

Mitigation Policy

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 As a student, time management is an essential part of your studies, and you are responsible for planning your work effectively so that you can meet assessment deadlines. Occasionally, minor illnesses or difficult circumstances occur, but these are part of normal life, and you should still be able to continue with your studies.
- 1.2 The University recognises that, exceptionally, circumstances might arise which disrupt your studies and affect your academic performance. These include periods of prolonged illness or other events which impact on your ability to engage fully with the course. If these are particularly serious or long-lasting, you may be required to take a period away from the course, known as intermission; this is covered by a separate policy and is designed to enable you to rejoin the course when you are able to participate fully. However, on some occasions the disruption is more limited, and you may only require an adjustment to your assessment schedule to enable you to continue on the course. These types of disruption are known as “mitigating circumstances”, and the University will take appropriate action to minimise the adverse impact on your studies. We call this mitigation.
- 1.3 The principles governing the mitigation process are that it should be:
- **Clear** – the process should be easily understood by all staff and students.
 - **Timely** – any mitigation claim should be dealt with at the relevant assessment point.
 - **Fair** – by dealing with claims under the same central system, decisions will be made by senior staff who are not directly concerned with you, and who are following guidance laid down in the mitigation policy.
 - **Confidential** – only staff who are directly involved in the process will have knowledge of any claim.

If you choose not to notify the University of mitigating circumstances at the point at which they affect assessment, it is highly unlikely that any retrospective allowance will be made through the appeal process.

- 1.4 It is important to be aware that in considering your mitigating circumstances, the University cannot make an academic judgement on the extent to which your

performance in assessment has been affected. For this reason, if mitigation is agreed, you will usually be offered an extension to the assessment deadline (so that you are still able to complete your work, and any loss of time is mitigated). A successful mitigation claim will not change any of your assessment marks.

- 1.5 You are expected to seek support when you need it. If you feel that you are disadvantaged as a result of your disability or an ongoing health condition, you should speak to your course team to see if reasonable adjustments can be made to learning, teaching or assessment methods. You should contact Student Services for further discussion regarding support (email disabilityandneurodiversity@aub.ac.uk). Circumstances that applied before you enrolled on the course would not be considered for mitigation. If, however, there is a sudden change in your condition, treatment or circumstances that is affecting your ability to undertake assessment, you could be eligible, and you should speak to your Course Leader in the first instance.
- 1.6 Please note that you are expected to back up any digital work. If you experience computer failure, this will only be considered for mitigation if it is evident that you have taken appropriate steps to protect your work and avoid computer problems.

2.0 APPLYING FOR MITIGATION

- 2.1 You are seeking mitigation for yourself and whilst staff will provide help and support, it is ultimately your responsibility to make a mitigation claim.
- 2.2 To make a mitigation claim, you must use the eVision portal **prior to** the unit assessment deadline. You should also supply appropriate supporting evidence. Evidence provided to support your claim should be in the following formats: Word, PDF or jpeg.
- 2.3 The mitigation team will always try to address claims as soon as possible, but you should allow for up to one week for your claim to be processed. The team has to work methodically and will **not meet emergency requests for quick approval**. If you submit your request close to the unit deadline, you are unlikely to receive the decision until after the original unit deadline.

3.0 Requests for mitigation extensions of one-week only

- 3.1 An individual Course Leader, Level or Unit Leader can grant an extension of up to one week, so long as they are satisfied that your circumstances warrant this. Evidence will normally be required to support your case, but we accept that it might not always be possible to provide this for a one-week extension request. We typically expect students to speak to a relevant member of the course team prior to making a submission, but again, we accept that this is not always possible.
- 3.2 You should apply using the one-week mitigation option on eVision; you will need to provide your reasons for needing additional time and, where available, to upload evidence.
- 3.3 If a submission deadline occurs in the last week of term, an extension of one calendar week will still be applied, with the new deadline occurring in the first week of the holiday period.

3.4 The course team is only permitted to approve two one-week extensions for any student per academic year. If you are seeking a longer extension, or if you wish to request a third one-week extension, you will need to make a mitigation claim.

4.0 Requests for mitigation extensions of more than one week

4.1 As with a one-week extension request, you must make this claim prior to the assessment deadline, and you should apply through the mitigation system on eVision. You will need to provide your reasons for needing additional time and to upload supporting evidence. Evidence should only be uploaded using the following formats: Word, PDF or jpeg.

4.2 You will have the option of referring your claim for comment by Student Services (for example, if you have had appointments with the Counselling, Disability or Wellbeing teams and they have agreed to support your claim). You should only do this if you have sought prior support from those services and they have agreed to support you, as otherwise it will simply slow down consideration of your claim.

4.3 You are encouraged to speak to your Course Leader prior to making a claim, as they will be asked for their observations, however this is not a formal requirement. The Course Leader may sometimes be able to suggest possible solutions, which you could also reference in your claim. It is rare for claims to be upheld which do not have the support of the Course Leader.

4.4 Any extension should match approximately the number of days lost due to illness or other reasons, as indicated by the evidence provided. You will be invited to propose a new hand-in date and describe the rationale for the requested date. It is important to remember that this is a request, and there is no guarantee that this date will be agreed.

4.5 If the extension would take you beyond the end of a term, the University would expect the new deadline to fall within the vacation period. In principle, the mitigation team calculates consecutive weeks of study (disregarding any times when the University is closed).

4.6 When a claim is received requesting an extension of more than three weeks, this will be considered by the University Secretary on behalf of the Mitigation Board to ensure consistency of treatment for all students.

4.7 If you are seeking an extension which would take you beyond the deadline for consideration by the next Examination Board, the implications of this will be outlined to you first so that you can decide how you wish to proceed (see paragraph 6.3). If you decide to proceed with a deadline which will postpone consideration by the Examination Board, the details will be confirmed in any message of approval.

5.0 Evidence for a mitigation claim

5.1 Evidence is needed to support any claim and will be available for your Course Leader to view, unless you request this not to be the case. Medical evidence must be dated and confirm a medical condition that is current. A doctor's note that indicates you were seen after the illness occurred, and does not include a professional diagnosis, will not be accepted as evidence. A report from a

professionally qualified counsellor or the University's Counselling / Disability / Wellbeing Service will normally be required to support a claim of personal crisis.

Using evidence from a third party and data protection

- 5.2 It may be that it is the illness or crisis of a close relative that is impacting upon your ability to meet a unit deadline. If this is the case, it is important to show how the situation has affected **you**. If you do need to provide evidence giving personal details about a third person, you should ensure that you are using their information in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). This means that you must ask permission from the person, explain to them how their information will be used (see Section 7.0 below).

6.0 Decisions under the mitigation process

- 6.1 When evaluating a mitigation claim, the University is seeking to ensure fairness in assessment for both you, and all other students. It will therefore consider the circumstances you describe, including their timing and severity, and the way in which these circumstances are likely to have impacted on your studies. It will also consider how an extension to the assessment deadline might impact on the remainder of your studies for the academic year. A decision will be made taking account of the above.
- 6.2 To ensure parity of treatment for all students, decisions will always be made in the light of past practice with reference to similar claims.
- 6.3 There may be occasions where a student is granted an extension which allows for submission of work beyond the normal end of the academic year. For final year students, this means that you will not complete the full credit required to complete the course and achieve your award before graduation. In line with the University Regulations, any student who has outstanding units which have been deferred for mitigation will be considered and will be awarded the highest award available based on the credits already achieved (in most cases this will be a BA without Honours, but it could also be a Diploma of Higher Education). This will enable you to attend graduation. On successful completion of the outstanding units, this will be upgraded to an Honours degree.
- 6.4 For students in all other years, the outcomes of deferred assessment will be considered at the next available Examination Board. Failure to successfully complete all outstanding assessments may affect your ability to progress to the next year of study.
- 6.5 The University has a duty of care for its students; the decision taken on a mitigation claim will ensure that a realistic timeframe is agreed which enables you to complete outstanding assessment requirements without undue pressure. Where there is clear evidence of mitigating circumstances that have been affecting you over a lengthy period, this may mean that you are recommended to intermit and complete studies in the following academic year (see paragraph 1.2).
- 6.6 You will be notified of the decision about any claim, and this decision will be copied to the Course Leader and Student Records (the Wiseflow online assessment team).

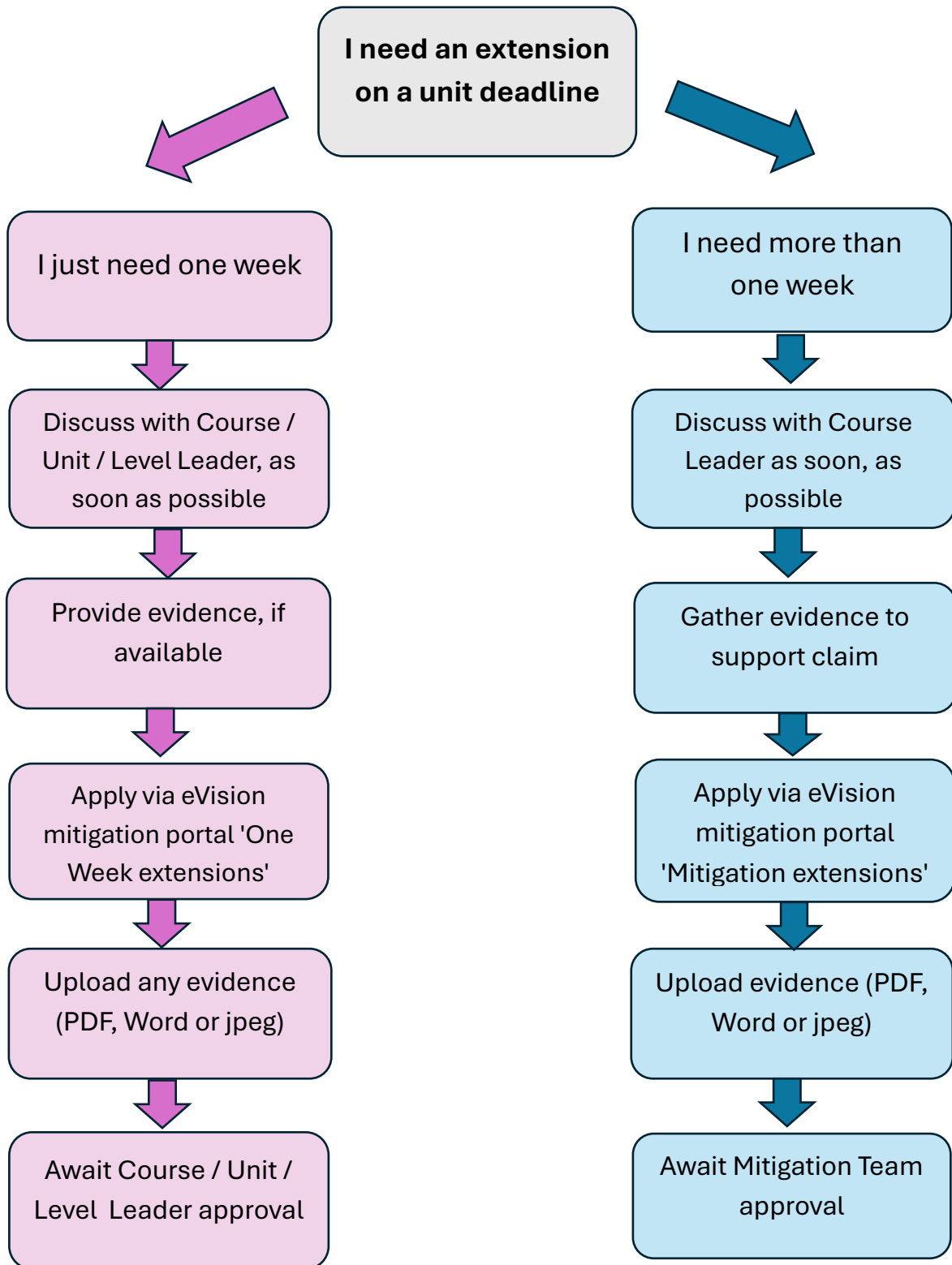
7.0 Accessing and maintaining records in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and monitoring the process.

- 7.1 The documentation and records associated with a mitigation claim will only be accessed by staff who are directly involved with the processing of the claim – see below:
- 7.2 A log of eVision claims and decisions will be maintained for oversight of the process. Claims will only be seen by the Course Leader (or nominee), members of the Mitigation Team deciding on the claim, and relevant Professional Service staff directly involved in the processing.
- 7.3 Copies of all the documentation will be retained within controlled access on the Registry server for two years, after which it will be destroyed.
- 7.4 The operation of the process will be reviewed by the Mitigation Board on an annual basis. This review will include analysis of claims by ethnicity, gender and disability to ensure that the process meets equality and inclusivity requirements. This will be summary information which does not identify any individual student.

8.0 Contesting a decision made by the Mitigation Board

- 8.1 In order to ensure consistency, there is no opportunity to contest a decision made by the Mitigation Board. If a mitigation decision forms part of an appeal against an assessment outcome, you should follow the University's appeal policy.

All members of the University's community including staff, students, visitors and contractors have a responsibility to treat others fairly and respectfully regardless of the characteristics which may define their identity. These include the legally protected characteristics which are: Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and Civil partnership, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion or belief (including lack of belief), Sex and Sexual orientation. The University has committed to provide a working and learning environment founded on dignity, respect and equity where discrimination of any kind is treated with the utmost seriousness.



- NB if you want to apply for a one-week extension or mitigation, you must do so **prior** to the assessment deadline. You will need to allow for **up to one week** for any mitigation application to be processed.