

Guidance for Mitigating Circumstances Boards – COVID-19

Version 5: December 2021

- 1.1 The College has a policy and procedure for mitigating circumstances for **situations where students may suffer from serious and unforeseen circumstances** during the course of their studies that adversely affect their ability to complete an assessment task and/or their performance in a piece of assessment. These documents are supplemented with a guidance document. Relevant documents are available online at:

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/academic-policy/exams-and-assessment/>

This policy and procedure apply only to taught students (on old and new regulations) and to any taught elements of a doctoral programme of study. Different processes are in place for the research element of doctoral programmes.

- 1.2 With the ongoing situation relating to COVID-19 it is important that any mitigation claims for situations arising from the consequences of this are handled through the established policy and procedure for the 2020-21 academic year, no separate procedure has been put in place.
- 1.3 The expectation for the current year is that the grounds for mitigation set out in paragraph 3.3 of the College's Mitigating Circumstances Policy should be sufficient to cover circumstances for students who test positive for Covid-19 and that this could be dealt with as any other illness.
- 1.4 Areas where a Board might wish to take a more pragmatic approach, where it is evident that a student has been significantly impacted by circumstances, might include:
- a. where a student has had local technical issues, such as an insufficient internet connection during an assessment period which has impacted their ability to study and engage with the remote learning and to prepare for or complete the scheduled assessment activities.
 - b. circumstances related to time-limited remote assessment, such as the timing of the remote assessment for students in particular time zones, where the student has been unable to return to the UK for a scheduled assessment; disturbance in the venue impacting performance; technical issues such as failure of internet connection or devices; an inability to photograph and send scripts.
 - c. where a student is in a household where they have to take on caring responsibilities for siblings, relatives in the household with illnesses or the elderly or where they are in a shared household where it is difficult for them to find a suitable space to work.

- d. where a student has been called into work to support local or national priorities in their area, or where a student has been called for voluntary or reservist military service at short notice.
 - e. Where pre-booked travel arrangements are changed due to circumstances out of a student's control (e.g. flights are cancelled and rearranged by the airline to a time which clashes with the assessment). In these instances it is expected that a student would be able to provide documentary evidence of the original travel booking and changes.
- 1.5 The above list is not exhaustive. Mitigating Circumstances Board should consider all claims on the basis of the information provided by the student. However, there might still be some instances where it would not be proportionate to reject claims solely on the basis of the lack of supporting evidence. The principles of the self-certification process set out in the policy in paragraph 5.2 should be utilised for situations where it is not practical or possible to obtain documentary evidence and **for the period through until the start of the 2022/23 academic year the standard maximum period for self-certification will be 14 calendar days**, with further extensions to 28 calendar days subject to the agreement of the chair of the relevant Faculty Mitigation Oversight Panel (FMOP).
- 1.6 Wherever possible, Exam Boards should allow for students with accepted Mitigating Circumstances Claims to be able to attempt any deferred (uncapped) assessments before the 2022/23 academic year to allow for award or progression decisions to be made without delay to the student.