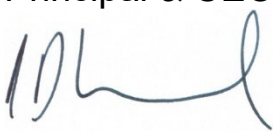
University Level Courses Mitigating Circumstances Policy 2026-2027

Overall responsibility:	Executive Director Improvement, Skills & Innovation
Implementation:	University Level Courses Curriculum Team
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Jason Lancaster
Principal & CEO



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1. INTRODUCTION

This policy outlines the procedures and guidelines for handling mitigating circumstances affecting students enrolled on University Level qualifications at Northampton College. Mitigating circumstances are defined as unforeseen, significant, and unavoidable events that may adversely affect a student's ability to meet assessment deadlines or perform to their full potential in their studies.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all students enrolled on University Level Qualifications offered by Northampton College. Awarding organization specific guidance will be referred to throughout the implementation of any processes relating to mitigating circumstances.

3. RESPONSIBILITY

3.1 It is the responsibility of the student to inform the relevant academic department as soon as possible if they believe they have mitigating circumstances that may affect their studies.

3.2 Course Leaders will consider straightforward applications for extensions, deferrals and study breaks and also offer advice to students on options in a way that will not lead to a conflict of interest in considering any subsequent applications.

3.3 Mitigating Circumstances Panel will consider complex applications for deferrals due to mitigating circumstances.

3.4 Personal Tutors will provide advice to students on options (mitigating circumstances, extension, study breaks, change of mode) and provide statements of support for students submitting a mitigating circumstances application.

3.5 Academic staff must treat all communications regarding mitigating circumstances with sensitivity and confidentiality.

4. DEFINITIONS

4.1 Mitigating circumstances include but are not limited to:

- Illness (physical or mental)
- Bereavement or serious illness of a close family member
- Personal crisis or trauma
- Severe adverse weather conditions
- Unforeseen disruption to essential services (e.g., transport strikes, power outages)
- Jury service or court appearances
- Any other significant, unforeseen event beyond the student's control

4.2 To ‘defer’ means to forsake the first assessment opportunity in favor of a later one. The later assessment opportunity cannot be deferred (although approved mitigating circumstances means that the lost credits will not count towards accumulated failure)

5. PROCEDURE

5.1 Students must submit a Mitigating Circumstances Form, available from the Course Leader, along with appropriate evidence (e.g. medical certificates, official documentation). This form will be submitted either to the unit teacher or Course Leader

5.2 The form must be submitted within a reasonable timeframe, in advance of the submission deadline or examination date. Exceptionally, in extremely rare specific cases (e.g. emergency hospitalisation on the day of an examination) applications will be accepted after the set deadline, but these must be submitted as soon as is practicable.

5.3 The form must clearly state the unit(s) and /or item(s) of assessment affected by the mitigating circumstance and the date(s) on which the mitigating circumstances affected the work; these dates must correspond with any information provided in third party evidence. It is the responsibility of the student to establish the facts.

5.4 The College has delegated decision making to a Mitigating Circumstances Panel, consisting of the Curriculum Manager, Assistant Principal and the Quality Improvement Lead, which will ensure consistency of decision making across programmes.

6. CONSIDERATION OF MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES

6.1 The Mitigating Circumstances Panel will review all cases of mitigating circumstances.

6.2 Each case will be considered on its own merits, taking into account the nature and impact of the circumstances provided by the student.

6.3 Decisions will be made in a fair and transparent manner, with due consideration given to maintaining academic standards and integrity. An application for mitigating circumstances will not feature in subsequent references provided by the College or influence the conferment of an Award.

7. OUTCOMES

7.1 If mitigating circumstances are accepted, students may be granted an extension to assessment deadlines, allowed to retake assessments, or provided with other appropriate support measures in line with awarding organization guidance.

7.2 The specific outcome will depend on the individual circumstances of each case and will be communicated to the student in writing.

7.3 A student whose application is denied for lack of independent evidence or support will normally be allowed seven calendar days to submit additional material. If that material is not submitted within this time period the application will normally be declined.

8. APPEALS PROCESS

8.1 Students have the right to appeal decisions made regarding their mitigating circumstances.

8.2 Appeals must be submitted in writing, outlining the grounds for the appeal and any additional evidence within 7 working days.

8.3 Appeals will be reviewed by a Mitigating Circumstances Review Panel consisting of the Deputy Principal, Executive Director and the Assistant Principal for Teaching Learning and Quality.

8.4 The decision of the Mitigating Circumstances Decision Review Panel marks the end of the College's internal Mitigating Circumstances Procedure. All applicants whose appeal is unsuccessful will be issued with a 'Completion of Procedure' letter, which details their right to apply for a review to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.

9. ASSOCIATED POLICIES

- Student Behaviour and Intervention Policy

Appendix 1: Northampton College University Level Programme Request for Mitigation Form

Name:	
Student ID Number:	
Course:	
Year of Study:	
School:	

Please consult the University Level Mitigating Circumstances Policy before completing this form, in particular referring to the grounds for mitigation and the timing requirements for submission.

Please note that an accepted request will not result in the changing of marks. Please see the Basic Guide to Mitigating Circumstances (available in Appendix 2) for examples of possible outcomes.

The Policy on Mitigating Circumstances defines the grounds for mitigation as a "serious or acute problem, or an event beyond a student's control or ability to foresee, which has prevented completion of assessment(s) or attendance at examination(s)".

1. Please *fully explain* the nature of the circumstances or events that you believe have affected, or are affecting, your performance or ability to complete assessments by the due date.

2. Dates of periods affected	

3A. Do you consider these circumstances to constitute a disability?	YES/NO (please delete as applicable)
3B. Are you registered for support for this matter?	YES/NO (please delete as applicable)
***Please note**: where the completion of assessed work is likely to be affected on a regular basis by a notified disability or learning support need, we would expect a support package to be in place on a long-term basis rather than through mitigating circumstances.*	

4. Deadlines for submission of this form

Tutors will advise students about the deadlines for submitting a request for mitigation but it is commonly expected that this form will be submitted before the beginning of an assessment period or the deadline for an assessed piece of work. Requests for mitigation for circumstances which arise during the course of an assessment period should be submitted within three working days of the end of the assessment period. Late requests for mitigation will not be considered without a credible and compelling explanation as to why the request was not made before the beginning of the assessment period. If necessary, please provide your explanation as to your late submission below, and attach any evidence to support your explanation:

5. Affected Assessments – Please complete all relevant sections.				
A. Assessed coursework affected:				
If you are registered with DSS, do you have an automatic extension in place?				YES / NO
Unit Code	Title	Have you submitted the work? If so, was it on time or late?		Due date
		YES / NO	ON TIME / LATE	
		YES / NO	ON TIME / LATE	
		YES / NO	ON TIME / LATE	
		YES / NO	ON TIME / LATE	
		YES / NO	ON TIME / LATE	
		YES / NO	ON TIME / LATE	

B. Other assessment affected (e.g. group work, in-class tests, presentations etc:				
Unit Code	Title	Date of assessment	Type of assessment e.g. presentation	Did you attend / submit?
				YES / NO
				YES / NO
				YES / NO
				YES / NO
				YES / NO
				YES / NO

6. Supporting Documentation

A. General	
To allow for a thorough consideration of your request, it is essential that supporting documentation is attached; failure to do so may affect the outcome of your request. Supporting documentation should be independent and time-specific to the circumstances for which you are requesting mitigation. Please tick the relevant box below. Please ensure that any hard copy supporting documentation is contained in a sealed envelope which is clearly labelled with your name and details.	
☐	Letter from medical practitioner
☐	Letter from counselling service
☐	Police report
☐	Other – please specify below.

B. If you are unable to provide supporting documentation
Should you be unable to provide supporting documentation please provide the reason why, and indicate when such documentation will be available:

C. **Students receiving DSA support**
If you are applying for mitigation due to issues directly related to your disability, you do not need to provide any additional supporting evidence if you are already registered with the DSA, but you must provide a detailed explanation of how your disability is currently affecting your studies. It is not sufficient to indicate only that you are registered with the DSA. If you need to request mitigation for an issue thatis not directly related to your disability, or you have a disability but are not registered with the DSA, you must provide supporting evidence.

D. Other support services
If you are currently using another support service, which you believe has information relevant to this request, please provide the details of your contact within that service below:

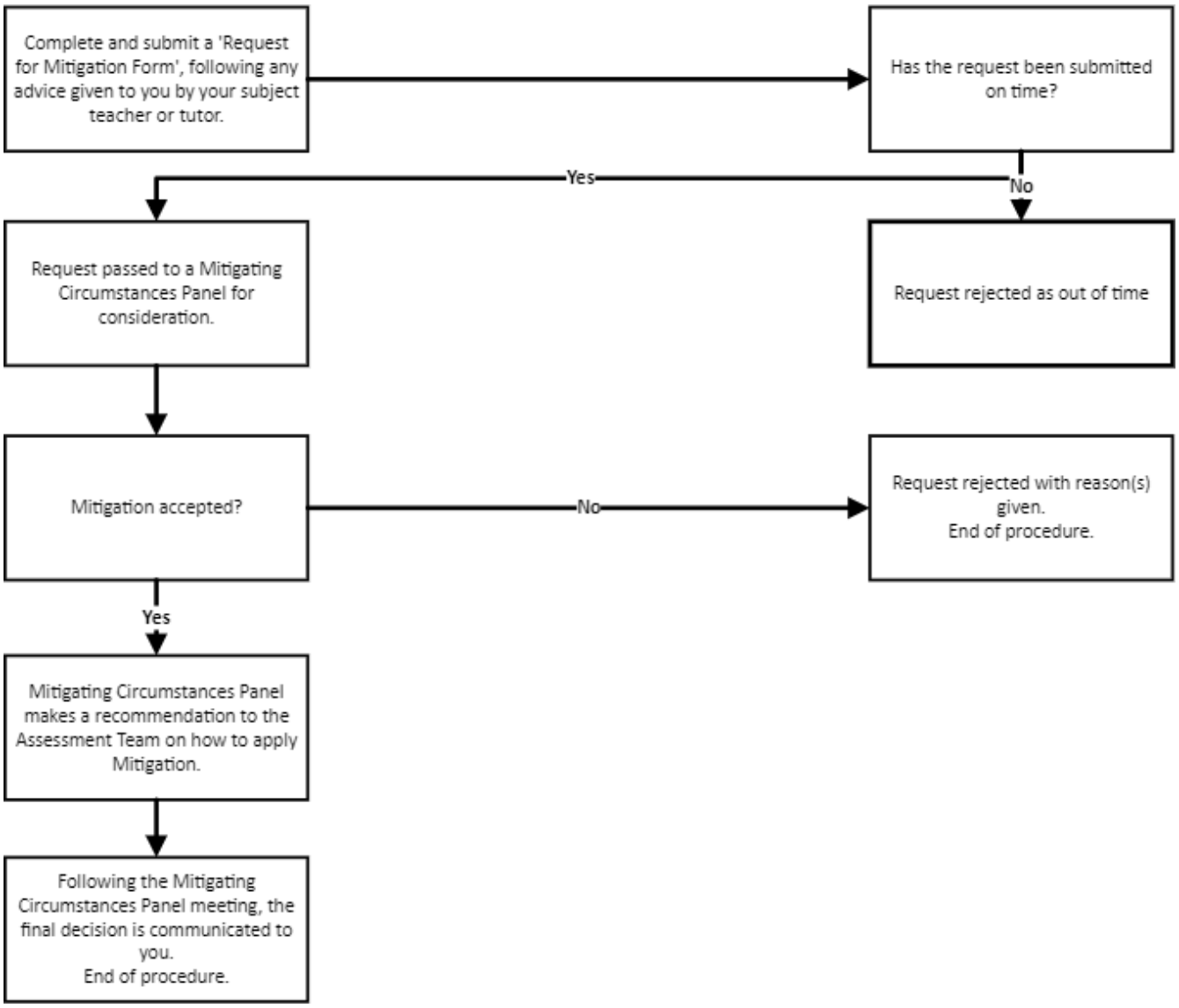
E. Declaration and important notes	
I confirm that all information given or referred to above is true and that I believe there has been a significant adverse effect on my performance as a result of the circumstances and/or events described. I consent to the sharing any relevant personal data about me between appropriate staff based on the information disclosed on this form, which may be necessary to allow for the consideration of my request for mitigation. *Note*: This form may also be shared with a disciplinary panel in the event of you being referred for disciplinary action at a similar time period to you submitting this form.	
Signature:	
Date:	

THIS FORM SHOULD BE SUBMITTED TO YOUR SCHOOL OFFICE, AS IDENTIFIED IN YOUR PROGRAMME HANDBOOK OR INTRANET.

PLEASE NOTE: Should your request be accepted, you will be informed about what mitigation has been granted, e.g. a new deadline. While you are awaiting the outcome of your request for mitigation, you should continue to work to any assessment deadlines that have been set, unless your circumstances completely prevent you from doing so.

FOR OFFICE USE:	
Received by:	
Date of Receipt:	
Date of Mitigating Circumstances Panel	
Outcome:	
Recommendation Made:	

Appendix 2: A Basic Guide to Mitigating Circumstances



Important: you should normally provide appropriate independent and time-specific evidence to support your mitigating circumstances request, preferably at the time of submitting the form, or, if not, as soon as possible afterwards. You should also comply with any additional requests made by the teaching team.
Students registered with a disability will not usually need to provide further evidence of the disability itself but may need to provide evidence of issues exacerbating it if applicable.

Some points to bear in mind:

- If you think mitigating circumstances might affect your academic performance you should tell your tutor as soon as possible. Mitigating Circumstances applications must be submitted by published deadlines. Your tutor will advise you of these.
- The College defines mitigating circumstances as ‘serious or acute problem, or an event beyond a student’s control or ability to foresee, which has prevented completion of assessment(s) or attendance at examination(s)’. Events that were planned or could reasonably have been expected, such as holidays or a house move, will not normally be regarded as grounds for mitigation.
- Mitigating Circumstances approval never leads to individual assessment marks being changed.