

Dublin International Study Centre  
Personal Mitigating Circumstances  
Policy



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## Document Control

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 DISC understands that learners may encounter unforeseen circumstances or challenges that could affect their ability to perform to their full potential during their academic studies at DISC. As such, DISC has developed a comprehensive Personal Mitigating Circumstance policy to provide support and assistance to students facing difficult situations that impact their academic performance. This policy outlines the procedures, resources, and considerations to ensure fair treatment and support for students in such circumstances.
- 1.2 All students should receive fair treatment throughout the assessment process. Therefore, to assist DISC in their decision-making, it is essential to have well-founded judgements based on appropriate evidence. This policy outlines the definition of Personal Mitigating Circumstances and provides a format and procedure for evaluating these circumstances. This process is aligned with the current responsibilities of DISC governing boards and the assessment appeals procedure.
- 1.3 This policy establishes a structured framework for managing unforeseen circumstances that could affect a students' ability to meet academic requirements or excel academically. Its objective is to guarantee equitable treatment for all students facing personal challenges that may influence their academic progress. Therefore, this policy provides a structured and standardised process for students to seek support and consideration in challenging circumstances.

## 2 Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all programmes at DISC.
- 2.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with DISC's Assessment policy and Fitness to Study policy in order to provide a comprehensive framework for supporting students in difficult circumstances.

## 3 Definition

- 3.1 Personal Mitigating Circumstances refer to unforeseen or unavoidable events that significantly impact a student's ability to participate in or complete assessments, examinations or academic activities. Such circumstances may include a medical emergency, family crisis, personal issues or other factors beyond the student's control that affect their academic performance.

## 4 Examples of Valid Personal Mitigating Circumstances

- 4.1 The following examples illustrate situations that might be accepted as personal mitigating circumstances (this list is not exhaustive):
- Serious illness or accident, including sudden and unexpected deterioration of a long-term condition;
  - Hospitalisation during or immediately before the assessment period or for a significant period during the term;
  - Bereavement (the loss of a close relative or significant other);
  - Funeral of a relative or close friend on the day of an examination;
  - Unexpected serious illness of a close relative/significant other;
  - Unexpectedly becoming the sole or main carer for a relative or significant other.
  - Sudden family breakup

- Being a victim or witness of a significant crime
- Exceptional and unforeseen travel circumstances beyond the student's control that prevented them from attending an examination or other scheduled assessment
- Severe and unforeseen financial problems (e.g. failure of a bank or withdrawal of funding for a reason out of the student's control)
- Impact of Forced Marriage; and
- Jury Service (which should be notified to DISC as soon as possible).

## **5 Circumstances that will not typically be considered for a Personal Mitigating Circumstances claim**

**5.1** The Personal Mitigating Panel will not review situations that could have been reasonably prevented, where the student could have implemented measures to lessen their impact or are similar to circumstances commonly experienced by a substantial number of students.

**5.2** The Personal Mitigating Panel will not review situations that students are typically expected to manage as part of a well-organised workload or that would not typically have a substantial impact on academic performance. The following circumstances will typically not be taken into consideration:

- Minor illness or ailment such as sore throats, minor colds, or headaches.
- A short-term problem or illness which is deemed not to have had an overall effect on the student's performance.
- Long term illness or disability, where reasonable adjustments have already been made for assessments or could have been made if DISC had been made aware of the problem at the proper time.
- Secondary applications for circumstances which have already been catered for by granting an extension for submitting coursework or assignments.
- General pressure of work.
- The timetabling of examinations
- Being unaware of the dates or times of submission deadlines or examination(s)
- Missing an examination due to misreading the timetable or oversleeping
- An inability to prioritise and schedule the completion of several pieces of work
- Inadequate planning to cope with last-minute delays and missing deadlines because of computer difficulties or a failure of a single data source
- Failure to make alternative travel plans when disruptions were advised in advance
- Normal employment commitments, changing jobs or taking on overtime work
- Holidays, religious observances, or wishing to attend important family events such as weddings (funerals are an exception to this)
- Not being aware of the Personal Mitigating Circumstances Policy.
- When an illness only impacts the day of an assignment submission.

## **6 Personal Mitigating Circumstances Procedure**

**6.1** Students who are unable to attend an exam or complete a coursework assignment by the stipulated deadline due to illness or other valid reason are required to fill out a Personal Mitigating Circumstances (PMC) form which is accessible on Study Smart.

**6.2** This form should detail the circumstances, their impact and duration and how these

circumstances have affected a student's academic performance. The completed form, along with all relevant documentation, should be submitted to the Professional Services Team.

- 6.3** Student can receive assistance in completing the form from the Professional Services Team, if needed.

## **7 Application Regulations**

- 7.1** Applications for Personal Mitigating Circumstances (PMC) must be submitted within an appropriate timeframe relative to the impacted assessment. PMC applications must be submitted within three days following the exam assessment deadline and three days prior to an assignment deadline.
- 7.2** Retrospective requests may be reviewed in exceptional circumstances, only if valid reasons for not meeting the standard submission timeframe are provided.
- 7.3** DISC reserves the right to investigate the validity of applications. In cases where there is a suspicion that an application may have been submitted fraudulently, the issue may be referred to DISC's disciplinary process.

## **8 Supporting Evidence of Personal Mitigating Circumstances**

- 8.1** All requests for Personal Mitigating Circumstances must be substantiated with written supporting evidence. The type of evidence needed to support a claim will vary based on the specific situation of each individual. Students are encouraged to obtain evidence from a third-party source, such as an independent individual, organisation, or a support service such as a GP or welfare service. Claims for Personal Mitigating Circumstances that do not include supporting evidence are unlikely to be upheld.
- 8.2** Original documents, rather than photocopies, must be submitted as supporting evidence. These documents must be signed by a relevant third party, providing information about the circumstances, including duration, and, if feasible, their impact. If the original document is not in English, an independent translation must be obtained from a professional translation service, a UCD/DISC staff member, or the embassy. The translation should not be conducted by a student, a family member, or a friend.

## **9 Examples of Acceptable Evidence**

- 9.1** Students should seek to provide one or multiple items from the following list as written evidence to substantiate their claim (this list is not exhaustive):
- Letter or another official document signed by a medical practitioner (doctor) on headed paper
  - Death certificate – where a death certificate is difficult to obtain, especially if the death occurred abroad, hospital documentation confirming the death or evidence of funeral arrangements would normally be an acceptable alternative (a copy of the certificate should be annotated with the student's name and registration number and relationship to the deceased)
  - Letter from solicitor, summons to attend court or attend for jury service
  - Report or written evidence from a police officer, and/or
  - A letter of confirmation of any matters of fact relevant to the claim from an academic member of staff or other appropriate independent third party.

## 10 Examples of Unacceptable Evidence

**10.1** The items on the following list would not typically be considered as acceptable supporting evidence (this list is not exhaustive):

- Letters from family members (unless the student is a minor), friends or fellow students
- Character references that confirm the good character of the student or how hard they worked but cannot confirm the facts of the claim
- Self-certificates for missed examinations or assignments and
- Retrospective notes/letters where the doctor or other professional simply reports what the student has told them.

## 11 False Declarations

**11.1** The submission of a false Personal Mitigating Circumstances claim, or appeal will be regarded as an attempt to mislead an Assessment Board or Appeals Committee or to obtain extensions to deadlines or exemption from work. This is an offence of academic dishonesty and may result in disciplinary action being taken against the student.

## 12 Personal Mitigating Circumstances Panel

**12.1** The DISC Personal Mitigating Circumstances Panel evaluates all submitted mitigating circumstances forms. This can be via Chairs Action such as granted extension requests, if necessary.

**12.2** The Panel is only able to review the circumstances of students who have submitted a completed PMC form and provided valid supporting evidence.

**12.3** The chair of the Personal Mitigating Circumstances Panel will be appointed at the beginning of the academic year. The panel will consist of the Head of Curriculum and Progression, at least one academic staff member, a Welfare Officer and a Professional Services Team member. A minimum quorum will be met by the attendance of the chair, the Head of Progression and Curriculum, along with an academic staff member.

**12.4** The Personal Mitigating Circumstances Panel will convene as is necessary, with meetings scheduled at least once at the end of each assessment period before the Module Assessment Board. The panel's terms of references are to:

- Consider and make decisions on request from students for personal mitigating circumstances and extenuation in respect of formal assessments and report these decisions to the appropriate Module Assessment Board
- Liaise with the DISC professional services staff regarding communication of decisions to students and application of decisions to student records and assessment requirements, and
- Provide a summary report to Academic Board via the Programme Assessment Board for inclusion in the Annual Monitoring Report.

**12.5** The panel does not have authority to decide on grades or progression. These decisions are the responsibility of the relevant assessment board, which considers suggestions provided by the Personal Mitigating Circumstances Panel.

**12.6** The panel will usually consider actions such as waiving an exam/ assessment attempt or



removing late penalties.

### **13 Appeals**

**13.1** Appeals against the Personal Mitigating Circumstances Panel's decisions may be made against the decision itself or the mitigation approved. For more details, please refer to DISC's Complaints & Appeals Policy.

**13.2** The Personal Mitigating Circumstances procedure allows students to submit medical and other evidence of personal mitigating circumstances throughout the academic year, which restricts academic appeals on these grounds unless new evidence becomes available that was not previously submitted to DISC for valid reasons.

# Appendix

## a. Personal Mitigation Circumstances (PMC) Form

### Instructions – Please read carefully before completing the form

- i. Before submitting a PMC form, make sure that you are familiar with the Personal Mitigating Circumstances and Late Submissions policies detailed in your Student Handbook. You can also find extra guidance and examples of appropriate evidence in the *PMC Process - FAQ Guide* available via the Dublin ISC Virtual Reception.
- ii. If you decide to submit a PMC form then make sure that you complete the form yourself and submit it to the Administration and Student Services Office or email it to [dublinisc@studygroup.com](mailto:dublinisc@studygroup.com). Do not ask your tutors to help you as they cannot do this.
- iii. When you submit the form, Dublin ISC will acknowledge receipt of the form via e-mail. If you submitted a paper copy, then you will receive a photocopy of your submission for your own records.
- iv. Your tutor or appropriate ISC staff member is always available for clarification on individual matters, but they cannot predict whether or not a PMC request will be granted.

### Filling in the Form

- v. You must complete **all** sections of this form.
- vi. State clearly which modules have been affected.
- vii. Identify the specific exams and/or assignments affected. If several assessments are covered by one set of personal mitigating circumstances you should list all of the assessments on an attached sheet.
- viii. Include relevant dates for the assessment.
- ix. Indicate for each assessment whether you are claiming mitigation for
  1. Absence- you missed the examination session
  2. Late submission – you submitted beyond the allowed 24 hours late submission window
  3. Non-submission – you did not submit the assignment at all
  4. Standard of performance – your standard of performance was impacted negatively

*Note: you can only claim for one of these for each assessment.*
- x. Attach all documentary evidence to your PMC form; students are normally expected to support their PMC claim with relevant evidence. See the *PMC Process - FAQ Guide* available via the DISC Virtual Reception for examples of acceptable evidence.



## b. Personal Mitigation Circumstances

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE STUDENT – Please highlight options as appropriate and complete all sections.

Student's full name:

Student's ID Number:

Title of programme: IFY Business  IFY Science

Please complete the table below with the details of each exam or assessment mitigation is requested for:

Title of Module	Title of exam or assessment	Date of exam or assessment	Type of mitigation e.g. absence

*Insert rows as appropriate*

**Give details of your personal mitigating circumstances**, and how they affected the assessment. You may attach an additional sheet, clearly marked with your name and signed.

**List evidence attached that supports your case** (e.g. medical note, police statement, etc.)

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*It is your responsibility to state your case clearly and support it with relevant and appropriate evidence. Re-submissions of PMC forms are not permitted.*

**Please read this paragraph and sign below:**

*I confirm that the information I have given is true and that I have read and understood the guidelines on personal mitigating circumstances. I have included ALL the information and evidence I am relying on.*

Signed/Digital Signature:

Date: