

Shockout Arts

Regulations & Procedures for the Submission and Consideration of Special Circumstances

2025–2026

1. Policy Statement

Shockout Arts, in partnership with the University of Greater Manchester, recognises that students may occasionally experience **serious, unforeseeable circumstances** that prevent them from attending, completing, or performing adequately in assessments. The institution is committed to managing such cases **fairly, transparently, and sympathetically**, while maintaining academic standards.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide a clear process for submitting and evaluating Special Circumstances
- Ensure equitable consideration across all programmes
- Support students whose assessment performance has been seriously affected by events beyond their control
- Special Circumstances are **not** a substitute for good study planning or time management.

2. Definition of Special Circumstances

Special Circumstances refers to **unforeseen, exceptional, and serious** events that:

- Occur **close in time** to an assessment or deadline
- Prevent attendance or submission
- Significantly impair performance

- Are **outside the student's control**

Examples may include:

- Sudden, severe illness (with medical evidence)
- Acute mental health crisis
- Serious accident or injury
- Bereavement of a close family member
- Victim of crime
- Significant personal emergencies
- The following **are not normally accepted**:
- Minor illness
- Work commitments
- Holidays or travel issues
- Computer failure or lost work
- Poor time management
- Misreading deadlines or timetables
- Known disruptions for which planning could have been made
- Longstanding conditions without evidence of a sudden flare-up

3. Longstanding or Managed Conditions

Chronic or long-term conditions - physical or mental - **do not normally** constitute Special Circumstances because:

They can be anticipated and managed students have opportunities to register with the University's Disability Service. Reasonable adjustments can be put in place in advance. However, a **documented temporary deterioration or flare-up** of a long-term condition *may* be accepted if it:

- Is sudden
- Is clinically verified
- Directly affects assessment performance

4. Student Responsibilities

Students must:

- Manage their learning and assessment workload throughout the semester
- Plan ahead for deadlines and examinations
- Recognise that everyday challenges are not normally accepted
- Submit Special Circumstances **on time**, with supporting evidence
- Avoid knowingly submitting false, misleading, or fraudulent claims (this is a disciplinary offence)
- Failure to follow the procedures or deadlines may result in claims not being considered.

5. Evidence Requirements

Students must provide **independent, verifiable documentation** that directly supports the circumstances claimed.

5.1 Medical Evidence Requirements

Medical documentation must:

- Relate to the **specific dates** of the illness
- Be issued on official, headed paper, signed by a practitioner
- Provide a **clear diagnosis** or professional opinion
- Be obtained close to the time of illness
- Not acceptable:
 - Appointment cards
 - Self-reported accounts without professional verification
 - Certificates produced long after the event without clinical basis
 - Doctors may charge fees, and may not provide certificates for short illnesses or after recovery.

5.2 Personal or Confidential Circumstances

Students may request for sensitive evidence to be reviewed only by the **Chair of the Special Circumstances Panel**.

However:

The Chair and External Examiners may still need to be informed (in confidence) of the general nature of the circumstances to support academic decision-making.

6. How to Submit Special Circumstances

All claims must be submitted using the official **Special Circumstances Envelope** or online system (where provided).

Steps to Submit

- Obtain a Special Circumstances envelope from the Student Centre or Local Administrator.
- Complete all sections **fully and clearly**, including assessments affected.
- Write a signed and dated personal statement outlining the circumstances.
- Attach all supporting **documentary evidence**.
- Submit the completed envelope:
- Preferably **as soon as possible**, and **No later than the published deadline** in the University Calendar.
- Incomplete or late claims may not be considered unless a valid reason is accepted.

Additional Notes

- Each submission is considered once only.
- If new circumstances arise later, a **new claim** must be submitted.
- Extensions for minor issues should follow the **Extension Request Procedure**, not Special Circumstances.

7. Acceptable Format of Claims

- Special Circumstances Panels only consider:
- Written claims from students
- Full, original evidence submitted with the claim
- Or, in rare cases, claims submitted **in writing by a third party** when the student is incapable.
- Oral evidence, anecdotal accounts, or tutor statements **cannot** be accepted.

8. Special Circumstances Panels

Role

Panels are responsible for:

- Reviewing claims and evidence
- Assessing the severity, timing, and impact
- Determining whether the circumstances are accepted
- Reporting outcomes to Assessment Boards

Operation

- Panels meet regularly
- Only decisions are recorded—not detailed discussions
- Panels only consider assessments listed on the envelope

9. Criteria for Decision-Making

Panels will consider:

- Timing of circumstances in relation to the assessment
- Severity and impact
- Quality and relevance of evidence
- Panels will **not normally** accept:
- Circumstances students are expected to manage
- Claims without evidence
- Claims not submitted via the correct procedure
- Circumstances that occurred too long ago without valid reasoning

10. Outcomes

If Special Circumstances are **accepted**:

10.1 Where the student has failed the assessment

Assessment Boards will normally permit:

A **retake without penalty** (i.e., treated as a first attempt)

10.2 Where the student has passed

Assessment and Awards Boards may use academic judgment to:

- Consider the effect of circumstances on performance
- Adjust progression decisions
- Influence classification decisions where appropriate
- The final decision always lies with the relevant Assessment Board.

11. New Special Circumstances Procedure 2025–2026

To ensure clarity, fairness and consistency, the updated procedure includes:

a) Designated Special Circumstances Leads

Shockout Arts will appoint **named administrative and academic leads** responsible for:

- Advising students on the process
- Ensuring forms and evidence are complete
- Liaising with Panels and Assessment Boards
- Supporting communication of outcomes

b) Digital Submission Option (where available)

Students may submit electronically via the official secure platform, following the same evidence requirements.

c) Early Notification Requirement

Students are encouraged to notify Shockout Arts **as soon as difficulties arise**, rather than waiting until deadlines.

d) Revised Deadlines

Clear institutional deadlines will be published annually and adhered to strictly.

e) Enhanced Confidentiality Measures

Sensitive claims may be sealed and reviewed by the Panel Chair only.

f) Standardised Evidence Checklist

- All submissions must include:
- Student details
- Module/assessment details
- Dates of impact
- Statement of circumstances
- Independent evidence
- Signature and date

g) Student Support Signposting

Students submitting Special Circumstances will also be signposted to:

- Mental Health & Wellbeing Leads
- Academic Support
- Extenuating Circumstances advisors
- Disability Services (if long-term adjustments are needed)

This ensures timely, wrap-around support.

12. Academic Integrity and False Claims

Submitting false, misleading or fraudulent claims is an offence under:

The Student Disciplinary Procedures

The Academic Misconduct Regulations

Penalties may include disciplinary action, failure of the assessment, or expulsion in severe cases.

13. Review and Governance

- This policy will be reviewed every **two years**, or sooner if needed due to:

- Regulatory changes (including OfS conditions)
- Sector best practice
- University of Greater Manchester updates
- Internal quality assurance findings



Student Submission Form for Special Circumstances relating to mitigation for unforeseen circumstances affecting performance in assessment.

Please submit an electronic copy of this form, a covering note and any scanned evidence to Mit-Circs@greatermanchester.ac.uk using your University of Bolton email address.

FAMILY NAME(S):	
GIVEN NAME(S):	
STUDENT NUMBER:	
PROGRAMME OF STUDY:	
IS MODULE ON BLOCK DELIVERY?	Y/N
ARE YOU AN APPRENTICE?	Y/N
NAME OF PERSONAL TUTOR	
NAME OF PARTNER INSTITUTION	

(if applicable)	
DATE OF APPLICATION	

Assessments to which the Mitigating Circumstances relate: *All sections must be completed prior to submission.*

Module Name	Module code	Assessment Name	Assessment Deadline Date

List of Supporting Evidence Submitted *Please list what you have included to support your mitigation request*

Evidence of circumstances and assessment deadline(s) is required: Please read the guidance on the next page carefully.

Circumstances and documentary evidence will remain confidential and will be discussed at the Mitigating Circumstances Panels only.

In some circumstances, Panels may, after considering a request for mitigation, wish to refer a student to the Disability Service. If you **do not wish** any information regarding additional needs to be shared with the Disability Service, please tick this box.

Please tick this box if you wish the circumstances to be viewed by the **Chair of the Mitigating Circumstances Panel only**.

Mitigating Circumstances Guidance for Students

Please refer also to the REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES FOR THE SUBMISSION AND CONSIDERATION OF MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES on the Student Information – Policy Zone webpage: [Mitigating Circumstances Regulations and Procedures 2025-26](#)

What are Special Circumstances?

Mitigating Circumstances refer to unforeseen, severe and exceptional personal difficulties which adversely affect academic performance.

This means circumstances such as sudden, severe illness (confirmed by medical certificate) or other unforeseen event, close in time to assessment, preventing attendance at an examination or other time constrained assessment, or adversely affecting performance at such, or preventing work from being submitted by the final deadline set (including any granted extensions).

How do I inform an Assessment Board that I have Special Circumstances?

Requests for Special Circumstances to be taken into consideration by an Assessment Board should be made through the submission of:

- 1) A **Student Submission Form for Special Circumstances**
- 2) A **covering note** in which you summarise your situation
- 3) **Documentary evidence*** of your circumstances
- 4) **Evidence of the deadline/s of assessments**** affected by the circumstances.

***Examples of documentary evidence** of Special Circumstances include scans of official letters, e.g. from a medical professional, a legal professional, your employer; medical or death certificates, test result evidence and official reports.

Letters of support from your Personal Tutor, Programme Leader, or a Student Liaison Officer, or equivalent if based at a partner institution, will also be taken into consideration.

****Evidence of your assessment deadline/s** include assessment briefs, module guides, Moodle screenshots, your examination timetable or an email/s from your Module Tutor/s.

You need to submit an electronic copy of your completed Mitigating Circumstances form, a covering note and any scanned evidence to Mit-Circs@greatermanchester.ac.uk using your University of Greater Manchester email address.

Help with submissions for Special Circumstances is available from your Personal Tutor and/or Programme Leader, as well as the Student Liaison Officers (slo@greatermanchester.ac.uk), Student Advisors in the Student Centre and the Students' Union (info@boltonsu.com) based at University.

What happens next?

Once you have submitted your request, the Mitigating Circumstances form together with your covering note and any evidence, will be considered by a **Mitigating Circumstances Decision Panel**. This panel, comprising academic staff from across the University, will come to one of three decisions: Mitigating Circumstances accepted, further evidence required, Mitigating Circumstances not accepted. If your Mitigating Circumstances request is not accepted, then a reason will be given. You will be notified of the decision made by the panel by the Academic Office.

Any **accepted** Mitigating Circumstances requests will be communicated to the Assessment Board which considers your results. Your difficulties will be taken into consideration when deciding the outcome of your results and you should not be penalised for adverse performance in any relevant assessments.