



2018

# Mitigating Circumstances and Short Extensions (HE10)

 **Partnership**  
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**Description:**

Periodically students experience difficulties that impact upon their abilities to meet their academic obligations. A student may be unable to perform to their usual academic standard, complete assessed work to deadline or attend an examination due to illness or exceptional personal circumstances. This code of practice reflects the TEC Partnership's commitment to safeguarding academic standards, whilst ensuring support is available and that fairness exists towards all students with regards to the assessment process. In using this code of practice other documents may need to be considered.

If you need any further advice on how the regulations work, you should contact the HE Quality Office.

HE Quality Office heqa@grimsby.ac.uk

Rm: OH02 (01472) 311222

**This document is available in alternative forms**

Reference	Change
3.1	Replacement
3.1.1	Update to replace Progression and Standards Committee with HE Quality Assurance Committee.

## **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 This Code of Practice (the Code) has been developed to ensure clarity of systems relating to applications for mitigating circumstances and short extensions.

1.2 The code brings together a range of processes relating to mitigating circumstances and short extensions which are intended to maintain the TEC Partnership's commitment to:

- i) cross institutional consistency in the procedures for dealing with mitigating circumstances and short extensions that are likely to be applicable to different forms of assessed material
- ii) making appropriate provisions for students who may need special assessment arrangements where practicable
- iii) the maintenance of academic standards
- iv) rigour, probity and fairness.

1.3 This code is mindful of the regulations laid down by partner universities, meaning in every instance it is the relevant partner university's regulations that will be applied. The universities include:

- i) University of Hull
- ii) Teesside University

1.4 Applications for mitigating circumstances and short extensions by students studying on Pearson Edexcel or programmes from other higher education awarding bodies, will be considered in line with the precepts specified within this code.

1.5 Both the Mitigating Circumstances Board and Short Extensions Panel will consider applications prior to the board of examiners. Recommendations must be reported to the chair of the board of examiners and approved by the board as appropriate.

1.6 In instances where mitigating circumstances are granted beyond an end of year board of examiners, students should seek guidance from their programme leader regarding the possibility that permission to progress (or proceed) to the next level of their award, or the award of their final classification (and opportunity to graduate with their fellow students) may be delayed until a board of examiners scheduled at a later date.

1.7 In every instance it is the student's responsibility to submit any application for mitigating circumstances or short extensions.

1.8 Where a student is, for good reason, unable to submit their application for mitigating circumstances or short extensions personally, these may be submitted on his or her behalf by another person. The reason for such submission shall be notified with the submission, and independent evidence of it produced. Situations such as these will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances and will normally be limited to third-party submissions on account of a serious health condition experienced by the student.

1.9 For the purpose of this code and for instances relating to approved extensions, the mitigating circumstances board will take all days as equal when considering a new date for submission of an assessment.

1.10 Details of mitigating circumstance or short extensions applications will remain confidential to the membership of the mitigating circumstances board and short extensions panel, except when the written requirements of a programme of study accredited by a professional or statutory body, and accepted at the validation of that programme of study, require a wider disclosure, where a student makes an appeal or in instances where the student identifies a safeguarding risk.

## **2.0 Short Extensions for awards approved by Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education, University of Hull and Pearson Edexcel**

2.1 Short extensions may be applied for when a student faces a situation that affects their ability to submit or complete an item of assessed work for the published deadline.

2.2 Whilst reasons that affect a student to submit work on time may be acute, severe, unforeseen, significantly disruptive and outside a student's control, the short extensions panel will consider all claims with respect to the seriousness of the circumstances put forward. Some examples of reasons for an application may include:

- i) family problems such as death in the family, separation of parents, illness of a close family member
- ii) personal problems such as victim of a crime or relationship issues such as divorce
- iii) illness or medical problems
- iv) birth or adoption of a child

2.3 The following are not normally acceptable as grounds for claiming short extensions:

- i) computer/IT failure of student's own equipment
- ii) transport problems
- iii) misreading of assessment or examination dates and times.
- iv) moving house
- v) getting married
- vi) holidays or expeditions
- vii) inadequate planning, organisation or time management
- viii) timetabling of assessments or examinations
- ix) demands of paid employment (although for students on a part-time programme this may, in exceptional circumstances, be considered)

2.4 Applications for short extensions must be submitted no later than 24 hours before the submission deadline using the prepopulated form available for download from Pro-Portal.

2.5 In every instance short extension application must be supported by appropriate documentary evidence.

2.6 Applications for short extensions must be submitted electronically to HEextensions@grimsby.ac.uk

2.7 Outcomes from short extension applications will normally be communicated within 48 hours of making the request.

2.8 An approved short extension may be granted up to 10 working days for the new deadline.

### **3.0 Short Extensions for awards approved by Teesside University**

3.1 Short extensions may be applied for when a student faces a situation that affects their ability to submit or complete an item of assessed work for the published deadline.

3.2 Whilst reasons that affect a student to submit work on time may be acute, severe, unforeseen, significantly disruptive and outside a student's control, the short extensions panel will consider all claims with respect to the seriousness of the circumstances put forward. Some examples are listed in 2.2 above.

3.3 The reasons listed in 2.3 above are not normally acceptable as grounds for claiming short extensions.

3.4 Applications for short extensions must be submitted prior to the submission deadline using the Teesside University Short Extensions form (HE10A) and submitted to the module tutor.

3.5 An approved short extension may be granted up to 7 calendar days for the new deadline.

### **4.0 Definitions, Claims and Timescales for Mitigating Circumstances**

4.1 Mitigating circumstances refers to situations that:

- i) affect, or are likely to affect a student's academic performance in assessed work

- ii) affect, or are likely to affect a student's ability to submit or complete an item of assessed work for the published deadline
- iii) prevent attendance at an examination.

4.2 This code recognises that sometimes students and staff inadvertently use different words or terms when referring to mitigating circumstances for example 'mitigation' or 'extenuating circumstances'. However, within this code the term 'mitigating circumstances' is used as an 'umbrella' term to describe three distinct categories, these being:

- i) impaired performance - lower performance than would usually be expected within assessed work due to mitigating circumstances and which may be taken into consideration in the consideration of module marks and awards by a board of examiners
- ii) non-standard extensions - where mitigating circumstances have obstructed a student's ability to complete an assessment by the scheduled deadline or an extension is required beyond a short extension
- iii) absence with good cause - for reasons of mitigating circumstances, a student may require permission to be absent from a scheduled assessment for example an examination. Within this code a scheduled examination also refers to any other assessment such as a performance or presentation that requires a student to be in attendance throughout the assessment.

4.3 Whilst mitigating circumstances are often acute, severe, unforeseen, significantly disruptive and outside a student's control, the mitigating circumstances board panel will consider all claims with respect to the seriousness of the circumstances put forward. Some examples of mitigating circumstances include:

- i) family problems such as death in the family, separation of parents, illness of a close family member
- ii) personal problems such as victim of a crime or relationship issues such as divorce
- iii) illness or medical problems
- iv) birth or adoption of a child

In i-iv above, students may not be able to

- v) complete an assessment(s) for the published deadline
- vi) attend an examination, performance or presentation
- vii) attend work-based learning as defined within the requirements of a programme of study or as part of an assessment

In such instances an approved extended deadline or granted absence from a scheduled assessment (until a specified later date) may be possible. Similarly in examples i-iv, students may find that their impact may result in lower than expected performance and therefore an application for consideration of impaired performance may be possible

4.4 The following are not normally acceptable as grounds for claiming mitigating circumstances:

- i) computer/IT failure of student's own equipment
- ii) transport problems
- iii) misreading of assessment or examination dates and times.
- iv) moving house
- v) getting married
- vi) holidays or expeditions
- vii) inadequate planning, organisation or time management
- viii) timetabling of assessments or examinations
- ix) demands of paid employment (although for students on a part-time programme this may, in exceptional circumstances, be considered)
- x) a car breaking down on the way to an examination or failure to arrange a flight which will arrive in good time.

4.5 To claim absence from an examination, there are only three acceptable reasons:

i) Medical circumstances - occurring at the time of the examination. Examples of evidence that may be used include a medical certificate (including self-certification), or letter from a medical practitioner (e.g. doctor, nurse, counsellor).

ii) Bereavement - of family or close friend (including attendance at funeral). Examples of evidence that may be used include a family announcement for example newspaper notice, or a letter from an appropriate person confirming the details, or a copy of the death certificate. The panel must be satisfied that the applicant has a clear relationship to the deceased.

iii) Transport difficulties - being unable to get to the examination because of transport difficulties of an 'unpredictable' and 'uncontrollable' nature and where alternative arrangements could not be made within reasonable time. Examples of evidence that may be used include an accident report. A car breaking down on the way to an examination or failure to arrange a flight which will arrive in good time will not be considered.

4.6 Mitigating circumstances applications should be made prior to the assessment deadline/ scheduled examination date and must be submitted no more than 14 days after this date. Requests submitted after this period will not normally be considered.

4.7 Mitigating Circumstances applications should only apply to the current academic year. The board will not assess mitigating circumstances applications relating to previous academic years.

4.8 All applications must be supported with appropriate evidence that is valid, reliable, and complete; applications without suitable evidence may be refused. For example claims based on medical circumstances must be supported with evidence such as a letter from a relevant practitioner (GP, nurse, counsellor, social worker).

4.9 It should be noted that where a claim relates to 'difficulties' in a student achieving suitable work related experience and which subsequently prevents completion of the requirements of a programme of study; or a work related assessment(s) as per the scheduled deadline; or an assessment(s) to the student's 'expected' standard, the board will not accept claims occurring as a result of an 'avoidable' delay in achieving suitable and timely work placement experience eg poor organisation in completing pre-placement documents, or establishing a placement provider in good time and through no fault of the TEC Partnership.

## **5.0 The Process of Application**

5.1 Applications for short extensions and mitigating circumstances will not be processed if the application has not been made on the appropriate form.

- i) Short Extensions for all awarding bodies except Teesside University awards.
- ii) Short extensions for Teesside University awards only (HE10A).
- iii) Long extensions for Teesside University awards only.
- iv) Mitigating Circumstances for all awarding bodies except Teesside University awards.
- v) Mitigating Circumstances for Teesside University awards only.

5.2 Applications for short extensions (with the exception of students on Teesside University validated programmes) and mitigating circumstances will only be accepted on the pre-populated application form downloaded from ProPortal.

5.3 Self certification forms will only be accepted on the pre-populated form downloaded from ProPortal (University of Hull, Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education and Pearson Edexcel programmes only).

5.4 All students are entitled to a meeting with their programme leader and/or module tutor prior to making an application. Prior to making any application, students are strongly advised to discuss their application for mitigating circumstances or short extensions with their success coach, programme leader and/or module

tutor.

5.5 All completed application forms, statement and evidence for short extensions must be submitted to [heextensions@grimsby.ac.uk](mailto:heextensions@grimsby.ac.uk).

5.6 All completed application forms, statement and evidence for mitigating circumstances must be submitted to [heqa@grimsby.ac.uk](mailto:heqa@grimsby.ac.uk), to the HE Learning Centre at the Nuns Corner campus or to Reception at Scarborough TEC.

5.7 Every mitigating circumstances application must be date stamped upon receipt.

5.8 The short extensions panel will normally meet and consider the application within 48 hours of the initial receipt of the application.

5.9 A student will normally be formally notified in writing of the outcome of the panel's decision on their short extension application within 48 hours of submission of the application.

5.10 The mitigating circumstances board will normally meet and consider the application within 15 working days of the initial receipt of the application.

5.11 A student must be formally notified in writing of the outcome of the board's decision on their mitigating circumstances claim within 5 days of the mitigating circumstances panel meeting.

## **6.0 Meetings of the Mitigating Circumstances Board**

6.1 Dates scheduled for the mitigating circumstances board meetings must be regularly scheduled from the start of each academic year in September.

6.2 The mitigating circumstances board must be quorate for the board to run and will be chaired by a senior HE academic tutor or manager.

6.3 A member of staff from the TEC Partnership's HE Quality office must be included on the mitigating circumstances board.

6.4 Because of the potential conflicts of interest that can arise when considering applications for mitigating circumstances, members of the board must be given ample opportunity to declare any personal interest, involvement or relationship with the student or application being considered.

## **7.0 Meetings of the Short Extensions Panel**

7.1 Short Extensions Panel meetings will be scheduled on an as necessary basis.

7.2 The short extensions panel must be quorate for the panel to run and will be chaired by a member of staff from the TEC Partnership's HE Quality office and will normally include two HE Success Coaches.

7.3 Because of the potential conflicts of interest that can arise when considering applications for short extensions, members of the panel must be given ample opportunity to declare any personal interest, involvement or relationship with the student or application being considered.

## **8.0 Records, Decisions and Outcomes**

8.1 Outcomes of mitigating circumstances or short extensions application decisions must be recorded as 'approved' or 'not approved'.

8.2 If short extensions are not approved a student may choose to make an application to the mitigating circumstances board.

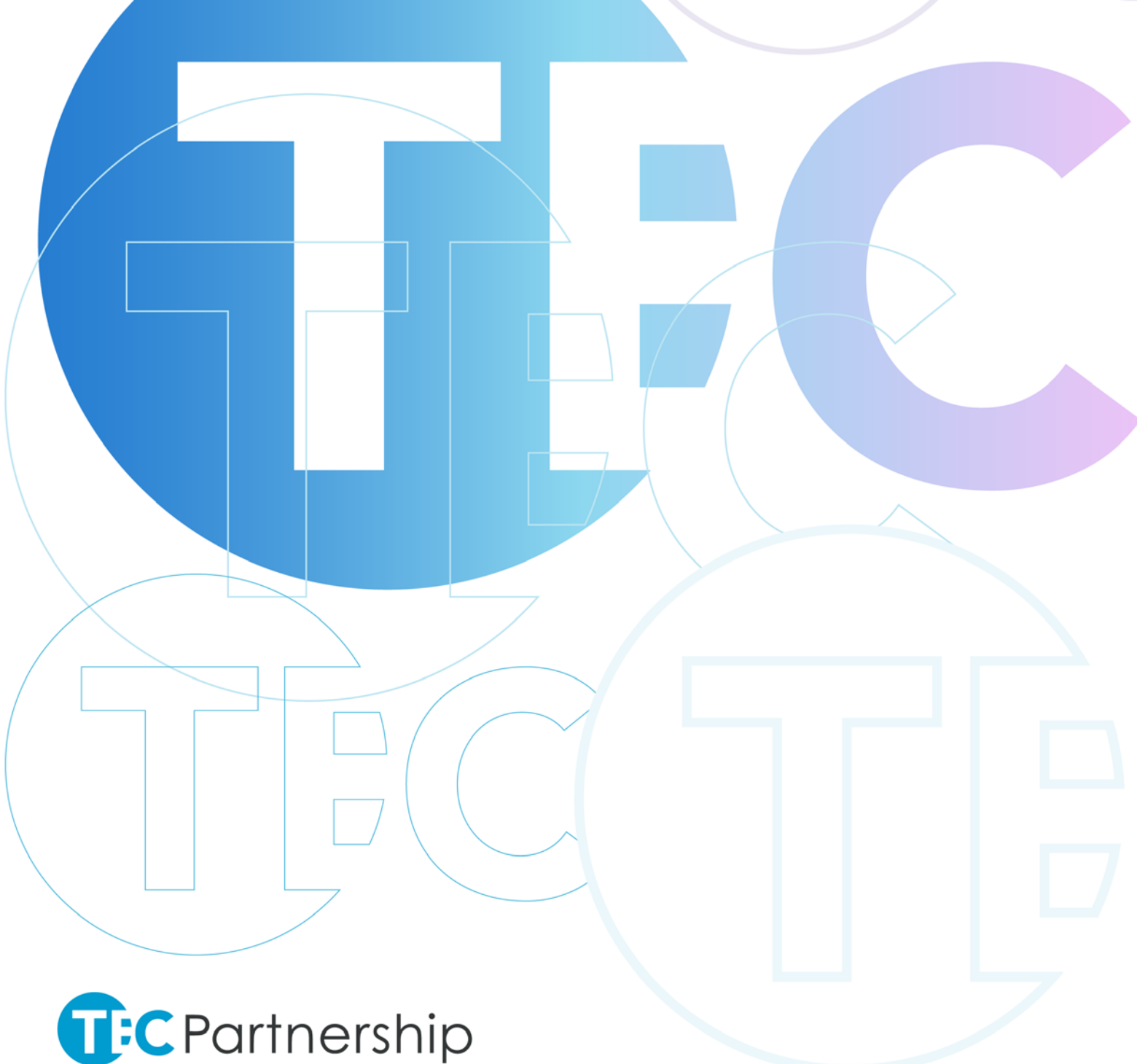
8.3 If mitigating circumstances are not approved a student may, dependent on their circumstance, find that their assessment(s) is subject to a late submission penalty, or is awarded a mark of zero, or is awarded the initial grade marked against the assessment in question.

8.4 Any appeal against the decision of the mitigating circumstances board must be made in writing to the HE Academic Registrar within 7 days of the notification of the outcome.

8.5 The HE Quality office must ensure that it keeps clear and appropriate records of the procedures and decisions of each mitigating circumstances board and those records are documented accurately and systematically.

8.6 Annually HE Quality office must monitor Group, Faculty, School and programme trends with regards to claims for mitigating circumstances and short extensions which will be reported to the TEC Partnership's HE Quality Assurance Committee.





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