

South Central TEI

Policy for extensions to summative coursework and other concessions on account of mitigating circumstances

1. Students who believe that their academic performance is being adversely affected by reasons beyond their control are strongly encouraged to contact their centre of study to explore the possible options of support.
2. If due to some adverse circumstance beyond their control a student anticipates missing a deadline to hand in summatively assessed coursework, or anticipates missing a class which leads directly to the submission of work which counts towards summative assessment and therefore cannot hand in the associated work, he / she should:
 - a. contact his / her centre as soon as possible to discuss and seek possible mitigation and any support they might find helpful; AND
 - b. complete and submit an extension/concession request form stating their circumstances, and then submit this form to his / her centre (either to the programme leader or to another designated person).
3. All such requests for extensions/concessions require approval from the centre. Mitigation outcomes may include, for instance, an agreed extension to a deadline (the most common outcome); a grace period to temporarily take time out from studies; or some other concession.
4. An undergraduate student may self-certify on two occasions per term for a maximum of seven consecutive calendar days on each occasion. A term in this context refers to both term-time and the following vacation. A postgraduate student may self-certify on two occasions per three month period for a maximum of seven consecutive calendar days on each occasion. The two opportunities for self-certification cannot be used consecutively (e.g. it is not possible to self-certify twice for seven days to cover a consecutive fourteen day period). The centre is responsible for checking that these limits have not been exceeded and for investigating any cases of attempts to self-certify on more than two occasions per term (undergraduates) / three month period (postgraduates). The general expectation is that the form should be completed within five days after the problem has occurred.
5. When students self-certify within the limits stated in paragraph 4 above, they do not need to provide independent evidence in support of their absence / illness and request for mitigation. Students are trusted to self-certify accurately and honestly.

6. If the student has used both his/her opportunities for self-certification during the term (for undergraduates) / three month-period (for postgraduates) in question, the student should discuss their situation with their centre.
Independent/professional evidence may be required at this stage, and if so it is the student's responsibility to provide sufficient evidence in support of their request. However such evidence may not be required if, for example, the situation is part of a previously disclosed and evidenced long-term disability, the result of pregnancy/maternity, or it is the nature of case that no evidence can reasonably be provided.
7. The expectation is that students should apply for mitigation in advance of deadlines. However adverse circumstances such as illness will sometimes make this impractical. If a student believes that an adverse circumstance caused the failure to submit summative work by a due deadline, it is his / her responsibility to contact their centre as soon as possible to explain the situation and to request a retrospective extension (or other appropriate mitigation). This should normally be done within five days of their problem occurring, and no later than five days after the deadline for the submission of the assessment.
8. The principle is that students can use self-certification of absence to support a request for mitigation only if their absence results from circumstances beyond their control. This renders it difficult to produce a definitive list of 'good reasons' under which students may default on their academic commitments through self-certification. The following is indicative but not exhaustive:
 - a. significant illness, comparable to that which would result in absence from work;
 - b. hospital appointment, doctor's appointment, emergency dental appointment;
 - c. bereavement;
 - d. significant personal problems or events (e.g. a family crisis; being the victim of a crime);
 - e. significant illness of a close relative or dependent (e.g. sufficient that the student needs to act as a carer);
 - f. in the case of a part-time student, unexpected demands of employment.
9. Self-certification should not be used in respect of general pressure of deadlines, missing deadlines due to malfunctioning of computer equipment and so on. Students are expected to manage their work to be able to cope with such problems.
10. Whilst all requests for mitigation should be carefully considered, students should not assume that requests for mitigation will automatically be approved. There may also be some instances where it is not reasonable for the

department to implement a particular type of mitigation requested by a student (for instance, it may not be feasible to offer an extension in respect of a practical assessment). In such instances, departments should consider whether another form of mitigation or support would be more appropriate.

11. In considering requests for mitigation, centres will either:
 - a. accept that the student has good reason due to their circumstances for defaulting on his/her academic commitments and (for retrospective requests) could not reasonably have negotiated a concession in advance. In this case the centre permits an extension or retrospective extension as appropriate to the deadline for the submission of work, or offers another form of mitigation as appropriate (for instance, other means of assessing the learning outcome associated with the assessment);
 - or
 - b. not accept that the student has good reason for having defaulted on their academic commitments and (for retrospective requests) could not have negotiated an extension to the deadline or an excused absence in advance. In this instance, the centre should inform the student; apply the standard penalties for late submission of assessed work as appropriate; and (where applicable) considers the student as having been absent from class without good cause.
12. Normally the only grounds on which a retrospective extension will be granted are where circumstances beyond the control of the student have prevented submission.
13. The student must be informed in writing / by email of the outcome of the centre's consideration of the student's request for mitigation. If an extension is granted then the new deadline must be made clear to the student, in writing / by email, and the procedures with regard to meeting the new deadline should be those outlined in this policy statement. If the student fails to meet the new deadline then the centre should apply standard policy and penalties on late submission of assessed work. Students should remember that failure to submit summative assessed work on the due date without a negotiated extension or self-certification means that standard procedures and penalties on late submission of assessed work will apply.
14. Students must advise their centre if their adverse circumstances are ongoing or if new adverse circumstances come to light, such that they believe that mitigation applied is insufficient (for instance, if a student has negotiated an extension due to illness, but their illness continues longer than anticipated). The procedures outlined above should be applied in such circumstances. Students

must not wait until they receive their marks to advise their centre of such difficulties.

15. Submitting false or misleading information in making a request for an extension/concession may be treated as a disciplinary offence.