Step One: Familiarise yourself with the FAQs and Mitigating Circumstances Policy. They can be found on this page.

Step Two: For further support and advice on your rights, contact your Academic Mentor, Student Support and Accommodation Service.

Step Three: Submit the Mitigating Circumstances form and supporting evidence. Within 5 days of the event addressed to your Head of School via your School Office.

Step Four: Your School will acknowledge your request. Within 2 days outlining the process and any further action needed by you.

Step Five: You will receive official confirmation of outcome. The date will be outlined in your initial email from your School.
10 FAQs

1. **What constitutes a ‘mitigating circumstance’?**

There are circumstances which, through no fault of your own, mean that the assessment (whether examinations or other types of assessment) has not accurately measured your ability or else could not be completed in a timely manner. Such circumstances are unfair to the student/s and are not an accurate representation of the expected level of performance. Examples may include (this is not exhaustive):

- You having a ‘significant illness’ on the day of an exam;
- A flood in a city preventing an exam taking place;
- Or political upheaval disrupting the study and learning of a group of students.
- Significant illness or accident affecting the student;
- Bereavement – death of a close relative or significant other;
- Significant adverse personal or family circumstances;
- Other significant exceptional factors that are outside the your control (e.g. Jury Service, although student assessments would normally be a reason for a student to be permitted to stand down), or for which there is evidence of stress caused;
- Circumstances affecting the University’s ability to schedule, set or deliver courses and/or assessments, including marking of assessments, e.g. staff participation in industrial action, or problems affecting infrastructure or IT systems.

Such circumstances are described as ‘mitigating circumstances’.

2. **Where can I get advice on the Mitigating Circumstances process?**

Your Academic mentor is a member of staff assigned to you in order to provide the first point of contact for advice or assistance on academic and non-academic matters. Student Support and Accommodation will be able to provide advice on the process. The Student Union Advice Hub will also give you support and make you aware of your rights during this process.

It is important to note that making your Academic Mentor aware of a mitigating circumstance does not constitute the beginning of the formal process. This begins when you submit a Mitigating Circumstances Policy to your Head of School.

3. **What information must I include in any Mitigating Circumstances application?**

In all cases independent documentary evidence, such as medical certificates, must be provided to verify mitigating circumstances. Academic Mentors may also provide information about circumstances based on meetings and conversations with you, but do not necessarily attend the Mitigating Circumstances Committee. Student Support and Accommodation may, in addition, provide further supporting evidence.
It is your responsibility to ensure that this information accompanies any application.

The confidential nature of information provided in support of your application for consideration of mitigating circumstances will be respected by Heriot-Watt University in compliance with data protection law. Confidential information will only be shared with the relevant individuals within the University on a ‘need to know’ basis, all of whom are required to keep applications securely to avoid unauthorised access or other breaches of information security. The application and any supporting evidence must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked ‘Mitigating Circumstances, Private and Confidential’.

4. **Where can I find the full Mitigating Circumstances policy?**

Insert hyperlink. The information in these FAQs is taken from this policy and it will be used by the Mitigating Circumstances Committee when considering your case.

5. **How long do I have after an event to submit a Mitigating Circumstance application?**

The form and supporting evidence must be submitted as soon as possible (normally within five working days for on-campus students, unless the Head of School or nominee accepts a later submission) after the events under consideration occur and, if relating to examinations, within five working days of the end of the examination diet.

6. **Is notifying my mentor or course leader of a mitigating circumstance enough to constitute an official mitigating circumstances process?**

No. It is an important first step in notifying the School of an issue which will likely affect your ability to perform to your academic best. Students must submit a mitigating circumstances form, with supporting evidence, to your Head of School within five working days of the event occurring.

7. **What if I don’t have evidence to substantiate my case?**

It is important that you provide the Mitigating Circumstances Committee with supporting evidence. You should note that the School cannot normally respond to your circumstances if they remain unaware of relevant information. It is also important to submit all supporting evidence with your initial application. This is because information which is withheld from the Mitigating Circumstances Committee or Exam Board will not normally be admissible during any subsequent appeal against the Committee or Board’s original decision.

On very rare occasions, the Mitigating Circumstances Committee may accept your case without supporting evidence. Student Support and Accommodation and the Student Union Advice Hub will be able to assist you fully if you think this may apply to you.
8. How is my case considered?

A Mitigating Circumstances Committee is set up within the School to consider your claim and supporting evidence. The Committee will take into account the following factors when considering an application:

- Seriousness of circumstances;
- Evidence presented;
- Amount of work affected by the circumstances;
- Any results achieved under the circumstances which are inconsistent with unaffected periods of study.

Upon submission of your mitigating circumstances you will receive an email from your School outlining the process.

9. What can I do if I am not satisfied with the outcome?

If you are dissatisfied with the decision of the Examiners, you are entitled to appeal under the terms of Regulation 36: Student Appeals (see [http://www.hw.ac.uk/ordinances/regulations.pdf](http://www.hw.ac.uk/ordinances/regulations.pdf)). It is important to note that appeals shall not normally be considered if mitigating circumstances, e.g. significant illness, could have been brought to the attention of the Mitigating Circumstances Committee/Exam Board prior to a disputed decision being taken. The University's Guidelines on Student Academic Appeal Procedures provide further guidance: [http://www.hw.ac.uk/students/studies/complaints/student-appeals.htm](http://www.hw.ac.uk/students/studies/complaints/student-appeals.htm).