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Extensions and Mitigating Circumstances Procedures

Introduction

This document details the college procedures in relation to requests for extensions to assessment deadlines and also for mitigating circumstances to be taken into consideration. It is intended for use by CAVC learners and employees of the college.

This set of procedures relates solely to the college higher education programmes approved to run and awarded by Pearson Education Ltd. They are informed by Pearson's BTEC Higher Nationals Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment and the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

Extensions

Requests for an extension to an assessment deadline will be dealt with based on the principles set out below:

- Extensions will only be considered for authorisation where there are legitimate reasons and extenuating circumstances, such as illness at the time of submission.
- Students must make a formal application for an extension providing evidence of the reasons for not meeting a deadline.
- Extension requests should be made at least 5 working days prior to the assessment deadline.
- The duration of extensions will normally not exceed 2 weeks and should not be after the summative feedback has been issued to the other students on the programme.
- All extensions granted by the Programme Leader will be recorded and made available at the Assessment Board and to the External Examiner (EE). Recording details of extensions enables the Assessment Board and the EE to confirm that the programme is operating consistently in accordance with CAVC's and Pearson's policies and guidance.

Procedure for Applying for an Extension

1. Applications for extensions should be submitted at least 5 working days prior to the submission date.
2. The Extension application form (see Appendix A) is to be completed and returned to the Programme Leader, copied to headminteam@cavc.ac.uk

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3. If approved, a further submission date will be set and the assessment will be graded as a first submission.
4. A record of the extension will be recorded and referred to at the Assessment Board.

Mitigating Circumstances

Students studying Higher Education programmes at CAVC should make every effort to ensure they are fit to study and undertake assessment as directed by the programme team. Students are also expected to make every effort to comply with assessment deadlines and complete their programme within the timeframe expected. However, there are times when a student will face adverse difficulties that will affect their academic progress.

Mitigating circumstances (also referred to as extenuating or special circumstances) are any serious circumstances beyond a student's control which may have adversely affected their performance; this can include the non or unauthorised late submission of assessments.

The appropriate management of mitigating circumstances affecting a student's study and assessment is important in ensuring that academic standards are maintained and that students perceive that they are being treated fairly.

Students are responsible for reporting, in a timely manner, any mitigating circumstances that may affect their results, using the procedures set out below. Claims for mitigating circumstances must be supported by appropriate evidence and the circumstances must be relevant to the claimed impact. Wherever possible, reasonable adjustments should be made to allow students to attend teaching activities and to complete coursework.

Claims for mitigating circumstances should be treated fairly and equally, in line with the college Equality & Diversity Policy and students who demonstrate mitigating circumstances should not be unduly disadvantaged or advantaged over other students.

Definition of Mitigating Circumstances

These are circumstances that:

- affect the student's ability to attend or complete an assessment or a number of assessments
- affect the student's ability to complete a level, or the number of units they are enrolled on in an academic year
- are exceptional
- are outside their control
- can be corroborated by independent evidence
- occurred during or shortly before the assessment in question

Procedure for Consideration of Mitigating Circumstances

Where possible a student should first use the extensions procedure to request an extension 5 working days before an assessment deadline. If this is not possible, or circumstances continue where a student feels an already extended deadline would also be missed, then the mitigating circumstances procedure will need to be used.

If a student feels that they have valid mitigating circumstances that have affected their performance or ability to meet an assessment deadline, they should raise this, in the first instance, with their Personal Tutor or Programme Leader, who will then be able to provide support to the student to ensure they are aware of the process, the possible outcomes and, where feasible, identify support that would help the student towards completing the course work. The student may be referred to relevant support teams within the College where they can be informed of available support.

The student must apply by filling in the Mitigating Circumstances Form. The Mitigating Circumstances Form and supporting evidence should be sent to the Programme Leader, copying in headminteam@cavc.ac.uk

The application will be considered by the Programme Leader, who may consult other members of the programme team, student services and the Dean of Higher Education in order to reach a fair and equitable outcome, that neither disadvantages or advantages the student.

Students apply for mitigating circumstances ideally at the time the circumstances occur. However, applications can be submitted later than this but must allow enough time for them to be considered prior to the relevant assessment board.

Evidence Based

In the interests of equity and transparency, applications for mitigating circumstances must be supported by relevant and independent evidence to corroborate the claim made. This can include:

- Death certificates
- Medical certificates or GP letters
- Legal Notices.

Medical certificates are acceptable if they:

- are signed by a medical practitioner who has seen the student during or immediately after a period of illness
- indicate the date(s) when the student sought assistance
- provide sufficient detail without breaching confidentiality of the nature and seriousness of circumstances
- indicate the degree and duration of any incapacity

NB. Medical certificates signed by family members are not acceptable. Non-medical circumstances (e.g. bereavement) may be reported in writing, with a description of the circumstances, when they occurred and, wherever possible, their duration.

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Possible Outcomes

1. No Action - where the mitigating circumstances are not considered to be directly impacting the student's studies or the evidence is not valid.
2. Extension to submission deadline - where the mitigating circumstances are agreed to be valid and require the learner to submit work by new deadlines. NB If marked work has been returned to learners and the learner requesting mitigation would benefit from that assessment feedback, the learner will be asked to complete a different assessment.
3. Make an assessment attempt 'null and void' and allow an opportunity to repeat the assessment - where allowances for mitigating circumstances have not already been made and it is accepted that the mitigating circumstances have resulted in a non-submission or impacted performance in that assessment.
4. Poor performance taken into consideration - where the student wants the mitigating circumstances to be considered by the assessment board. For example, where an illness affected a student's ability to undertake work to the same standard as previously submitted work, although the learner did submit work by the deadline.

In this case the Assessment Board may decide to increase the award class on academic achievement where the following apply:

- the student has a borderline mark
- there is evidence that the mitigating circumstances had an impact beyond specific modules in which allowances have already been made
- it is not possible to make allowances retrospectively at module level e.g. because of the nature of the assessment method

The Assessment Board has the right to ask for additional information about mitigating circumstances if original documentation is not adequate or if the circumstances reported are not considered serious enough to warrant special consideration. The Assessment Board may decide to defer the decision until further details are obtained.

If a student attends a module but is unable to sit examinations or complete coursework because of mitigating circumstances, the student may:

- Sit a supplementary examination or complete coursework before the meeting of the Assessment Board or
- Sit a supplementary examination or complete coursework as a first attempt before or during the re-sit examination period

Appealing a Decision

If the student wishes to appeal against an application that has been rejected, the Dean of Higher Education will firstly assess if the independent evidence fully supported the dates noted

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on the Mitigating Circumstances Form. If any aspect of the form is incomplete, or further evidence is required, contact will be made directly with the student and the Programme Leader to request this information or amend the form. If the evidence still does not fully meet the criteria for approval, the student and Programme Leader will be formally notified in a letter, and the minutes noted to reflect the final rejection of the application and the relevant reasons.

Retrospective claims of mitigating circumstances will not normally be considered unless there were exceptional reasons for not doing so at the time. This would normally only be because the student was unable to disclose the circumstances in advance because a medical condition has only just been diagnosed. Please note that unless there are exceptional circumstances as detailed above, mitigating circumstance claims which are submitted retrospectively will be deemed to be invalid.

Examples of circumstances which might be considered valid are*:

- Hospitalisation, including operations
- Health problems
- Personal or psychological problems for which the student is undergoing counselling or has been referred to a counsellor or other qualified practitioner
- Bereavement
- Major accident or injury, acute ailments or conditions which coincide with an assessment deadline or an examination or test, or are sufficiently long-lasting to impact on a significant part of a term
- Mental health problem
- Recent burglary/theft/serious car accident
- Jury service which cannot be deferred
- Late diagnosis of, for example, dyslexia, resulting in no support or examination provision

Examples of circumstances which would not normally be considered valid are*:

- Computer problems such as inability to upload assignments to Turnitin
- Time management problems (e.g. competing deadlines)
- Appointments (legal, medical etc) which could be rearranged
- Child care problems which could have been anticipated
- Accidents or illness affecting relatives or friends (unless serious, or the student is a sole carer)
- Unspecified anxiety, mild depression or examination stress
- Cough, cold, upper respiratory tract Infection, sore throat, minor viral infection, unless the illness was at its peak at the time of an examination, end-of-module test or in class test and the corroborating evidence refers to the impact on the student's performance
- Financial problems (other than cases of exceptional hardship)
- Holidays, house moves, family celebrations

*these are examples and not an exhaustive list of circumstances

Location and Access to the Procedure

This is available from the website, staff intranet and Moodle and may be out of date if printed.

Date approved: 11th March 2022

Approved by: QSB

Review date: 11th March 2024

Responsible Manager: HE Registrar

Executive Lead: Dean of HE

Accessible to Students: Yes

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Students need to complete the extension application form providing evidence of the reasons for not meeting a deadline.

Applications for extensions should be submitted at least 5 working days prior to the submission date. Send your completed Extension Form to your Course Tutor copying in headminteam@cavc.ac.uk

EXTENSION DETAILS:

Full Name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Student ID Number: Click or tap here to enter text.

Reason for Extension: Choose an item.

ASSESSMENT DETAILS (1):

Unit Number: Click or tap here to enter text.

Unit Title: Click or tap here to enter text.

Assessment Number: Click or tap here to enter text.

Assessment Attempt [Choose an item.](#)

Assessment Deadline: Click or tap to enter a date.

You can click the + symbol at the bottom right of the section above to add more assessments to your extension request.

DECLARATION:

☐ I confirm that the information I have given is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand that false information or deliberate omission will invalidate my extension and may result in disciplinary action.

Signed: Click or tap here to enter text.

Date: Click or tap to enter a date.

DATA PROTECTION:

Personal data collected on this form will be used for the purpose of considering your extension and will be retained on your file. We may use this information to identify support or services which would be beneficial to you. The information provided will not be shared beyond those processing the extension. For further information please see the Privacy policy available at <https://cavc.ac.uk/en/about-cavc/about/policies-and-procedures/privacy-policy>

Before completing this form, please read the Mitigating Circumstances Guidance below

You must provide evidence to support your application, this should be from a professional involved in your circumstances. The evidence must be directly relevant to your circumstances and the date of your assessment.

If you need help completing your form, **contact the HE Administration Team at CAVC**, they'll advise what evidence you will need to support your claim.

Send your completed Mitigating Circumstances Form and evidence to **your Course Tutor, copying in** headminteam@cavc.ac.uk

MITIGATION DETAILS:

Full Name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Student ID Number: Click or tap here to enter text.

Reason for Mitigation: Choose an item.

ASSESSMENT DETAILS (2):

Unit Number: Click or tap here to enter text.

Unit Title: Click or tap here to enter text.

Assessment Number: Click or tap here to enter text.

Assessment Attempt [Choose an item.](#)

Assessment Deadline: Click or tap to enter a date.

You can click the + symbol at the bottom right of the section above to add more assessments to your extension request.

DECLARATION:

☐ I confirm that the information I have given is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand that false information or deliberate omission will invalidate my extension and may result in disciplinary action.

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