnancy.
- 10.8.5 The Mitigation Committee may decide that there are no grounds for action because one of the following conditions applies:
- a. The evidence presented does not support the claim that the student may have been affected and no further action is required.
- The evidence presented does not support the claim that the student may have been b. affected in excess of the normal maximum extension period of two weeks.
- An application was not submitted or was made too late without compelling reasons for c. why the application was not made at the time of the effect on performance.
- 10.8.6 Where the Mitigation Committee decides that action is required the following options **should** be considered the most commonly applicable outcomes:
- Examination: Deferral of the examination. This can be decided even where the a. examination has been attempted if the Mitigation Committee decides that the student may have been effectively incapable of sitting the examination.
- b. Coursework assignment; Permitting an extension to the submission deadline for assignments or in-year deferral.

- 10.8.7 In special circumstances, (see APA Handbook Annex F: Mitigation) where deferral or an extension to an assessment deadline is not appropriate, the following **may** also be considered:
- Setting aside the assessment mark or module mark when considering progression,
 classification or condonement.
- b. Substitution of a proxy mark for any affected assessment. This is appropriate where of there is sufficient evidence а student's performance other examination/assignment so that the Mitigation Committee can have reasonable confidence in the validity of the proxy mark - e.g. by ranked performance in similar examination/assignment in a similar subject. Where a proxy mark was derived largely from the student's performance in all the other modules in the same year (as opposed to information specific to that or similar modules) it should not exceed the student's stage average for that year. The substitution of a proxy mark can be problematic however for degrees with professional qualifying status and therefore may not be possible.
- Recommendation of Repeat Study: Where a recommendation has been received from c. the Welfare Team, the Mitigation Committee may recommend to the Assessment, Progression and Awarding Committee that repeat study be offered to a student. It is expected that this recommendation might be made when students have faced exceptional mitigating circumstances which has severely impacted their ability to engage with their studies during the academic year and/or where they have deferred a number of assessments and there is concern that they may not be able to successfully of study. complete their year Where programmes are governed by PSRBs, it may not be possible for the measures listed in a-b above to be applied to students' marks. There may also be limits to the maximum length of time in which a programme can be completed which would mean repeat study might not always be available to students on PSRB regulated programmes.
- 10.8.8 The Mitigation Committee **must** clearly record every decision and the reasons for it.

 All students **should** be informed of these decisions as soon as possible.
- 10.8.9 Decisions of Committees **must** be Mitigation reported to the Programme/Department Assessment, Progression and Awarding Committee. These decisions are not then subject to change except where the

Programme/Department Assessment, Progression and Awarding Committee considers that a decision to defer an examination (or coursework assignment) is unnecessary for the purpose of classification, i.e. where the likely outcome of such a deferral will not affect the overall classification.

10.9 Review of Mitigation and Appeals

- 10.9.1 Students have the right to request a review of the decision made with respect to their mitigation application. A request for review must be submitted within 10 working days of the outcome of the mitigation being communicated to the student and may be made only on the following grounds:
- a. Procedural error or evidence of bias or prejudice.
- b. The decision reached is one which no reasonable body, properly directing itself, could have arrived at.
- Students should note that the outcome of the review may not change the decision of c. the mitigation committee and they should not delay submitting their work until receipt of the outcome of the review.
- 10.9.2 Reviews **should not** be considered on the following grounds:
- a. Dissatisfaction with the reasonable judgment of the Mitigation Committee.
- b. Late submission of an application for mitigation where there are no compelling grounds for the lateness.
- Additional grounds for mitigation that were not part of the original mitigation c. application.
- 10.9.3 The request for a review should be submitted in writing to <u>mitigation-outcome-</u> review@exeter.ac.uk and the review request will be considered by the Chair of the Mitigation Committee or their nominee. The Review should not be considered by any individual who was involved in making the original decision for which the review is being requested.
 - The Chair of the Mitigation Committee or their nominee will consider the mitigation application and the student's request for review and provide a response to the student in writing within 10 working days.
- 10.9.4 If a student remains dissatisfied following the review of their mitigation decision by the Chair of the Mitigation Committee or their nominee, the Student has the right to appeal against the decision made. Such appeals must be submitted within 10 working

- days of the student receiving their confirmed module marks following the relevant Assessment, Progression and Awarding Committee (APAC).
- 10.9.5 Appeals will be considered through the University's <u>Student Academic Appeals</u> procedure.

10.10 Supporting Documentation:

10.10.1 A set of FAQs for Mitigation are available. Please see section 10.2 above.