



University of  
**Salford**  
MANCHESTER

# **Personal Mitigating Circumstances Procedure**

**Version Number 2.3**

**Effective from 1 September 2023**

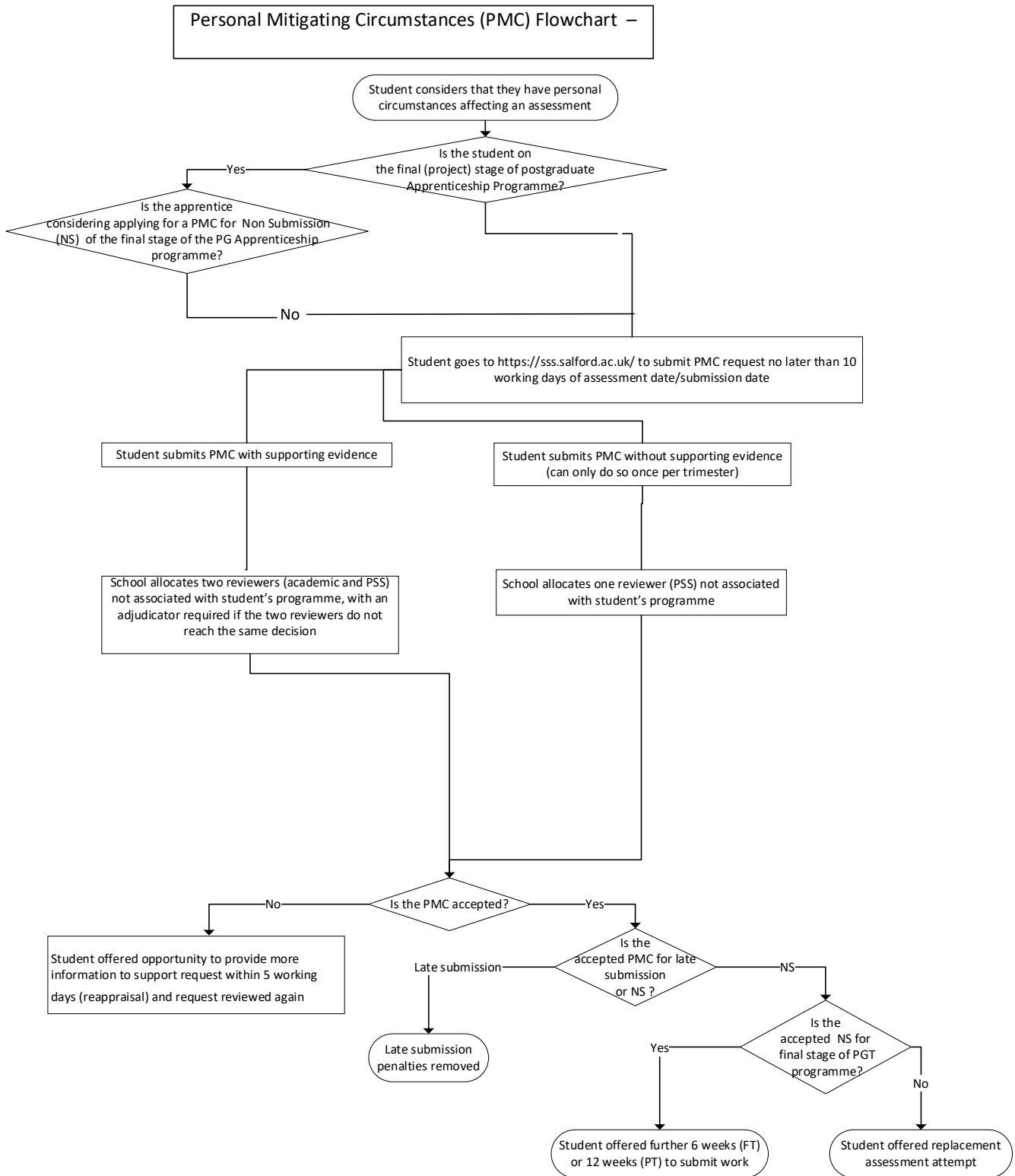
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**Quality Management Office**

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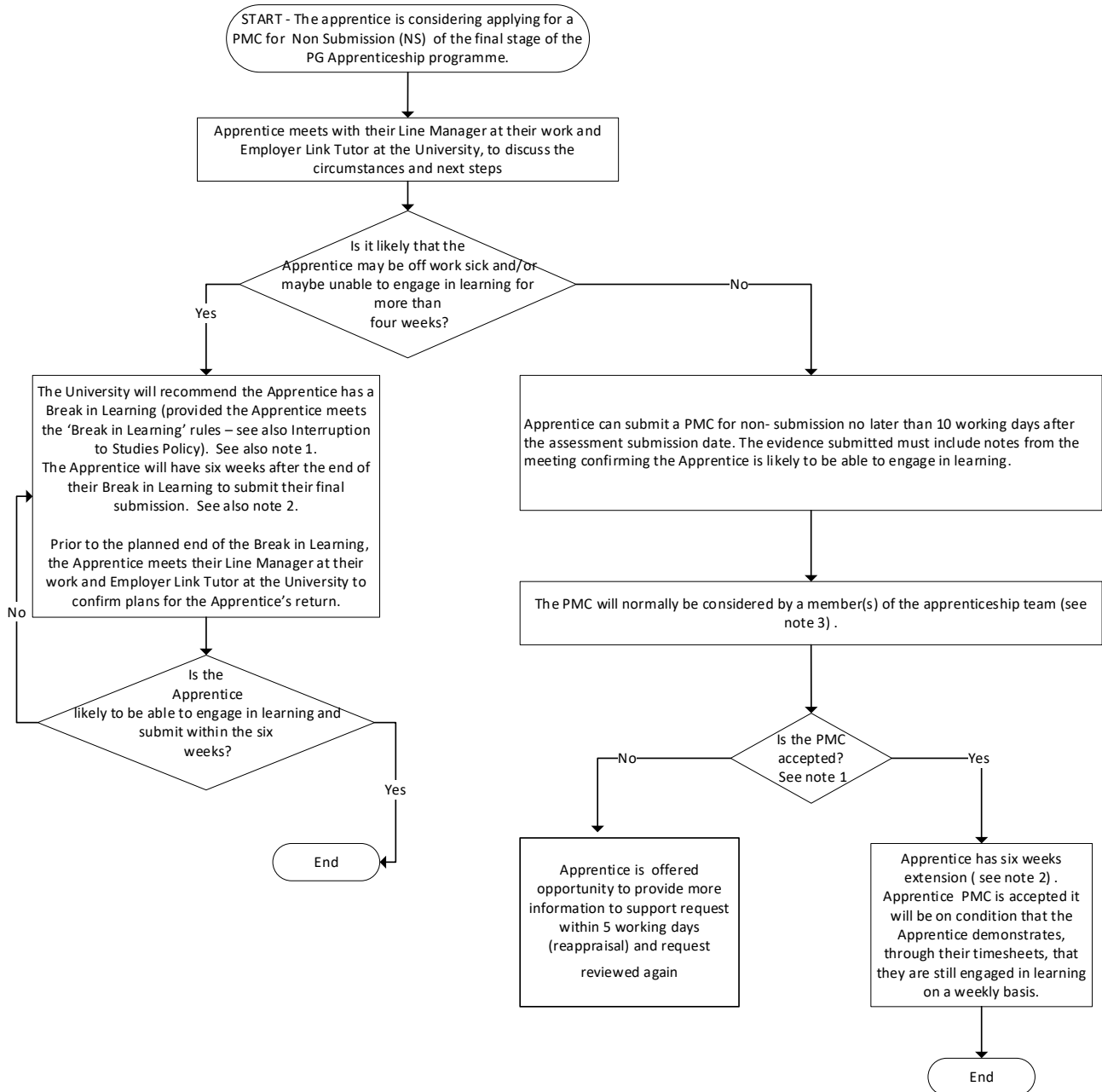
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# Flowchart of Process Part A



## Flowchart of Process Part B

### Personal Mitigating Circumstances (PMC) Flowchart - Part B [Only applies to the final submission of the final stage of a Postgraduate Apprenticeship Programme]



#### NOTES

- 1- All Apprentices **cannot** submit requests for Breaks in Learning or PMCs due to pressure of work at their employer.
- 2- All Apprentices, regardless of whether they are Part Time or Full Time will have six weeks to submit their submission after their Break in Learning ends.
- 3- Unlike the general PMC policy, a nominated member(s) of the Apprenticeship team considers the PMC as they have expertise in Apprenticeship Rules.

### 1. What is the purpose of this Procedure?

This document sets out the University's regulations governing personal mitigating circumstances (PMCs) and the procedure for submission and consideration of PMCs.

### 2. Who does the Procedure apply to?

This procedure applies to students registered on University of Salford undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes, including students at partner institutions (with the exception of students at the British University of Bahrain where a separate Procedure operates). It only applies to summative assessment (i.e. assessment formally submitted for credit). It does not apply to formative assessment, which has a development purpose, and is designed to help you learn more effectively through feedback on your performance, providing comments on how it can be improved.

This procedure does not apply to postgraduate research students who are advised to consult the Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Programmes for information regarding personal mitigating circumstances.

### 3. What are Personal Mitigating Circumstances?

PMCs are circumstances such as medical or personal issues which have seriously affected your ability to complete an assessment, **over which you have no control, and which could not have been predicted.**

You can ask the University to consider PMC requests for the following reasons:

- **Late submission** of an assessment during the late submission period which, if accepted, would result in removal of a late submission penalty where this relates to the first submission of an assessment.

The late submission period is defined as seven days after the published submission date for the assessment.

The University does not have a process where a student can request an extension to an assessment deadline, instead the late submission period is in place; however, students with a disability or who act as a carer may be able to request a seven-day extension through a Reasonable Adjustment Plan or Carer Support Plan.

- **Absence** from or **non-submission** of an assessment which, if accepted, would offer you a replacement assessment attempt at the next available assessment opportunity.

### 4. What circumstances are considered through this Procedure?

Examples of acceptable PMC requests are listed below (this is not an exhaustive list):

- a) Serious short-term illness or injury;
- b) Death or significant illness of a close family member or friend;
- c) Unexpected caring responsibilities;
- d) Worsening of an ongoing illness or disability, including mental health conditions;
- e) An emergency or crisis that prevents the student from attending an exam or accessing an online assessment;

- f) An accommodation crisis such as eviction or a home becoming uninhabitable;
- g) A crime which has had a substantial impact on you;
- h) Impact of a Religious Observance that **could not be anticipated** (e.g. mourning/funeral plans, or fainting in an exam because of fasting);
- i) Witnessing or experiencing a traumatic incident;
- j) Significant and unanticipated increases in your workload (e.g. as a result of paid employment) which had not been planned for (this only applies to part time/distance learning students and does not apply to apprenticeship students);
- k) Being called for jury service;
- l) Unanticipated military service deployment;
- m) A shortcoming or failure in the support arrangements for disabled students.
- n) Unavoidable technical issues affecting your submission.

#### **5. What circumstances cannot be considered through this Procedure?**

The following examples would not normally be considered as acceptable PMC requests (this is not an exhaustive list):

- a) circumstances over which you have some control (e.g. going on holiday);
- b) circumstances to which all or most students are subject to (e.g. coursework deadlines or exam stress);
- c) circumstances where individual arrangements have already been put in place (e.g. through a Reasonable Adjustment Plan or Carer Support Plan);
- d) circumstances arising from poor time management or personal organisation (e.g. failure to plan for foreseeable last-minute emergencies such as computer crashes, printing problems, work not backed up, misreading/lack of awareness of examination timetables or submission deadlines);
- e) travel problems arising from minor delays or in cases where normal traffic congestion has not been taken into account;
- f) minor ailments of a short-term nature such as colds, headaches, stomach upsets, except where the ailment prevented attendance at, or occurred during, an exam or similar scheduled assessment;
- g) being subject to Procedures such as Academic Misconduct, Student Misconduct or Fitness to Practise.

#### **6. What circumstances cannot be considered through this Procedure for Apprenticeship Students?**

Work related commitments/deadlines cannot be considered as a reason to approve a PMC request if you are an apprenticeship student. This is because when you and your employer

sign up for an apprenticeship programme, you both agree that 20% of your time will be spent on 'off-the-job' work. This is time spent working on the apprenticeship programme which could include academic work and embedding theory into practice in the workplace. This is a requirement for funding and if you are unable to commit to the minimum 20% then you will need to consider a break in learning or withdraw from your programme (depending on the circumstances).

## **7. What do I need to know about 'Fit to Sit'?**

By attending an assessment or submitting a piece of coursework, you are declaring that you are fit and well enough to take assessments, so you are deemed to be 'fit to sit or submit'. As such, you cannot submit PMC requests on the basis that your standard of performance in the assessment has been affected by PMC.

In situations where illness occurs during a scheduled assessment such as an exam or presentation, consideration will be given to PMC requests. These must be reported at the time to the invigilator or examiner. You can submit PMC requests for non-attendance to request a replacement assessment opportunity.

Exceptionally, where you are unable to determine if you were fit to sit/submit an assessment and have done so, you can submit a PMC request to ask that the assessment attempt should be considered as a non-submission or absence. This would normally be limited to situations where you were so unwell or so severely affected by your circumstances that you were unable to recognise or determine your own ill health, and medical documentation would need to be provided to confirm this.

Information for students with Reasonable Adjustment Plans and disabilities is provided in section 14.

## **8. What if I have ongoing PMCs?**

This Procedure must not be used to mitigate against ongoing illnesses or circumstances. You should seek support or consider options including a [Reasonable Adjustment Plan](#), a [Carer Support Plan](#) or an [interruption in study/break in learning](#).

If your circumstances relate to harassment, you are advised to report these circumstances through [Report and Support](#).

## **9. How do I make a PMC request?**

To make a PMC request, you should complete the online form available at: <https://sss.salford.ac.uk>.

You must:

- a) state if your request is supported by evidence or not (see sections 10 and 11);
- b) explain the circumstances which have affected you and the impact of these;
- c) explain the period of time you have been affected;
- d) state which assessments have been affected;
- e) state if your request relates to late submission of your assessment, non-submission of your assessment or absence from your assessment;
- f) provide evidence (where appropriate) – see Appendix 1.

We would recommend that you submit your request close to the point of your assessment so you know whether or not you will be able to submit.

Your request may be submitted in advance of the assessment date if you know you will be unable to attend an assessment or submit an assessment and if relevant evidence is available, for example, you have a hospital appointment or treatment scheduled on the date of a timed assessment.

If you are a student on a level 7 apprenticeship programme and undertaking your final stage project/dissertation, please see section 20.

#### **10. Do I need evidence to support my PMC request?**

You are encouraged, wherever possible, to submit a PMC request which is supported by appropriate evidence; however, the University recognises that it may not always be possible for you to obtain evidence to support every situation.

In the following circumstances, you can submit a PMC request **without evidence**:

- you have experienced a period of short-term acute illness or condition;
- you have had unexpected caring responsibilities (see section 7);
- you have been affected by a bereavement;
- experiencing a traumatic incident as a result of a protected characteristic for example the stress or weather effect brought about as a result of racial discrimination or harassment (see section 7);
- other circumstances which you are unable to provide evidence of **and** you must explain why you are unable to provide evidence.

You have **one** opportunity each trimester to submit a PMC request without evidence.

If you have submitted or taken an assessment, you have confirmed that you are fit to do that assessment. As such a PMC request for non-submission or absence would not normally be considered (exceptions are documented in sections 12 and 13).

Late notification of PMCs through the Academic Appeals Procedure must always be supported by evidence.

If you are a disabled student with a fluctuating condition which may have an ongoing impact, and the University is aware of your condition, we do not expect you to provide medical evidence each time you submit a PMC request. Submitting a PMC request on the basis of previously documented evidence with respect to a registered disability will not be treated as a request without evidence.

Appendix 1 provides examples of evidence which could be used to support your request. Appendix 2 provides guidance about medical evidence. All evidence should be submitted in English or in the original language with a translation provided. The University **cannot** obtain evidence on your behalf.



If you are providing evidence to support circumstances relating to another person, you will need to seek their permission to use their evidence and confirm that you have done so on the PMC request form.

If concerns arise regarding the authenticity of evidence provided to support a PMC request, the University reserves the right to check the authenticity of such evidence with the identified originating source. Action may be taken through the Student Misconduct Procedure or Fitness to Practice Procedure if evidence is found to be fraudulent.

#### **11. What is the timescale to submit a PMC request?**

Your request must be submitted within 10 working days of the assessment or submission date (if you have a Reasonable Adjustment Plan or Carer Support Plan which permits an extended submission date, the PMC request must be submitted no later than 10 working days after your extended submission date).

#### **12. What should I do if I become ill during an exam or similar timed assessment?**

If you are taken ill during a scheduled assessment i.e. exam or presentation you should:

- a) notify an invigilator so that a report of the illness can be made;
- b) where appropriate seek medical attention on the day and obtain evidence of incapacity where possible;
- c) submit a PMC request for non-attendance at the assessment within the timescale specified above.

#### **13. What if I have a disability or Reasonable Adjustment Plan (RAP)?**

If you have a Reasonable Adjustment Plan which permits an extended deadline to submit, you do not need to submit a PMC request to use your extended deadline. Once your extended deadline has passed, you will be able to use the late submission period. You may wish to consider submitting a PMC for 'late submission' if you have an appropriate reason to do so.

PMC requests should not be submitted for matters already covered by a Reasonable Adjustment Plan which offers reasonable adjustments for disabled students, or where other individual arrangements have been made. If you have a Reasonable Adjustment Plan but experience additional issues, or when the circumstances covered by the Reasonable Adjustment Plan are exacerbated, then you may submit a PMC request. If such circumstances are likely to be ongoing, you should seek a review of their Reasonable Adjustment Plan through Disability and Learner Support.

Occasionally a disability may not be diagnosed until some, or all, of your assessments have been completed, or it is too late to put in place appropriate reasonable adjustments required to avoid disadvantage. In such circumstances, you may use the PMC process, even if you have submitted or taken assessments. You cannot ask for a replacement assessment attempt for assessments completed in a previous academic year.

**14. What happens if I experience technical issues during submission?**

If a technical issue with a University system arises which affects your ability to submit your assessment on time or affects your submission, you should raise a case through the service portal explaining the issue you are experiencing. They will help you resolve your issue but also provide evidence to support any PMC you may submit. PMCs will only be accepted where there is evidence enough time was left to successfully submit on time and that all possible steps were taken to submit successfully.

**15. Where can I get independent advice and support about this Procedure?**

Independent advice about the PMC process and PMC requests is available from the [Students' Union Advice Centre](#).

**16. What if I can't submit a PMC request?**

There may be occasions when you are unable to submit a PMC request due to incapacity. In this case you may nominate another person to make arrangements for a request to be submitted on your behalf. You or your confirmed nominee should contact your School Office or askUS.

**17. What if I am a final year student and I have a PMC request, what do I need to know?**

If you are in the final year of your studies, you should be aware that if you are unable to submit an assessment (and a PMC request for non-submission/absence is submitted), this may result in a delay to your graduation as it may not be possible to offer a further assessment opportunity prior to graduation.

**18. I am undertaking the final stage of my Master's degree, what do I need to know?**

If you are a student on the final stage of a taught Master's programme (non-apprenticeship programmes), you can submit a PMC for the following:

- Late submission of your project/dissertation – if your PMC is accepted this means that any late submission penalties applied will be removed.
- Non submission of your project/dissertation – if your PMC is accepted this means a new standard submission date will be set as follows:
  - 6 weeks for students on a full time Master's programme (from the original submission date);
  - 12 weeks for students on a part time Master's programme (from the original submission date).

**19. I am undertaking the final stage of my Master's degree as an apprentice, what do I need to know?**

If you are an apprentice on a taught Master's programme it is important that you discuss your personal mitigating circumstances with your employer and your Programme Leader prior to submission of a PMC request. If you are unable to engage in study for more than four weeks due to your personal circumstances, the University will recommend that you take a Break in

Learning (further information is available in the Student Engagement, Interruption and Withdrawal Policy).

Prior to the planned end of the Break in Learning, you will need to meet your Line Manager and Employer Link Tutor to confirm plans for your return.

All apprentices, regardless of whether you are full time or part time, will have six weeks to submit your dissertation after a Break in Learning ends.

Unlike the general PMC process, a Programme Leader or a nominated member of the Apprenticeship team, will consider your PMC request as they will have expertise in Apprenticeship Rules.

If your PMC request is accepted, you will be offered a six week period from your original submission date to submit your dissertation. This will be on the basis that you demonstrate, through timesheets, that you are still engaged in learning on a weekly basis.

## **20. How are PMC requests reviewed and what is the timescale for review?**

PMC requests are considered by the School which has responsibility for your registration,

Schools will nominate reviewers to consider PMC requests. Reviewers will be normally be selected from staff outside your programme team, unless you are an apprentice.

Reviewers determine the validity of each case, taking the following into account:

- have you provided a clear supporting statement detailing the nature, severity and impact of the circumstances?
- could the circumstances have been predicted or avoided?
- did the period affected correspond with the assessment date or timing?
- are the circumstances sufficiently severe to have had a definite impact?
- where evidence is provided, is the request supported by relevant and genuine evidence third party evidence?
- were adjustments in place to support the assessment (e.g. a RAP)?
- were the circumstances particular to you, or did they apply to all students?

A request without evidence will be considered by one reviewer (usually a member of the School's administration team).

A request with evidence will be considered by two reviewers (a member of the School's academic staff and a member of the School's administration team). Where the two reviewers cannot agree, a third adjudicating academic reviewer will consider the case.

To ensure independence of decision making, the academic reviewer will not be the Chair of a Module or Programme Assessment Board which considers the same student.

Reviewers will normally consider PMC requests prior to meetings of the relevant Assessment Board.

PMC requests and outcomes are retained electronically in line with the Information Retention Schedule.

Schools will inform you of the outcome of your PMC request via email immediately after consideration, and where possible within three working days of submission of your PMC request.

The communication will advise you of the following:

- a) the assessments stated on your PMC;
- b) the mitigation claimed for each assessment (late submission, non-submission or absence);
- c) the outcome (accept or reject);
- d) a brief rationale to explain the outcome in the cases of a rejected request;
- e) the recommended action to be taken by the Module or Programme Assessment Board.

You are encouraged to discuss PMC outcomes with your Personal Tutor, Programme Leader or Student Progression Administrator to understand any relevant implications. What action will the Assessment Board take?

PMC decisions are reported to the relevant Assessment Board. The Assessment Board is not be permitted to change the decision of the reviewers. Actions in response to reviewers' decisions are recorded in the Assessment Board minutes.

You are given the opportunity to demonstrate skills and competence at a time when you are fit and well to do so; consequently, Assessment Boards may not change marks nor set aside marks in order to accommodate PMCs.

Where a PMC request is accepted for a component of assessment:

- a) if the claim is for the late submission of work then any penalties for late work for that component shall be removed and the module mark or grade shall be calculated in the normal way;
- b) if the claim is for the non-submission of work or absence from an assessment then you will be offered a replacement attempt for that component which shall normally take place in the next designated assessment period.

Where a PMC request is rejected for an assessment then the mark or grade given, including any penalties for late work, shall stand.

In circumstances where you are permitted a replacement attempt at an assessment (in the current or next academic year) as a result of an accepted PMC request and this decision has been reported to the Assessment Board, the Board may exercise discretion regarding the nature of the assessment and how the learning outcomes may be achieved.

You should also be aware that submitting a PMC request will at best, either remove a cap from your mark or offer you a further assessment attempt at the next opportunity. You will still need to complete each assessment.

Further information for students on the final stage of a taught Master's programme with an accepted PMC request for non-submission, please see section 19.

## **21. What can I do if my PMC request has been rejected?**

Where PMC requests have been rejected due to insufficient or lack of evidence, you may, within five working days, submit further information or evidence to support your case. Details of the process to follow in this situation will be provided to you when they are informed that their PMC request has been rejected.

Following conclusion of the PMC process and where a PMC request has been rejected, you may subsequently submit an academic appeal against the decision of the Assessment Board when ratified/confirmed results are available. You will need to establish good reason to explain why all relevant information could not be provided through the PMC Procedure. Not knowing about the University's PMC Procedure would not be considered good reason for non-submission of a PMC request.

The following would be considered as acceptable reasons to explain why a PMC request was not submitted in line the PMC Procedure:

- You were in hospital or severely ill and unable to submit a PMC request (evidence will be required to support this);
- relevant evidence to support a PMC request became available after the PMC submission deadline.

## **22. What do I need to know about my personal data?**

You can find more information about how the University will use information you provide through your PMC request [here](#).

## **23. Related Documentation**

- [FAQs for Personal Mitigating Circumstances](#)
- [Academic Appeals Procedure](#)
- [Fitness to Practise Procedure](#)
- [Fitness to Study Procedure](#)
- [Student Engagement, Interruptions and Withdrawals Policy](#)

## **24. Appendices**

**Appendix 1: Evidence for Personal Mitigating Circumstances**

**Appendix 2: Guidance for students seeking medical evidence for PMC/Academic Appeal Purposes**



## **Appendix 2: Guidance for students seeking medical evidence for PMC/Academic Appeal Purposes**

If you have an illness or health condition which has affected your assessments and you need to submit personal mitigating circumstances (either for a PMC or an Academic Appeal), if you do not meet the criteria for a PMC without evidence, it is strongly advised that you obtain a signed and dated letter on headed paper or with an official stamp from a health professional (GP, clinical specialist, registered professional in psychiatric practice, registered nurse/midwife etc.) to support your PMC/Appeal.

The evidence should be in English, and you are responsible for ensuring that evidence in other languages is accompanied by a translation.

Healthcare professionals may charge for any letter or medical evidence which they provide, and you are responsible for the payment of these fees. You will not be reimbursed by the University for any costs associated with obtaining medical evidence.

Appointment cards are not sufficient evidence of a health condition, as they will not indicate a medical condition or the period during which you were affected.

Letters from family members, friends and fellow students are unlikely to be considered as valid evidence for a PMC due to the fact they are not from a professional or independent third party.

Staff considering your PMC/Appeal will look for the following information:

- A brief description (without breaching confidence) of the medical issue and how this has affected your ability to prepare for, submit or attend an assessment. This could include the main effects of the condition and any side effects of medication or treatment.
- The period of time during which you were affected by the medical issue. This is to check that it coincides with relevant assessment dates.
- If you have been affected as the result of a set of circumstances relating to another person (e.g. the illness of a relative), confirmation of the impact this has had on you.
- The university has a 'fit to sit' policy which means that if you sit or submit an assessment, you are declaring that you are fit to do so. In very exceptional circumstances, if you have sat or submitted an assessment but are able to show that you were unable to determine if you were fit to do so, the university may be able to consider a PMC or appeal on this basis. In such cases, confirmation from a health professional is needed.
- In the case of academic appeals, if you did not submit a PMC at the time of your assessment, the factors that may have prevented you from doing so.

You should ensure that you read the Personal Mitigating Circumstances or Academic Appeals Procedure for further information.

<b>Document Control Information</b>			
<b>Revision History incl. Authorisation: (most recent first)</b>			
<b>Author</b>	<b>Summary of changes</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Authorised &amp; Date</b>
Annette Cooke	Changes to terminology, evidence requirements, opportunities for submitting PMC without evidence.	V2.3	ULTC and subsequent Chair's Action July/Aug 2023
Annette Cooke	Updated to reflect apprentices cannot use the PMC process for work related deadlines	V2.2	Chair's Action ULTC August 2022
Annette Cooke	Inclusion of information for students on PGT programmes (including those on apprenticeship programmes)	V2.1	Chair's Action ULTC December 2021
Annette Cooke	Re-presentation of procedure in FAQ format, expansion of circumstances which can be considered for a self-certification PMC request, inclusion of information about use of data and data of third parties used to support a PMC request.	V2.0	SELTEC May 2021
Annette Cooke	Change to the process to review self-certification PMCs, removal of the need to provide an 'official' translation for evidence in another language, inclusion of the framework for PMC review, confirmation that PMCs do not apply to formative assessment and clarification of PMC routes for PGR students.	V1.10	SELTEC 1 July 2020
Annette Cooke	Introduction of self certification, clarified of evidence to support PMC requests for disabled students with fluctuating conditions, review of acceptable reasons for PMC requests.	1.9	SELTEC 22 May 2019
Annette Cooke	General update for 2018/19 and inclusion of link to guidance about PMC requests submitted by students who are in final stage of PGT programmes	1.8	Update on behalf of SELTEC 15 August 2018
Annette Cooke	General update for 2017/18	1.7	Update on behalf of SELTEC 6 July 2017
Annette Cooke	Inclusion of types of circumstances which may be considered as acceptable/unacceptable for PMC purposes, procedure transferred to new template, minor modifications to terminology used and improved accessibility	1.6	Update on behalf of SELTEC 24 August 2016
<b>Policy Management and Responsibilities:</b>			
<b>Owner:</b>	This Policy is issued by the Director of Quality, who has the authority to issue and communicate policy on personal mitigating circumstances and has delegated day to day management and communication of the policy to the Quality Standards Manager.		



<b>Document Control Information</b>	
Others with responsibilities (please specify):	All subjects of the Policy will be responsible for engaging with and adhering to this policy.
<b>Author to complete formal assessment with the following advisory teams:</b>	
Equality Analysis (E&D, HR)	Proposed changes will not have a detrimental impact on any specific groups.
Legal implications (LPG)	
Information Governance (LPG)	
Student facing procedures (QMO)	
UKVI Compliance (Student Admin)	
<b>Consultation:</b>	
Staff Trades Unions via HR Students via USSU Relevant external bodies (specify)	
<b>Review:</b>	
<b>Review due:</b>	2023/24