

MBChB Programme – Mitigating Circumstances Procedure

1. Functions of the MBChB Mitigating Circumstances Panel (MCP)

The overall function of the MBChB Mitigating Circumstances Panel (MCP) is to determine whether evidence of sufficient mitigating circumstances that adversely affect the ability of a student to complete an assessment or the results they obtain for an assessment has been established. Recommendations from the MBChB MCP will be forwarded for consideration to the relevant Board of Examiners.

The MBChB is a professional Programme, and students are required to pass all elements of the Programme to progress to graduation, therefore the remedies available to the MBChB MCP in respect of mitigating circumstances (MCs) are restricted.

Please note, only mitigation for students who are unsatisfactory in an assessment will be considered and applied (except in cases where students have submitted MCs to waive the late submission penalty in the case of Year 3 APEP and Year 5 QEPEP).

2. Membership of the MBChB MCP

The MBChB MCP will consist of:-

- Associate Programme Director - Assessments: MBChB Programme and/or
- Deputy Lead for MBChB Assessments
- A senior member of the Student Support and Wellbeing team

The members will be approved by the Director of Undergraduate Medical Studies for the MBChB Programme. The MBChB MCP operates under delegated powers from the Examination Board (as defined in the Procedure for Mitigating Circumstances Panels).

3. Procedure for Submitting Mitigating Circumstances

(a) 'Notification of Mitigating Circumstances' Form

Students must inform the School as soon as they are aware of any possible issues that may affect their progress or assessments.

A student who believes that circumstances or events beyond their control have adversely affected their ability to perform to their full potential, resulted in an assessment being submitted late or in being unable to attend an assessment must submit a 'Notification of Mitigating Circumstances' eForm on-line.

The form must be submitted as soon as the circumstance or events become known to them and prior to the assessment / submission deadline where possible. In exceptional cases, retrospective mitigating circumstances can be submitted up to five working days /one calendar week following the date of assessment / submission deadline however students should provide explanation as to the reason for doing so after the assessment has taken place.

Mitigating Circumstances and PEP

In addition to considering MCs for exam performance (Semester /Progress Tests, AKT and CCAs), the MCP will also review MCs for the Year 3 APEP and Year 5 QEPEP only. Students can submit MCs for Year 3 APEP and Year 5 QEPEP to,

1. Raise issues that either affected them generally across these programme components (and thus potentially void the result in event of an Unsatisfactory grade). These submissions will be reviewed by the MC Panel once results are available and outcomes communicated via the PEP results email. Requests for this needs to be within 5 working days of the submission deadline.
2. To report unexpected personal circumstances (for example, health / bereavement) that has had an impact of at least 5 working days to seek a 5 working day extension. Requests for this must be submitted as soon as possible once these circumstances become known to the student and with accompanying evidence. These will be reviewed on an urgent basis by the MC team in advance of the assessment submission deadline and students will be notified of the decision as soon as possible.

Due to the logistical processes required to implement a 5 working day extension, requests for this must be submitted no later than the Monday of the final week of your PEP.

NOTE: The MC extension request should not be used to report concerns regarding supervision or issues with the PEP process itself. These should be raised to the PEP team.

3. To request removal of late submission penalties in the event of experiencing unforeseen circumstances that resulted in the student submitting up to 5 days later than the stated submission deadline. You must still submit your PEP and apply for mitigation on this grounds both within 5 working days of the original submission deadline.

If a student successfully applies for an extension / waiving of penalties, they cannot also request mitigation for a fail, and vice versa. The student must make clear on which grounds they are applying and provide evidence.

NOTE: MCs are not normally considered for Year 1 PEP (given it is a primarily group-based activity) or Year 2 PEP (as this is completed longitudinally over several months).

The Programme insists upon time specific, appropriate, independent, third-party corroborating evidence / documentation to be submitted at the same time as the 'Notification of Mitigating Circumstances' form. If evidence is not available at the time the form is submitted, it should be submitted as soon as possible afterwards and no later than the day before the MCP. In exceptional circumstances, the Chair of the Mitigating Circumstances Panel may grant an extension to the period to submit evidence though this will be no later than 12 noon on the day before the corresponding Board of Examiners. If sufficient evidence is not submitted in line with the above timescales, then the case for mitigation will be rejected.

The MCP should be satisfied that any evidence is sufficiently independent and contemporaneous to confirm the veracity and impact of the circumstances that the student is describing. Any evidence should allow for a MCP to verify that it is accurate, for example, provided on letter headed paper, written in English (or certifiably translated), clearly states the name and signature of the author of the material, include relevant dates, have the students name visible etc. These (i.e. the form and supporting documentation) should be submitted on-line via the eForm or if not available when submitting the eForm can be emailed to sms.mitcircs@manchester.ac.uk.

If supporting documentation is of a confidential nature it may be submitted as a hard copy in a sealed envelope to the School of Medical Science Student Support Hub, Stopford Building. Please write your student ID number, year of study and the assessments you are submitting the mitigation in respect to. Hard copy evidence must still be submitted in accordance with the timescales outlined above.

NB: In accordance with GMC recommendations, the Programme does NOT accept GP certification where the GP is a relative or friend of the student concerned.

(b) Grounds for Mitigation

Outlined below is a summary of what the University defines as grounds for mitigation.

You should also refer to the following University documents before submitting your Mitigating Circumstances application:

- Policy on Mitigating Circumstances and Coursework Extensions (<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=4271>)
- A basic guide to Mitigating Circumstances (<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=23886>)
- Mitigating Circumstances Procedures (<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=23163>)

Grounds for mitigation are **unforeseeable** or **unpreventable** circumstances that could have, or did have, **a significant adverse effect** on the academic performance of a student.

Please ensure you have referred to Section 4.0 of the [Policy on Mitigating Circumstances and Coursework Extensions](#) to ensure you meet the grounds for mitigation.

Events may arise during pregnancy that may constitute mitigating circumstances, and these need to be judged on a case-by-case basis. The Department of Health and Social Care have advised that 2 weeks is the statutory minimum amount of maternity leave that must be taken by NHS students, so you will be unable to return to clinical placements within 2 weeks of giving birth. It is recommended by the Royal College of Midwives that maternity leave should be for at least 12 weeks (for the wellbeing of the mother and baby). Please also refer to the [MB ChB Programme's Parental Leave Guidance document](#).

Absence from the University during the semester for any period of no more than five consecutive working days will not normally be regarded as grounds for mitigation.

A student cannot submit the same standalone, individual circumstances as a request for mitigation more than once, unless the student can show that the circumstances has exacerbated in some way, or the effects on the student have lasted longer than expected.

If a student submits mitigating circumstances more than twice in an academic year or more than three times during their time on the Programme, the MC Chair or nominated deputy will review all their submissions to ascertain if there is a potential welfare or professionalism concern. Where appropriate, the Mitigating Circumstances Chair will refer the student on to Student Pastoral Support (SPS), Hospital Dean or the Chair of the School Concerns Review Panel.

(c) Meeting with Student Support Tutor/ Hospital Clinical Education Campus Leads

Students are strongly advised to meet with the SPS Tutor (in Year 1, Year 2 and the GEM Year) or their CEC Hospital SPS Team (in Years 3, 4 and 5) if they need help with understanding the process or for ongoing support or alternatively the Programme's SPS or Assessment Team for all years of the Programme.

(d) MBChB MCP

For exam-based assessments, the MBChB MCP will meet after the results have been processed but not yet formally ratified at the Board of Examiners.

Students will not be invited to meet the panel and their identity will remain anonymous throughout the discussion and will only be referred to by their Student ID number. For administrative purposes, the identity of the student will only be known to the Secretary to the panel.

The MBChB MCP will determine in the first instance, whether there is substantiated evidence of circumstances eligible for mitigation. If the evidence is not substantiated, it is dismissed at this point. Where there is substantiating evidence, the MCP will then assess whether the circumstances have had an adverse effect on the student's performance, in line with the Policy on Mitigating Circumstances. It may judge that the effect would have been negligible (for example in the case of a minor illness or a minor disturbance in an examination room), in which case mitigation is dismissed; or, it may judge that the effect would have been significant, in which case mitigation is approved. Mitigation may be approved for i) a specific assessment, ii) for more general impairment over a number of assessments, or iii) for both.

If the MBChB MCP confirms that the circumstances were unforeseeable and unpreventable and that the effect on the student's academic performance would have been significant, the student would not forfeit any re-assessment opportunity under the Programme regulations. Furthermore, as the MB ChB is a professional Programme, the sanctions available to the Panel in respect of mitigating circumstances are restricted since all students must pass all elements of the Programme in order to progress or graduate. Therefore, actual marks awarded for an exam based assessment cannot be changed, only a fail can be mitigated for and voided if successful. For the Year 3 APEP and Year 5 QEPEP the MBChB MCP has the sanction to recommend the waiving of late submission penalties.

The recommendations regarding mitigation from the panel will be submitted to the Board of Examiners for consideration.

(e) The Board of Examiners

The Board of Examiners will determine the academic progression of a student on the basis of their results and any recommendations from the MCP and in accordance with University of Manchester degree regulations, full details of which will be outlined in the MBChB Programme Handbook.

The outcome of all cases considered by the MBChB MCP will be communicated to students within their email of results.

Any student who faces exclusion as a result of the Board of Examiners' decision, will be seen by the Student Pastoral Support team or a senior academic member of staff.

(f) Appeals

A student has the right of appeal under University of Manchester Regulation XIX Academic Appeals against any decision that is reached by the Board of Examiners.

Please refer to the Appeals section of the Programme Handbook for more information:
<https://www.mbcchbhandbook.manchester.ac.uk/assessments/general-information-regulations/appeals/>.

(g) Submissions not considered by the MBChB MCP

The MBChB MCP will not consider any cases where a student has passed their assessments (except in cases where students have submitted MCs to waive the late submission penalty in the case of Year 3 APEP and Year 5 QEPEP).

The Student Support and Wellbeing team will review all submitted mitigating circumstances application to identify any students who could benefit from additional support. In these cases, students will receive an email signposting them to appropriate support services i.e. the Occupational Health Service, the University Disability Advisory and Support Service or/and the University Counselling Service. A meeting with the Programme's Student Pastoral Support team will also be offered if deemed appropriate.

The MC Chair, or nominated deputy, may also decide that the MC submission, and/or information contained within, is of significant concern to warrant a referral to the School's Concerns Review Panel – this will be done in discussion with the Year Lead for students in Year 1 and Year 2, or the Hospital Dean for students in Year 3, 4 and 5.

(h) Sources of Support and Advice

You can contact sms.mitcircs@manchester.ac.uk with queries relating to your Mitigating Circumstances application.

The following areas of the University can be contacted for support and guidance relating to mitigating circumstances:

- SMS Student Support and Wellbeing Team - med.sps@manchester.ac.uk
- The University Counselling and Mental Health Service - <http://www.counsellingservice.manchester.ac.uk/>
- Student Support and Advice - <http://www.studentsupport.manchester.ac.uk/>
- Disability Advisory and Support Service - <http://www.dass.manchester.ac.uk/>
- Occupational Health Service - <http://www.occhealth.manchester.ac.uk/>
- Students' Union Advice Service - <http://manchesterstudentsunion.com/advice/service>

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