



THE UNIVERSITY OF
BUCKINGHAM

MEDICAL SCHOOL

MB ChB

Student Guidance for Mitigating Circumstances

1 Introduction

The Medical School recognises that students may suffer from an illness or other serious and unforeseen event or set of circumstances which may mean that they cannot attend an assessment, or if they do attend the assessment, that their performance may be sub-optimal. In such cases the mitigating circumstances procedures may be applied. These are designed to ensure the fair and consistent treatment of all students. The mitigating circumstances procedures are part of the Code of Practice for Assessment of MB ChB students.

2 Definition of a mitigating circumstance

The Medical School defines mitigating circumstances as follows:

‘A mitigating circumstance is a serious or significant event which is unforeseen and unpreventable and could have significantly impaired the academic performance of a student in one or more assessed activities, possibly over a period of time’.

Mitigating circumstances may include medical matters or events directly affecting someone other than the student. These may include:

- significant physical or psychological illness
- severe personal difficulties
- serious illness or death of a member of the immediate family (e.g. mother, father, sister, brother, spouse, son, daughter)
- sudden deterioration in a long standing medical condition or disability
- being the victim of a serious crime
- legal proceedings requiring attendance at court

The following would not normally be accepted as mitigating circumstances:

- failure to read the examination timetable or coursework deadline carefully
- work pressure
- failure to save work properly
- minor illnesses (colds, hangovers)
- religious festivals
- domestic or personal disruptions which may have been anticipated (e.g. moving house, holidays)
- sporting fixtures

3 Evidence of mitigating circumstances

Students must submit the appropriate Mitigating Circumstances form and supply supporting documentation from an appropriate third-party as evidence of the mitigating circumstance.

The evidence must explain:

1. The circumstance
2. Exactly how it affected you in relation to your studies/assessment
3. Precisely define when (i.e. identifying which assessments were affected)
4. What action you have taken in an attempt to address the problem (e.g. interaction with Personal Tutor or Student Support)

The student is responsible for obtaining the appropriate documentary evidence and ensuring that it is submitted on time. The Medical School will not seek documentary evidence on the student's behalf. The evidence submitted in relation to any mitigating circumstances claim must be in English. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain and submit a verified translation if the original evidence is in another language.

4 *Example of evidence of mitigating circumstances*

Serious physical illness	Medical certificate/hospital report/report from qualified medical practitioner
Psychological illness	Report from psychiatrist, psychologist or relevant pastoral specialist
Severe personal difficulties	Report from the Pastoral team, Student Support, or qualified professional
Serious illness or death of an immediate family member or close friend	Medical report from a qualified medical practitioner, or a copy of a death certificate accompanied if necessary by formal documentation confirming relationship with deceased
Sudden deterioration in a long standing medical condition or disability	Medical report from an appropriately qualified medical practitioner
Being the victim of a serious crime	Crime report and number
Legal proceedings requiring attendance at court	Documentary evidence from a court/solicitor

In addition to the above evidence, the student will be required to submit a Personal Tutor or Pastoral report confirming the actions taken to resolve the problem. Mitigating circumstances will apply for all summative assessments in the specified time frame.

5 *Submission of a mitigating circumstance*

Students are responsible for ensuring that the Medical School is notified of any Mitigating Circumstances and for supplying supporting documentation. A Mitigating Circumstances form with relevant documentary evidence must be submitted in advance of the Mitigating Circumstances Panel and Board of Examiners meeting related to that particular assessment. A Mitigating Circumstance form may be submitted during the 5 working days prior to the start of the examination. **Where the examination consists of both a written and a clinical (OSCE) element the deadline for submission is before the start time of any assessment. In the case of events happening at or very close to the time of the assessment, immediately afterwards, and in all cases at least 24 hours before the published time of the Mitigating Circumstances Group**

If a student is unable to attend an assessment because of mitigating circumstances they must submit a Mitigating Circumstances form within 5 working days of completion of the assessment to which it relates.

Note: A student who presents themselves for an examination is declaring themselves fit to take that examination. The result of an assessment stands if a student becomes unwell during any part of an

examination unless it can be shown that the student could not reasonably have foreseen that acute illness.

The Medical School reserves the right to verify the authenticity of any evidence submitted. Similarly, in the case of students who feel that their exam performance may have been adversely affected by an event occurring in the last 2 working days prior to an assessment or during the assessment itself, a mitigating circumstances form should be submitted within 5 working days of the completion of the assessment to which it relates.

Failure to divulge information and provide evidence at the appropriate time or the inability to verify documentary evidence may mean that the Mitigating Circumstances Group has insufficient information to accept mitigating circumstances.

The Mitigating Circumstances form must be submitted to the Medical School Office, Medical School, Hunter Street, Buckingham, MK 18 1EG (med-support@buckingham.ac.uk), Student Support Lead.

6 Guidance on completion of the Mitigating Circumstances form

Help with mitigating circumstances

Help and support is provided on a number of levels within the Medical School. Students in Phase 1 will have a Personal Tutor who will be familiar with the mitigating circumstances process. However the responsibility for completing the form lies with the student. If the student has experienced significant problems or difficulties in the run-up to the examination it would normally be expected that the student will have met with staff from the Student Support Team. The Medical School expects students to make use of appropriate support structures and to take responsibility for their own health and welfare.

If however:

Circumstances mean you might need time away from study, your Personal Tutor/ Student Support Lead will be able to advise as to whether a formal suspension of studies is a possibility. The Medical School has published separate guidance on "Suspension of Studies" and these should be consulted.

If you have or suspect you have a learning difficulty your Personal Tutor can refer you to the appropriate specialist in the Pastoral team. If you are experiencing any difficulties, whether it be financial, personal or health related, your Personal Tutor can direct you to the appropriate University Services.

For students in Phase 2 of the course your Educational Supervisor or Personal Tutor will gladly help, but students should always contact Student Support within the Medical School,

(med-support@buckingham.ac.uk), Student Support Lead.

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