



## Hull York Medical School

### Policy on Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances affecting Assessment and Examination

<b>Approval Process:</b>	
<b>Committee</b>	<b>Outcome/Date of approval</b>
Board of Studies	<b>1<sup>st</sup> December 2021</b>
Joint Senate Committee	<b>27<sup>th</sup> January 2022</b>
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To obtain this Policy document in an alternative format contact [governance@hyms.ac.uk](mailto:governance@hyms.ac.uk)

## Definition of terms

The following terms will apply throughout this Policy:

**Assessment** refers specifically to a piece of academic work which is a requirement for academic progression at programme level. This will include summative and formative assessments. There are a wide range of assessment types such as written essays, portfolio submissions, written examinations, oral examinations, posters, presentations, online activities and practical work.

**Affected assessment** is one where the outcome is likely to have been affected by relevant mitigating and exceptional circumstances for which acceptable evidence has been provided. The assessment may have been missed, failed or passed.

**Assignment submissions** are assessments that require work to be submitted by a specific deadline. Such assessments might include essays, portfolio submissions, online activities, posters and practical work books.

**Non-clinical examinations** are assessments that occur on a specific, dedicated fixed date and require a student to participate in an examined piece of work individually or as a group. These might include written examinations, oral examinations, practical examinations, presentations.

**Clinical examinations** are assessments that occur on a specific, dedicated fixed date and require a student to participate in an examined piece of work involving real or simulated patients in a clinical setting. These include OSCEs and OSLEs.

**Fit to Sit** A student who attends or participates in a **clinical examination** (e.g. with patients/simulated patients) is declaring themselves to be in a fit state to do so. By declaring themselves 'fit to sit' a student cannot normally submit a retrospective claim that their performance was adversely affected by mitigating or exceptional circumstances. This is aligned with the principle that a Medical Practitioner must be 'Fit to Practise' and has a responsibility and duty of care to ensure that this is the case. *In some cases, mitigating or exceptional circumstances on the day of or during an examination may be taken into consideration (see [Section 7.5](#)).*

**Day** is a working day: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday or Friday (*excluding UK public holidays/University shutdown days*).

**Student** includes all students studying a Hull York Medical School programme.

## Student support

If a student is experiencing any problems, difficulties or circumstances affecting their ability to study, whether personal, medical, financial or other, and no matter how big or small, they should contact the Hull York Medical School's Student Support Team in the first instance, for advice on the best course of action to take.

Email: [studentsupport@hyms.ac.uk](mailto:studentsupport@hyms.ac.uk) (*this email address is for both UG and PG students*).

York University Student Union (YUSU), Hull University Student Union (HUSU) and Graduate Students' Association (GSA) advice and guidance services are also available:

- [asc@yusu.org](mailto:asc@yusu.org)
- [advice@yorkgsa.org](mailto:advice@yorkgsa.org)
- [husu-advice-centre@hull.ac.uk](mailto:husu-advice-centre@hull.ac.uk)

**Other School Policies are available, which may be relevant to particular circumstances include:**

[Policy on Disability and Reasonable Adjustments in Assessments](#)

[Policy on Student Welfare and Support](#)

[Policy on Leave of Absence](#)

[Equal Opportunities Policy for Students](#)

***All applicants should note the following:***

*Where a claimant discloses information of a specific nature, which would give rise to **safeguarding concerns**, this information will be made available (in strictest confidence) to Hull York Medical School's **Student Support Team**, regardless of the eventual outcome of the claim. Such concerns may be investigated further by Hull York Medical School.*

*Any fraudulent claims submitted by students will be subject to the Hull York Medical School's misconduct procedures in accordance with the Code of Practice on Academic Misconduct and the Code of Practice on Student Fitness to Practise.*

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# 1. Preface and Purpose

- 1.1. The Hull York Medical School and its parent Universities (University of Hull and University of York) offer a range of student support services and opportunities to enable students to manage the challenges and demands of academic study<sup>1</sup>. All support services are accessible to all students directly, without the need for referral. Accessing support when required is a strength and will never be interpreted by the School as a sign of weakness. It is a feature of academic and subsequent professional success for some students to access support services in order to identify and develop appropriate strategies. It is an **expectation** that Hull York Medical School students will access the relevant services if they require them, sometimes signposted by their supervisor or other members of the academic community.
- 1.2. Students **registered** to a Hull York Medical School Programme undertaking **an intercalated degree** at a different institution or a host department within the University of Hull or the University of York and is **registered with that department or institution for the duration of their intercalated study**, any claim of mitigating or exceptional circumstances should be applied for with, and processed by, the relevant host department or institution in accordance with their mitigating and exceptional circumstances policy and procedure.
- 1.3. Students **registered** to a Hull York Medical School Programme undertaking a module at a host department within the University of Hull or the University of York should adhere to the policy and procedures of the Hull York Medical School Mitigation and Exceptional Circumstances Committee. The student is required to report the outcome of the claim to Hull York Medical School, before the relevant School Board of Examiners meeting.
- 1.4. Students **not registered** to a Hull York Medical School Programme, but taking a Hull York Medical School module, should adhere to the mitigation and exceptional circumstances policy of the relevant department or institution that hosts the Programme the student is registered for. The student is required to report the outcome of the claim to Hull York Medical School, before the relevant School Board of Examiners meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> These may include financial, emotional, mental health or disability related issues or may result from difficulties in terms of housing, visa application or other difficulties that certain students may face.

- 1.5. For pre-existing long-standing conditions, disabilities and circumstances<sup>2</sup> students will be **expected** to declare this to the respective parent University as soon as they are known to allow Hull York Medical School to agree appropriate and reasonable adjustments in advance of assessed work. It is **expected** that the student has made full use of the appropriate support services provided by the Universities (e.g. Disability Services) in order to have relevant reasonable adjustments made, and/or to develop coping strategies which will enable them not only to be successful in their studies but also in post-university life. Please refer to the [Hull York Medical School Policy on Disability and Reasonable Adjustments in Assessments](#).
- 1.6. Hull York Medical School aims to provide all students with the support and guidance needed to successfully complete a programme of study. In addition to the support services available to all students, Hull York Medical School has a Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee whose aim is to ensure that fairness and academic standards are maintained for all our students who endeavour to manage the challenges inherent in academic study. It is imperative that only mitigating or exceptional circumstances are supported under this Policy.
- 1.7. The Policy on Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Affecting Assessment and Examination is adopted from both the University of York's Exceptional Circumstances affecting Assessment Policy and the University of Hull's Code of Practice: Mitigating Circumstances. Hull York Medical School aligns its key policies with its parent Universities to ensure that we consistently meet the standards set out within the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education.
- 1.8. **Mitigating circumstances** are medical or personal issues that a student may encounter, which are **serious** and **unusual**, and go beyond the normal daily challenges experienced in academic study. **Exceptional circumstances** take place in **close proximity** to an assessment or deadline and have **seriously impaired** a student's academic performance during the assessment period for which they are claiming. They are usually **unpredictable** (i.e. the student could not reasonably have been expected either to avoid or to allow for them in planning for or preparing assessment work). Examples of mitigation

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<sup>2</sup> The definition of a disability is a physical or mental health issue that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on a person's ability to do normal daily activities. Long term is defined as lasting one year or more or likely to last one year or more. 'Normal daily activities' includes mobility, manual dexterity, lifting, hearing, eyesight, speech, memory, and the ability to concentrate, learn or understand. It includes, but is not limited to, physical and cognitive issues and long-standing or recurrent mental ill-health.

or exceptional circumstances are listed in [Section 3](#). Examples of what is not considered a mitigation or exceptional circumstance are listed in [Section 4](#).

- 1.9. If a student's preparation for, performance in, or completion of an assessment or examination has been seriously impaired by an unforeseen mitigating or exceptional adverse circumstance, then this may be taken into account under this Policy. No allowance can be made within this process for circumstances affecting attendance or other work during the unit of study, except where the assessment itself is closely linked with the attendance.
- 1.10. Hull York Medical School promotes valid submission of mitigating or exceptional circumstance claims as **a proactive student support process** enabling students to complete their programme of study successfully. Students must take responsibility for their own submission of mitigating or exceptional circumstances, and for seeking academic and pastoral support at the earliest opportunity when they have encountered problems during their studies. Responsibility is defined as writing and submitting the claim. In circumstances where students are unable to submit a claim, claims may also be submitted by the Student Support Team, the student's Academic Advisor or the student's Programme Lead on the student's behalf. The Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee will also accept claims submitted by the Student Support Team, the Academic Advisor or the Programme Lead for students who are deemed to have circumstances within the remit of the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee, and are at risk of missing the deadline for submission of their mitigating or exceptional circumstance claim. In this instance the following criteria applies:
  - 1.10.1. Student Support, the Academic Advisor or the Programme Lead will attempt to contact the student to remind them to submit the mitigating or exceptional circumstances claim form before the assessment deadline.
  - 1.10.2. If no response is received, Student Support, the Academic Advisor or the Programme Lead can submit a claim on the student's behalf.
- 1.11. Students who have a **Student Support Plan (SSP)/ Reasonable Adjustments** that provides assessment extensions to mitigate for their pre-existing, long standing condition or disability can apply for a standard two-week extension. Requests for consideration of a longer period of extension for mitigating or exceptional circumstances relating

to this pre-existing, long standing condition or disability will be considered if:

- 1.11.1. There has been a substantial and unforeseen change in their condition.
- 1.11.2. Adjustments have not been made in time for an assessment, as long as the delay in the implementation of the adjustments was not caused by the student's failure to engage with appropriate support.
- 1.12. Students with **Student Support Plans/ Reasonable Adjustments** that experience substantial changes to their condition, should contact Disability Services and Student Support/ Reasonable Adjustments to discuss modification of their Student Support Plan/Reasonable Adjustments to accommodate the change in their circumstances.
- 1.13. It is expected that students granted mitigating or exceptional circumstances for an assessment seek support to mitigate recurrence of the circumstances that lead to the initial claim. Repeated claims for the same mitigation or exceptional circumstance may not be supported. However, students can claim mitigating or exceptional circumstances for the same reason if there is an **exacerbation** in their circumstances. The student should provide evidence supporting exacerbation in their circumstances. The Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee may ask the student for additional evidence to support the student's claim if the evidence provided is similar to previous claims.
- 1.14. Where necessary, students with conditions or circumstances which cannot be resolved or accommodated within a programme of study may need to consider a temporary **Leave of Absence** from the programme in order to allow them to re-engage when they are better able to do so. Please refer to the [Hull York Medical School Policy on Leave of Absence](#).

## **2. Evidence to support mitigating or exceptional circumstances claims**

- 2.1. For any claim of mitigating or exceptional circumstances to be properly considered and an outcome be agreed upon by the Mitigation and Exceptional Circumstances Committee, appropriate supporting evidence **must** be submitted with the claim. Any claim without such evidence will not normally be supported.

- 2.2. Evidence must give **direct confirmation of the circumstances leading to the submission, from which it is possible to infer their effect on the student's ability to engage with work in general, or assessment tasks in particular.**
- 2.3. Evidence must be written in English or as an official translation into English obtained by the student.
- 2.4. **Self-certification** can be used as a form of evidence for the following circumstances:
  - 2.4.1. Bereavement of a close family relative.
  - 2.4.2. A short illness of 1-5 days before an assessment that impacts on the student's ability to prepare for the assessment. In this instance, self-certified claims will provide a maximum of a 5 working day extension to mitigate for time lost if the claim relates to a hand-in assignment.
- 2.5. Self-certification **will not be permitted** for assessments classified as attendance requirements, Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs), OSLEs or Oral Examination/Presentations or Placements. Students wishing to claim mitigation or exceptional circumstances for such assessments must provide evidence as detailed in [Section 3](#).
- 2.6. Evidence must be submitted alongside the mitigation or exceptional circumstances claim form or **no later than 5 working days** after the assessment deadline or exam. **In rare circumstances if evidence cannot be provided within 5 working days of the assessment, the student should contact Exceptional Circumstances ([exceptional.circumstances@hyms.ac.uk](mailto:exceptional.circumstances@hyms.ac.uk)) explaining the reason for the delay and receive advice on whether they should progress with the mitigating or exceptional circumstances claim.**
- 2.7. The evidence must indicate the period of disruption, including the duration of the impact of the mitigating or exceptional circumstance. Institutional support services can only provide the type of evidence required when a student has used, or is currently using, the services provided to address the circumstances. **The person providing any medical evidence should normally be a relevantly-qualified third party professional, and must be independent.**
- 2.8. If a student is too ill or suspects themselves to be too unwell to attend a doctor's surgery or other support service at the time of the assessment or examination, they should contact the School's Student Support Team via telephone or email at the earliest opportunity. They can

submit a mitigating or exceptional circumstances claim on the student's behalf as detailed in [Section 1.10](#).

- 2.9. In the event that the person providing evidence does not see the student at the time of the affected assessment or examination, but believes the circumstances have prevented the student both from engaging with the affected assessment/examination **AND** with support services, a claim may still be considered. The evidence in such a case needs to clearly explain the extent to which the circumstances have affected the student and how they could have prevented the student from engaging with professional support services at the time.
- 2.10. If a claim is received, but supporting evidence has not been provided by the aforementioned deadline, the Mitigation and Exceptional Circumstances Committee may consider the claim and make a provisional decision of '**Pending Evidence**' if the student's claim met the following conditions:
  - 2.10.1. Stated the nature of the evidence.
  - 2.10.2. Stated why evidence is not currently available and the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee accepts the reason(s).
  - 2.10.3. Stated when the evidence will be available and it is submitted prior to the ratification of results by the relevant Board of Examiners.
- 2.11. Where the Mitigation and Exceptional Circumstances Committee has made a decision of '**Pending Evidence**' and no evidence is received before results are ratified by the relevant Board of Examiners, the claim will be dismissed and the original mark for the assessment or examination will stand.

### 3. Circumstances normally supported and types of acceptable evidence

*The following examples are indicative but not exhaustive.*

Circumstances normally accepted	Examples of evidence that would support a claim based on this circumstance (original documents required)
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<p><b>Compassionate grounds</b> (e.g. exceptional personal/emotional circumstances)</p>	<p>A letter from the Open Door Team at the University of York, Student Wellbeing, Learning and Welfare Support at the University of Hull, a counsellor, a senior member of HYMS Student Support Team where the student has actively been engaging with Student Support Services, a Programme Director or Academic Tutor where the student has been actively engaging with them for pastoral support, or a relevant independent third-party explaining that, <i>in their professional opinion</i>, the circumstances have had a serious impact on the student's ability to engage with academic work effectively during the assessment period in question.</p>
<p><b>Primary Caring Responsibilities for a Vulnerable Person</b> (a vulnerable person is defined as a child, elderly person, someone living with a disability or chronic illness)</p>	<p>A letter from HYMS Student Support Team where the student has actively been engaging with Student Support Services, a Programme Director or Academic Tutor where the student has been actively engaging with them for pastoral support. A letter from an educational establishment e.g. for a child, detailing the need for the child to remain at home for a defined period. The student should document how their primary caring responsibilities impacted on their studies. Students who do not define themselves as a primary carer but can show evidence (as detailed above) of significant caring responsibilities for a vulnerable person that impacts on their assessments can claim for mitigating and exceptional circumstances.</p>
<p><b>Key Workers</b> (a key worker is defined as a Health Care Professional)</p>	<p>A letter from the workplace line manager (on official paper) detailing the unexpected increase in the student's rota hours over the normal hours expected for the paid employment, and the reason for this increase in hours.</p>
<p><b>Exceptional Medical grounds</b> (e.g. serious or incapacitating illness, injury or medical condition, sudden and significant deterioration of on-going/longer-term medical condition, or emergency operation on or shortly before the day of an examination or assessment deadline, or during the revision period)</p>	<p><b>Self-certification</b> as a form of evidence will be applicable <b>only</b> if the period of personal illness was <b>1-5 days</b> prior to the assessment deadline. For exceptional medical grounds outside this time period, evidence as defined as an original medical certificate or letter (on headed paper) from a suitably qualified medical practitioner (normally a GP or hospital specialist, who is registered with the General Medical Council in the UK or the equivalent overseas practitioner), psychiatrist or educational psychologist as appropriate is required. <b>The person providing the medical evidence should normally be a relevantly qualified professional, with no personal or family relationship with the claimant.</b> The student should have had a consultation with this individual <b>during</b></p>

	<p><b>the period of illness for diagnosis or treatment</b> and is therefore able to attest to the student's condition at the time and the impact of the circumstances on their academic performance.</p> <p>Retrospective certification of a condition will not normally be accepted (that is, a note from the doctor/practitioner indicating that the illness/condition was presented to them after the event but the student was not seen at the time of the illness).</p> <p>In the case of hospitalisation, the student should provide documentation showing the date of the admission and discharge from hospital and details of the condition that resulted in admission. The documentation should also detail any health issues that may follow on from this hospitalisation.</p>
<p><b>Sudden serious illness or death of a dependent or close family member</b> (The following relatives are accepted as 'close' without further evidence: partner, child, parent, sibling, grandparent, and grandchild. For other individuals, evidence of dependence or closeness in the form of a statement from a third-party should also be provided).</p>	<p>For <b>bereavement</b>, students may <b>self-certify</b> as a form of evidence.</p> <p>In the case of serious illness of a dependent or close family member, evidence must be provided as an original medical certificate or letter (on headed paper) from a suitably qualified medical practitioner (normally a GP or hospital specialist, who is registered with the General Medical Council in the UK or the equivalent overseas practitioner), psychiatrist or educational psychologist as appropriate. <b>The person providing the medical evidence should normally be a relevantly qualified professional, with no personal or family relationship with the claimant.</b> The student should document how the serious illness of the dependent or close family member has impacted on the student's ability to study and/or complete an assessment/examination should be clearly indicated, (e.g. visiting relative in a hospice, having to shoulder extra responsibilities, etc.).</p>
<p><b>Victim of a serious crime, involvement in accident, or any other incident involving the emergency services</b></p>	<p>Written statement of events, supported by written evidence from the relevant emergency service (e.g. police report) OR a crime reference number OR an insurance claim OR a valid medical report.</p>
<p><b>Disabilities for which reasonable adjustments are not yet in place and where the delay in their implementation is not the fault of the student</b></p>	<p>A letter from a home university Disability Service OR relevant Medical Evidence.</p>

<p><b>Exceptional and unforeseeable transport difficulties (major transport incident, cancelled flights but not every-day issues e.g. traffic congestion, missed train or bus)</b></p>	<p>A letter from the relevant transport company or evidence of a major road accident (e.g. a copy of online or newspaper reports on the accident/delay). For long distance travel, original travel tickets/documents should be provided which indicate an intention to travel to arrive at least one hour before the examination or deadline for submission of work. Documents for revised travel arrangements should also be provided.</p>
<p><b>Jury Service (UK citizens only)</b></p>	<p>The Courts will permit Jury Service to be deferred for students in higher education on one occasion. Jury Service will therefore only be considered as an acceptable exceptional circumstance if a deferral has been refused in which case the student should provide a letter from the Court with proof that their request for a deferral was rejected or with proof that a previous request was accepted.</p>
<p><b>Legal proceedings requiring attendance</b> (e.g. being charged with criminal offence)</p>	<p>Official correspondence from a solicitor or the Court confirming the date and time of required attendance.</p>
<p><b>Divorce or significant relationship breakdown (parental or self)</b></p>	<p>If a student is involved in divorce proceedings and misses an assessment, the student needs to provide official correspondence from the Court confirming the date and time of the required attendance. If parents are involved in divorce proceedings and this has impacted significantly on a student's ability to study, the student will need to provide appropriate evidence of this (see Compassionate Grounds).</p>
<p><b>Interviews for work placements or for employment which cannot be changed</b></p>	<p>Evidence showing that the interview date cannot be rearranged.</p>
<p><b>Paid work commitments or constraints arising from paid employment (for part-time students only)</b></p>	<p>If a student is studying part-time while in full- or part-time employment, it is expected that the student will have informed their employer of this and of the need for the student to be present for assessments at certain times of the year. There may, however, be extraordinary circumstances at work, which will mean that it is impossible for the student to be present. In such cases, the student will need to provide evidence of employment explaining that the circumstances have had a serious impact on their ability to engage with academic work effectively during the assessment period in question.</p>

## 4. Circumstances not normally supported and reasons why

*The following examples are indicative but not exhaustive.*

Mitigating and exceptional circumstances not normally deemed to be acceptable	Explanation
<b>A claim without appropriate, independent supporting evidence</b>	It is the student's responsibility to provide appropriate, independent supporting evidence. Letters from family, fellow students, academic supervisors, tutors or mentors are not normally sufficient on their own.
<b>A claim which fails to make clear to the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee which assessments have been affected or the way in which they have been significantly affected</b>	It is the student's responsibility to make clear to the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee how their circumstances have adversely affected their academic performance.
<b>A claim submitted more than five working days after the assessment for which the claim is made</b>	Deadlines are clearly communicated to students by the School.
<b>A claim is submitted after the assessment marks have been ratified by the Board of Examiners.</b>	The claim is submitted after the assessment marks have been ratified by the Board of Examiners. Claims submitted after ratification cannot be considered by the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee. Such claims must be considered as formal appeals and students should refer to the <a href="#">Hull York Medical School Code of Practice on Academic and Fitness to Practise Appeals</a> .
<b>Reluctance to disclose circumstances as they are personal, sensitive or confidential</b>	The Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee can only consider circumstances if they are disclosed in line with this Policy. The student's circumstances are considered by a small group of Committee members which considers all cases in strictest confidence. As educated citizens, students are responsible for their own wellbeing and should proactively seek academic and pastoral support from the School's Student Support Team at the earliest opportunity when they have encountered problems during their studies. In certain circumstances disclosures may be made in confidence to a member of the School's Student Support Team, who will liaise with the Mitigating and

	Exceptional Circumstances Committee in support of a claim.
<b>Circumstances are not in close proximity to the assessment OR over and above normal difficulties</b>	The timing of the circumstances cited would not have adversely affected the specified assessment(s) or examination(s). The nature of the circumstances cited is not over and above the normal difficulties experienced in life or the evidence submitted does not support the claim that the nature of the circumstances was over and above the normal difficulties experienced in life.
<b>Circumstances have already been used in a previous claim</b>	Sufficient adjustment has already been made for the same circumstances; the evidence has already been used to support adjustment for the same assessment or examination and no new evidence has been provided.
<b>Minor illnesses</b> (e.g. coughs, cold, hay-fever)	Students are expected to manage these and they do not normally have a significant impact on academic performance.
<b>Pregnancy</b>	Pregnancy is not an exceptional circumstance, unless the pregnancy results in a medical condition, in which case appropriate evidence should be submitted. If pregnancy results in a medical condition that affects assessment or examination, students are encouraged to approach University Disability Services who will discuss each case in relation to possible reasonable adjustments. For further information please see: <a href="#">York policy on pregnancy, maternity, paternity and adoption</a> <a href="#">Hull policy on pregnancy, maternity and adoption</a>
<b>Self-diagnosed examination nerves, stress, insomnia</b>	Most students experience these and similar symptoms ahead of and during assessment periods. These are not therefore normally considered as acceptable mitigating and exceptional circumstances unless a medical diagnosis of illness has been made, in which case a letter from a medical practitioner should be provided.
<b>Disabilities for which reasonable adjustments have been made or where the student has experience and sufficient time to manage the situation</b>	Reasonable adjustments made by the School should have addressed the needs of diagnosed disabilities.

<p><b>Long-term illness or disability where earlier disclosure would have enabled Disability Services to have put reasonable adjustments in place</b></p>	<p>Unless the disability was diagnosed part way through a student's studies and consideration needs to be given to the period when reasonable adjustments were not in place. It is a student's responsibility to proactively disclose and seek help for their long-term illness and/or disabilities.</p>
<p><b>Refusals to take up support offered by the Disability Services</b></p>	<p>If students do not take up support offered, they cannot later expect the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee to take into account difficulties they may experience and which impacted on their studies.</p>
<p><b>Personal/domestic events that could have been anticipated and/or arrangements made or choices in a student's personal life</b> (e.g. family holidays, family celebrations, weddings, attending or taking part in sporting, social or extra-curricular activities, moving house, routine childcare)</p>	<p>These are not normally accepted as mitigating and exceptional circumstances as such events can be anticipated and alternative arrangements made.</p> <p>If personal/domestic events coincide with submission deadlines it is the responsibility of the student to submit work before the stated submission deadline or inform the School an examination will be missed. In the case of missed examinations, the Board of Examiners may permit a student to re-sit but this would count as a second attempt and the results will be capped.</p>
<p><b>Oversleeping</b></p>	<p>It is a student's responsibility to ensure that they submit work by the published submission deadline and/or arrive at scheduled examination venues before the scheduled start time.</p>
<p><b>Misreading the timetable</b></p>	<p>It is a student's responsibility to ensure that they are aware of the location of an examination as well as the start time and duration, or the deadline for a written assessment.</p>
<p><b>Examinations/deadlines which are scheduled close together or on the same day</b></p>	<p>These are unlikely to constitute acceptable mitigating and exceptional circumstances as students are aware of such scheduling in advance and are expected to manage their time accordingly.</p>
<p><b>Academic workload</b></p>	<p>Students are expected to manage their academic workload.</p>
<p><b>Paid employment/voluntary work or constraints arising from paid employment/ voluntary work for full-time students</b></p>	<p>Full-time students are only permitted to work part-time, i.e. for a maximum of 20 hours per week to support their studies and should arrange such work or voluntary work so that it does not conflict with their responsibilities as a student.</p>

<p><b>IT and/or computer issues,</b> (e.g. submission of incorrect document, file type or file size, computer crash, loss of work not backed-up or printing problems close to the deadline, upload after a submission deadline, technical issues without proof of error message or system failure)</p>	<p>Loss or corruption of files is not an acceptable exceptional circumstance as students are expected to keep a back-up copy of work which is electronically generated and stored. Students are expected to submit work electronically with care to avoid mistakes. Students should submit work electronically before a deadline, allowing sufficient time to troubleshoot and resolve any problems they may encounter before the deadline.</p>
<p><b>Problems in group work where other members of the group do not cooperate</b></p>	<p>This should have been raised with the School and resolved at the time.</p>
<p><b>Minor, local transport problems</b> (e.g. normal rush hour traffic, not allowing enough time in travel plans for minor unanticipated delays, missed public transport)</p>	<p>Students are expected to plan travel to campus / placement / assessment site in such a way that there is some contingency for unanticipated delays due to road works, a minor accident, etc.</p>
<p><b>Visa problems which prevent a student from returning to the UK for examinations</b></p>	<p>It is a student's responsibility to take steps to apply for a visa well ahead of their return and to anticipate that there may be some minor delays. If, however, an application was submitted in a timely fashion and the delay occurred at the UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI) Office or other relevant agencies, the student will need to provide evidence of the date of their request for a visa and any other documentation from the UKVI relating to the processing of their visa.</p>
<p><b>Cultural celebrations</b></p>	<p>If these coincide with submission deadlines, it is a student's responsibility to submit work or inform the School an examination will be missed ahead of such events. In the case of missed examinations, the Board of Examiners may permit a student to re-sit but this would count as a second attempt and the results will be capped.</p>
<p><b>Driving test</b></p>	<p>If a driving test interferes with studies (i.e. prevents a student taking an examination or submitting work on time), this is both foreseeable and preventable and students are expected to reschedule.</p>
<p><b>Planned health appointments</b></p>	<p>These are foreseeable and clashes should be avoidable. Students are expected to reschedule appointments. The School will consider cases where such appointments cannot be moved (eg. surgery).</p>
<p><b>Financial difficulties</b></p>	<p>These are not normally mitigating and exceptional circumstances. The acceptance of financial difficulties as mitigating and exceptional circumstances will require evidence not only that</p>

	they occurred, but also that they were unforeseeable, unavoidable and had a significant impact on the student's assessment. Students should inform the School of these difficulties at the earliest opportunity so that appropriate support is available.
<b>Unavailability of course books/resources</b>	It is a student's responsibility to ensure that they have access to learning materials made available by the School.
<b>Breakdown of personal relationships</b>	Unless these lead to compassionate circumstances in which case appropriate evidence detailed above should be provided (see Compassionate Grounds).

## 5. Process for submitting a claim for an extension for an assignment

- 5.1. If mitigation or exceptional circumstances occur, students should seek appropriate support as closely as possible to the time of the occurrence. Early consideration means that decisions can be made and recommendations applied in a timely fashion.
- 5.2. Students should be advised to read through this Policy before completing and submitting a claim. They should attempt to discuss each application for mitigating or exceptional circumstances with an appropriate member of the Hull York Medical School Student Support Team or Academic Staff, to ensure appropriate support and advice is received to complete the application in full.
- 5.3. Students seeking extensions on assignments on the grounds of mitigating or exceptional circumstances should complete a claim form and submit the form with supporting evidence at the earliest opportunity, and **no later than 5 working days** post the assessment deadline. If the extension request is approved, the assignment will be marked without penalty. If the extension request is not approved, the assignment will incur late submission penalties, in accordance with the relevant and specific Programme regulations.
- 5.4. The Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee will endeavour to provide the student with the outcome of their claim prior to the assessment deadline, but this may not always be possible. It is recommended that students work to the original deadline for the

assessment they are making a claim for whilst their claim is being considered.

- 5.5. The intention in granting an extension is to compensate for any working time lost. In most instances, the length of time granted for an extension will be between **7-21 working days** from the date of the assessment depending on the nature of the mitigating or exceptional circumstance. The actual length of time granted for an extension will be dealt with on an individual basis, according to the student's circumstances and the time recommended should be supported by the evidence provided. The extension will start from the date of the assessment's original deadline.
- 5.6. Requests for longer extensions will be considered by the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee but the length of time granted for an extension should never be longer than the total time originally available to complete the work and may require the student to take a **Leave of Absence**.
- 5.7. Where an extension goes beyond the Board of Examiners' scheduled meetings, students must be advised of the consequences of reassessment should they fail. Extending a submission deadline may help ease the impact of mitigating and exceptional circumstances, however the granting of an extension cannot subsequently be regarded as an exceptional circumstance for disruption to studies or failure in that or subsequent assessments. The granting of extensions will be agreed upon in the best interests of the student and any extension given, that moves a submission deadline into the next unit of study, will be discussed with the academic lead and, where necessary, the Student Support Team to ensure a student is appropriately supported throughout.

**Example:** A student is granted a ten-day extension to a submission deadline, which moves the new deadline into the next module of study with its own assessed piece of work. The student will be expected to complete the outstanding piece of work by the new deadline **and** the next piece of work by its original deadline. The student cannot submit a new claim of exceptional circumstances for 'missing' ten days in the following module.

- 5.8. It is the responsibility of the student to manage their time according to the assessment timeline and ensure that work is submitted by the published deadline. Missing a deadline will generally mean that work is subject to a late penalty or may not be marked at all.

## 6. Process for submitting a claim for a non-clinical exam

- 6.1. Mitigation or exceptional circumstance claims relating to non-clinical examinations (e.g. written examinations, oral examinations, practical examinations, presentations) may be submitted before or immediately after attempting the examination, or if an examination is missed.
- 6.2. Students will normally have **five working days** from the date of the examination to submit a claim of mitigating and exceptional circumstances with supporting evidence to the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee.
- 6.3. If a student is taken ill during a non-clinical examination, they must report this to the examination invigilator who will submit a report to the appropriate Board of Examiners. If the student is unable to continue they will be expected to leave the examination venue. Students will be required to submit a completed claim form within **five working days** of the examination and should provide appropriate supporting evidence (which might consist of the invigilator's report) with the completed claim form.

## 7. Process for submitting a claim for a clinical exam

- 7.1. Students should be made aware at the start of the unit of teaching whether an assessment is defined as a 'clinical examination' (e.g. with patients/simulated patients). If it is, it will be subject to the 'Fit to Sit' provisions that follow.
- 7.2. **Mitigation or exceptional circumstance claims relating to clinical examinations** (e.g. OSCEs, OSLEs) **can only be submitted if the student has not taken part in the examination.**
- 7.3. By taking part in a clinical examination, a student is declaring themselves 'Fit to Sit'. As future medical practitioners, students have a responsibility to practise medicine safely and maintain professional conduct in all settings. This is aligned to the General Medical Council (GMC) and Faculty of Physician Associates (FPA) guidance that registered medical practitioners have a duty to recognise whether or not they are fit to practise and if they are not, then it is their responsibility to declare this and not attend work.
- 7.4. If a student is taken ill during a clinical examination to the point where they are unable to continue, they should inform the lead examiner or invigilator, who will submit a report to the Board of Examiners and the student will be expected to leave the examination venue. The student will then be required to submit a completed mitigating and exceptional circumstances claim form within **five working days** of the affected

exam day(s) and should provide appropriate supporting evidence with the completed claim form.

- 7.5. If a student declares themselves 'Fit to Sit' and completes a clinical examination, but subsequently believes an underlying medical condition (e.g. mental health issue or a physical health condition that progressively worsens or persists throughout the examination) has affected their overall performance or their judgement in deciding whether they were fit to sit or not, they have the right to appeal the progression recommendation made by Board of Examiners. In this situation, students should contact the School's Student Support Team at the earliest opportunity and refer to the [Hull York Medical School Code of Practice on Academic and Fitness to Practise Appeals](#). However, a short-term mitigation is not normally the correct resolution for such situations and a Leave of Absence should be considered. Students should refer to the [Hull York Medical School Policy on Leave of Absence](#).

## 8. Outcomes and recommendations available to students

- 8.1. The Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee is responsible for making a decision on the validity and outcome of each submitted claim.
- 8.2. Where a claim for an extension to a deadline is for **less** than five working days, the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee will make assessment adjustment **recommendations** on behalf of the Board of Examiners and communicate both outcome and recommendation to the student. Where a claim for an extension to a deadline is for **more** than five working days, the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee will report the outcome(s) to the relevant Board of Examiners, who in turn are responsible for making examination and/or assessment adjustment **recommendations** and communicating both outcome and recommendation(s) to the student.
- 8.3. Once the process is complete, the relevant Board of Examiners will communicate the outcome and recommendation(s) in a timely manner, via a letter from the **Chair of the Board**, emailed to the student.
- 8.4. There are **four** possible outcomes to a mitigating or exceptional circumstances claim:

- 8.4.1. **Claim Supported** (circumstances meet criteria with sufficient supporting evidence).
- 8.4.2. **Claim Partially Supported** (circumstances meet criteria with supporting evidence for some of the assessments listed but not all. For example, a student has listed both non-clinical and clinical assessments in their claim, but declares they are 'fit to sit' the clinical assessment and does so. The clinical assessment can no longer be supported under the mitigating and exceptional circumstances policy but the non-clinical assessment can still be supported).
- 8.4.3. **Claim Not Supported** (circumstances do not meet criteria, either because they are not exceptional or there is insufficient supporting evidence).
- 8.4.4. **Claim Supported Pending Evidence** (circumstances may meet criteria but insufficient evidence has been provided or queries have been raised).
- 8.5. The following *recommendation(s)* may be made by a Board of Examiners in response to a '**Supported**' claim outcome.
  - 8.5.1. For assignment submissions, the original deadline may be extended. Any extension granted will be determined by the length of time that the mitigating or exceptional circumstances have affected the assignment, in addition to the time taken by the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee to arrive at the decision.
    - 8.5.1.1. In the case of students in their final year of study, permission to complete the assignment after the end of the programme will result in a postponement of graduation, and requires permission from the Board of Studies. In the case of taught postgraduate students, the Board of Studies can approve extensions of up to six months. The deadline for extensions for non-final year students beyond the end date of the summer term in other years should not be later than the end of August. If an extension beyond the end of August is necessary, a leave of absence may be appropriate and requires permission from the Board of Studies.
  - 8.5.2. For examinations (clinical and non-clinical), the opportunity to take an examination 'as if for the first time' during the specified re-sit period or next appropriate/scheduled opportunity.

- 8.5.2.1. Where an examination is taken, and a new attempt 'as if for the first time' is offered as compensation for mitigating and exceptional circumstances, the mark from the new assessment would replace any mark already obtained from the original impaired assessment, irrespective of which is higher. This also applies if that attempt is failed, as the new mark would replace any mark already obtained. Please note that there is no provision for adjusting a student's assessment mark or degree class where a claim is supported. A new attempt or submission will be required and a new mark applied to this.
- 8.5.2.2. Where the opportunity for a sit 'as if for the first time' is offered, the student is permitted to decline that opportunity and their original mark will stand. If the offer of a sit 'as if for the first time' is accepted, the mark from the new sit will stand, even if it is lower than the previous mark achieved. Students are not permitted to choose between two marks. Failure to attend or submit 'as if for the first time' will be treated as declining the opportunity to do so.
- 8.5.2.3. Within the confirmation of the outcome letter, Hull York Medical School will set a date by which students must confirm to the relevant Board of Examiners their decision to accept or decline the sit(s)/submission 'as if for the first time'.
- 8.5.2.4. Where the student fails an assessment taken 'as if for the first time' at a particular period of the academic year, a Leave of Absence may be needed to accommodate any further (re-)assessment.
- 8.5.2.5. Where the student fails an assessment taken 'as a second (re-sit) attempt' the student's programme of study should be terminated, subject to the usual route of appeal.
- 8.5.3. For examinations (clinical and non-clinical) the opportunity to take a different form of assessment to the original assessment, 'as if for the first time'. This will usually be for practical reasons, e.g. so that the assessment can take place in time for the next stage of the programme or if the original assessment involves group work which cannot be carried out in the re-assessment period. Alternative assessments must be feasible, fair,

proportionate and give equivalent outcomes and cannot be in a format that the student has never previously encountered.

8.5.4. Completion of additional work to complete the original learning outcomes of the programme (e.g. where practical work has been only partially completed).

8.5.5. The opportunity to repeat some or all elements of previous study.

8.5.6. For all credit bearing, modular programmes: if a single module mark is created from a number of marks from assessments testing the same learning outcomes, the following rule may apply: The relevant Board of Examiners can, in order to produce a module mark, recommend to the Board of Studies waiving no more than 20% of the overall module mark. This is only possible when the learning outcomes for the module have been met by the remaining assessments for that module. Where the various elements of a module are intended to test different learning outcomes, such waiving of marks is not permissible. This procedure may be followed for up to a maximum of 40 credits per stage, provided that the learning outcomes for the module(s) have been achieved. Where the exceptional circumstance affects an assessment that contributes more than 20% of the overall mark, the student will be expected to complete the assessment component following the recommendation of the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee.

8.5.6.1. If a module has been approved by Hull York Medical School Joint Senate Committee to be non-re-assessable, a revised submission (referral) of work already submitted may be permitted. Nevertheless, the following are never permitted:

- Substitution of marks
- Changing of marks

The following is only permitted with the approval of the Hull York Medical School Board of Studies:

- Waiving or pro-rating of marks beyond that permitted above

8.6. The following recommendations may be made by a Board of Examiners in response to a '**Claim Not Supported**' claim outcome:

8.6.1. **For non-submission by a stated deadline**, the application of penalties will be in accordance with the relevant regulations governing the programme of study.

- 8.6.2. **For late submission after a stated deadline**, normal late submission penalties for that submission within the Programme of Study will be applied.
- 8.6.3. **For a missed examination**, a zero or 'Fail' grade will be awarded for the first sitting. Students will be required to sit the examination(s), as a re-sit, during the agreed re-sit period. The grade for the affected re-sit examination(s) will be capped in accordance with the Programme of Study.
- 8.6.4. **For an examination that has been sat**, the original grade awarded based on student performance in the examination will stand. In the case of MBBS examinations, if this is a 'Fail' grade the student will be required to sit the failed examination(s) as a re-sit, during the agreed re-sit period, provided the examination is not already a final attempt. In the case of Postgraduate Taught programmes if a grade of 'Fail' in an examination results in an overall failure of a module of study, the student will be required to re-sit the whole module. The grade for the affected re-sit examination(s) or module will be capped in accordance with the Programme of Study.
- 8.6.5. If a claim is '**Not Supported**' but there is evidence that was not brought to the attention of the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee, at the time of their decision, that could have led them to a different decision on the claim, and there is good reason why the evidence was not presented at the appropriate time, the recommendation from the Board of Examiners can be appealed and students must follow the procedure set out in [Hull York Medical School Code of Practice on Academic and Fitness to Practise Appeals](#). Appeals against a decision of the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee can only be made on the basis of procedural irregularity in the decision making.
- 8.7. The following recommendation(s) may be made by a Board of Examiners in response to a '**Supported Pending Evidence**' claim outcome.
- 8.7.1. All possible recommendations outlined in **Section 8.5** may be made with the caveat that appropriate supporting evidence be received by the Mitigation and Exceptional Circumstances Committee by a specified deadline, which will be communicated in the outcome letter.

8.7.2. If evidence is not received by the deadline given or documents submitted as evidence fail to meet the criteria laid out in **Section 3** or **Section 4**, the outcome of the claim will be amended to 'Not Supported'. In such cases, the relevant recommendations outlined in **Section 8.5** will be applied by the Board of Examiners.

## 9. Governance

- 9.1. Hull York Medical School Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee is responsible for the consideration of all Hull York Medical School student claims for mitigating or exceptional circumstances affecting assessments, in accordance with this Policy. It is a subcommittee of, and accountable to, the MBBS Board of Examiners, Intercolation Board of Examiners and Postgraduate Board of Examiners. **It is however an independent committee from the Boards of Examiners.** Each decision made by the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee on student claims will be communicated to the appropriate Board of Examiners.
- 9.2. The Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee must meet, electronically or virtually, at the conclusion of each defined examination period. Meetings may occur more frequently as required. Each meeting should, where possible, be held at least three working days prior to any relevant Board of Examiners meeting in order that these recommendations may appear on the relevant reports.
- 9.3. Consideration of mitigating or exceptional circumstances must always take place prior to consideration of any assessment result by the Board of Examiners. Each Board of Examiners has responsibility for making assessment and examination recommendations for individual students, in light of the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee decision regarding a submitted claim. The Board of Examiners will communicate the outcome of each claim to the student in a timely manner.
- 9.4. External Examiners must not be involved in the mitigating or exceptional circumstance decisions made by the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee, but can be consulted as part of the Board of Examiners recommendation for adjustments to assessments and/or exams.
- 9.5. Each Board of Examiners is ultimately accountable to the Board of Studies, which is the final arbiter of the interpretation of this Policy.

Statistical analysis on claims of mitigating or exceptional circumstances should be reported to the Board of Studies by each Board of Examiners on an annual basis.

- 9.6. Consideration of mitigating and exceptional circumstances cannot be anonymous but should remain confidential. Documentation submitted should only be shared with relevant members of the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee and senior Hull York Medical School staff, on a need to know basis. Circumstances will not normally be disclosed outside the Mitigation and Exceptional Circumstances Committee, the School's Student Support Team and the recording of decisions. All documentation relating to a claim will be stored securely and confidentially by Hull York Medical School.
- 9.7. The Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee may not interview any individual when considering mitigating and exceptional circumstances. However, the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee may need to seek clarification from the Assessment Team regarding the assessments the students are asking mitigation or exceptional circumstances for. The Mitigation and Exceptional Circumstances Committee will always endeavour to contact the student first for such clarifications.
- 9.8. In cases where a student discloses information of a specific nature, which would give rise to safeguarding concerns, this information will be made available (in strictest confidence) to the Hull York Medical School's Student Support Manager and senior Hull York Medical School staff, regardless of the eventual outcome of the claim. The School has a duty of care to all students and will pursue safeguarding concerns in accordance with the [Hull York Medical School Policy on Student Welfare and Support](#).
- 9.9. It is the responsibility of Boards of Examiners to set and publish the deadlines for the submission of mitigating or exceptional circumstances in relation to particular assessments.

**Example:** A student submits a claim which discloses a serious mental health problem previously undisclosed to the school. The claim on this occasion is not supported because it was not submitted within the specified timeframe. However, the information disclosed in the claim needs to be passed to the Student Support Team to ensure the student is fully supported moving forward. Note that where a not-supported decision impacts upon a progression decision, then that progression decision will be open to appeal.

9.10. Mitigating or exceptional circumstances should normally be considered, and any recommendations applied, before the end of the stage of the programme during which they occur.

9.10.1. Consideration of mitigating or exceptional circumstances should take place throughout the academic year to ensure students receive the outcome of their submission in a timely fashion.

9.10.2. As far as possible, approval of arrangements to alter the deadline for completion of an assessment (whether coursework submission or formal examination) must be made in advance of the deadline.

9.10.3. Consideration of mitigating or exceptional circumstances with a view to promote to a higher class of degree (e.g. MB BS with Honours or PGT with Distinction) will not normally be accepted. Mitigating or exceptional circumstances should be received, considered and decisions made throughout the programme of study, so should not be re-visited at the end.

9.10.4. Where it has not been possible for a claim to be submitted and considered before the end of the stage of the programme during which the mitigating or exceptional circumstances occurred, a student may appeal the recommendation of the Board of Examiners. In such cases, students should be informed of their right to appeal within 28 calendar days of receipt of the Board of Examiners recommendations, and follow the procedure set out in the [Hull York Medical School Code of Practice on Academic and Fitness to Practise Appeals](#). It is not expected, however, that the award of a higher class of degree would be recommended without full and formal consideration of the individual circumstances of any such case.

9.11. Where an assessment or examination is affected by mitigating or exceptional circumstances, the normal timescale for **completion of the programme** should be adhered to as far as possible.

9.11.1. This principle applies to situations where assessments have been affected by mitigating or exceptional circumstances rather than to situations where attendance/receipt of teaching has been affected.

9.11.2. Where a student has not received teaching or met attendance requirements as a result of mitigating or exceptional

circumstances, a leave of absence or repeat year of study, which will extend the normal length of the programme, may be required.

- 9.12. Where a decision of mitigating or exceptional circumstances is taken outside a meeting of the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee, by Chair's Action, a report of such decisions should be made to the next meeting of the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee, whether that is the scheduled meeting or an interim meeting called by the Chair, and thereby recommended to the relevant Board of Examiners. The student record system should be updated with the decision as soon as possible and, in any case, within a week of each formal meeting.
- 9.13. Circumstances which might be acceptable as mitigation or exceptional under this Policy will not normally be acceptable as a defence against the award of penalties in relation to academic misconduct. For the treatment of mitigating and exceptional circumstances with respect to academic misconduct, please refer to the [Hull York Medical School Code of Practice on Academic Misconduct](#).

**Example:** The death of a close relative is an exceptional circumstance against the award of a particular mark for a summative assessment, since the death adversely affected the student's performance on the assessment for which that mark was awarded. This death is not an exceptional circumstance against the award of penalties for having committed academic misconduct on the assessment (e.g. plagiarism or cheating in a written exam).

- 9.14. This Policy should be applied in accordance with [Hull York Medical School Equal Opportunities Policy for Students](#).
- 9.15. Providing false information within a claim application is considered a disciplinary offence by Hull York Medical School and both Parent Universities. To seek to gain an advantage through providing false information is liable to action being taken under the [Hull York Medical School Code of Practice on Academic Misconduct](#).

## 10. Data protection and record retention

- 10.1 The Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee follows the data protection policy of our Universities and complies with GDPR.
- 10.2 The Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee will retain records of student claims for two years after the student's graduation. Any

paper and electric records submitted by the student as part of the claim will be confidentially destroyed by the Secretary of the Committee once they have exceeded the two-year record retention period.

## 11. Appendix A: Terms of Reference and Membership of the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee (MECC)

*(A sub-committee of MB BS Board of Examiners, Intercalated Board of Examiners, and Postgraduate Board of Examiners)*

### Membership

The Membership of the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee requires approval by the Board of Studies. The Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee must consist of a minimum of seven members, selected by the Chair of the Board of Studies in consultation with the Dean of Hull York Medical School, as follows:

- **Chair** - an experienced academic member of School staff who is not the Chair of any School Boards of Examiners or Board of Studies
- **A Deputy Chair** - this should be a permanent member of the Committee, nominated by the Chair to deputise on their behalf where necessary
- **Two academic members** of School staff from the **MB BS Programme**
- **One academic member** of School staff from the **Intercalated Programme(s)**
- **One academic member** of School staff from the **Postgraduate Programme(s)**
- **One member** with expertise in **disability support**

The Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee meetings should be serviced by the Secretary of the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee, and all decisions must be recorded.

The term of service of the Chair and all members should normally be three years and may be extended to four years to be approved by the Board of Studies.

In cases where a formal complaint has been lodged against a member of the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee by a student making a claim of mitigating or exceptional circumstances, or there is an evidenced conflict of interest for a member of the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee, that member should exclude themselves from the consideration of the relevant case(s). If, as a result of such exclusions, the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee has insufficient members to conduct its business, then the Chair of Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee may propose to the Board of Studies that alternative members should be co-opted.

Quorum for Committee decision: **3 members\*\*** (including the Chair OR Deputy Chair)

*\*\*in most cases it is expected that the Chair of the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee will take Chair's Action for individual claims, rather than each going to full Committee decision. Where a claim is more complex or the initial*

*decision is to not support the claim, it will be put before a full Committee for a final decision to be made.*

Students are not permitted to attend the Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee meetings.

### **Frequency of meetings**

The Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee shall meet in advance of Boards of Examiners meetings. It shall also meet to review and evaluate mitigating or exceptional circumstance claims as they present themselves throughout the academic year to ensure that students receive the outcome of their claims in a timely fashion.

Meetings may take place either in person or virtually (via email or other suitable electronic means). However, in all cases, quorum must be adhered to and adequate records kept of all decisions made.

### **Terms of Reference**

1. To establish and review appropriate policies and procedures for mitigating or exceptional circumstance claims of students undertaking a Programme of Study.
2. To review mitigating or exceptional circumstance claims submitted by students in order to reach a decision, in accordance with Policy on Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances affecting Assessment and Examination, on whether those circumstances have affected a student's academic performance adversely during the assessment period for which they are claiming.
3. To operate under delegated powers from the Boards of Examiners and to ensure that decisions are made on a fair, impartial and consistent basis. Any conflict of interest shall be declared at each meeting.
4. To ensure that decisions regarding whether to support or not support mitigating or exceptional circumstance claims are entirely evidence-based. The Mitigating and Exceptional Circumstances Committee shall not endorse mitigating or exceptional circumstance claims where no evidence is submitted. Decisions on an outcome can be pending where mitigating or exceptional events cause delay in obtaining evidence.
5. To take account of the severity and duration of the mitigating or exceptional circumstances described and their coincidence with a critical point in the assessment period. Each claim will be considered on an individual basis.
6. To make formal recommendations to the relevant Board of Examiners in regard to the decisions of mitigating or exceptional circumstance claims:

- 6.1 **Claim Supported** (claim meets criteria with sufficient supporting evidence).
  - 6.2 **Claim Partially Supported** (claim meets criteria with supporting evidence for some of the assessments listed but not all. For example, a student has listed both non-clinical and clinical assessments in their claim, but declares they are 'fit to sit' the clinical assessment and does so. The clinical assessment can no longer be supported under the mitigation and exceptional circumstances policy but the non-clinical assessment can still be supported).
  - 6.3 **Claim Not Supported** (claim does not meet criteria, either because they are not mitigating or exceptional, or there is insufficient supporting evidence).
  - 6.4 **Claim Supported Pending Evidence** – more details required (claim may meet criteria but insufficient evidence has been provided or queries have been raised).
7. To determine if the student should be referred to the School Student Support Team for pastoral support in the light of the mitigating or exceptional circumstances described.
  8. To monitor and review mitigating or exceptional circumstances claims trend data and provide an annual report to the Boards of Examiners.