

Semester 1 Examinations and Mitigating Circumstances in the Faculty of Science and Engineering

Recent conversations with your Student Representatives have highlighted that you would appreciate greater clarity on how on-campus examinations will be delivered and how the Mitigating Circumstances procedures will be applied should you miss an examination. This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) provides answers to your questions.

This FAQ should be read alongside the guidance in the [University Coronavirus Information webpages](#).

Summary

- Face coverings must be worn unless you have an approved exemption on health or disability grounds.
- Students must take a Lateral Flow Test (LFT) each day they will be on campus for an examination.
- If you test positive for COVID-19 or have symptoms, you must not attend the on-campus examinations, and instead you should submit a Mitigating Circumstances request to your department.

Delivery of on-campus examinations

Will I have to wear a face covering in examinations?

Yes. You must wear a face covering. The wearing of face coverings in all teaching and learning settings, including examinations, is now mandatory, and it is one of the most important control measures in minimising the transmission of COVID-19.

Some students may be exempt from wearing face coverings on health or disability grounds. You should request an exemption from wearing a face covering by self-referral to the Occupational Health Service or by asking your Academic Adviser to refer you. The Occupational Health Service can be contacted by email: millocchealth@manchester.ac.uk or by telephone: 0161 2752858 (open 9am to 4pm, Monday to Friday). Please make a referral at least 2 days prior to your first on-campus examination.

If you are not wearing a face covering in an on-campus examination, then you may be challenged and asked to produce the email from the Occupational Health Service that confirms your exemption. You should have this email readily accessible on a mobile device when you are waiting to enter the examination room. Students who are not able to provide this confirmatory email when challenged will be prevented from sitting the examination.

Is there a risk assessment for on-campus examinations?

Yes. This [risk assessment](#) has been created by the Central Examinations Team who operate the on-campus examinations and has been approved by the Campus Management Group (CMG). The risk assessment describes all the measures that will be put in place to make the delivery of on-campus examinations safe.

The CMG regularly reviews guidance from the UK government (Department for Education) and public health experts and advises the University on the safe operation of the campus during the pandemic. CMG will review the risk assessment on 13 January 2022 and in each week of the January examination period.

Am I required to take Lateral Flow Tests (LFTs) during the examination period?

Yes. You must take a Lateral Flow Test within the 24-hour period before the start time of each on-campus examination and record the results of your tests on the [NHS website](#). When using this website, you must select the option to have the recording of the result confirmed to you by email and text message as you may be asked to produce the confirmatory email or text message on your way into an examination room or following an examination. Lateral Flow Tests are available from [catering outlets on campus](#).

What should I do if I have COVID-19 symptoms?

If you have any [symptoms](#) of COVID-19 then you should immediately self-isolate, follow the latest [NHS guidance for self-isolation](#) and notify the University using the [online form](#). You should also notify your [School Support Team](#) that you are self-isolating and submit a request for Mitigating Circumstances at the earliest opportunity (see FAQ questions below).

Failure to self-isolate if instructed to do so by NHS Test and Trace may be a criminal offence. Attending on-campus activities (including examinations) when you have COVID-19 symptoms or should be self-isolating following a positive Lateral Flow Test or a PCR test will result in disciplinary

action as this involves the wilful disregard of university guidance on health and safety. If proven, the penalty imposed by such disciplinary action is likely to be severe.

What should I do if I believe that I have found an error in an examination question?

The risk assessment for invigilated on-campus examinations does not permit discussions between students and invigilators during the examination. So, if you believe that you have found an error in an examination then you should clearly note this on the inside front cover of the answer booklet and continue with the examination paper. Following the examination, you should notify the team managing your programme. Your programme team will let you know how to notify them.

What happens if I arrive late for an on-campus examination?

If you arrive late for an on-campus examination then, depending on how late you are, you may still be permitted to enter the examination room and sit the paper. If you are admitted, you will not be allowed any additional time.

If you are not permitted to enter the examination room then you will be directed to a Student Services Hub to register the fact that you are on-campus but have arrived too late to start the examination. Our staff in the Hub are there to support you and will discuss the circumstances that led to you being late and, if appropriate, suggest that you submit a Mitigating Circumstances request.

Student Hub locations:

- Barnes Wallis Building, Ground Floor
- MECD Engineering Building A, Ground Floor

Mitigating Circumstances

How do mitigating circumstances apply to missed on-campus examinations?

You are required to attend all the invigilated, on-campus examinations shown in your examination timetable. Where you have a valid reason for not being able to attend an examination, the [Mitigating Circumstances procedures](#) enable you to notify the team that manages your programme of your circumstances and request that they act to mitigate for the impact of the absence.

Is evidence required when applying for Mitigating Circumstances?

Yes. A request for Mitigating Circumstances for a missed examination must be accompanied by evidence. In the case of a COVID-19 infection this would normally be a positive Lateral Flow Test or PCR test result. The best way to evidence this by recording the results of your tests on the [NHS website](#) and requesting email confirmation.

Examples of evidence for non-COVID-19 health reasons for a missed examination can be found on the [Student Support webpages](#).

Students who miss examinations due to travel restrictions should provide evidence of these restrictions. This may include government notification of local lockdowns or travel restrictions and cancelation of flights at short notice.

Can I request Mitigating Circumstances if I miss an examination as am self-isolating due to having COVID-19 symptoms but have yet to take a PCR test?

Yes – you are following UK government guidance and self-isolating. You can evidence your circumstances by submitting the NHS response to your request for a PCR test.

If your subsequent PCR test is negative, then your request for Mitigating Circumstances remains valid because you were following UK government guidance.

How do I submit a request for Mitigating Circumstances?

Requests for Mitigating Circumstances can only be submitted using the [online form](#).

When should I submit a request for Mitigating Circumstances?

You should submit your request for Mitigating Circumstances as soon as possible, and then update the request with the supporting evidence as soon as you have it. Mitigating Circumstances requests (and the accompanying evidence) relating to the Semester 1 (January) Examination Period must be submitted before 31 January 2022.

What happens if I miss an examination and don't submit a Mitigating Circumstances request?

If you do not attend an examination and do not either submit a Mitigating Circumstances request, then you will receive a mark of zero for that examination. You should arrange to speak with your programme team as soon as possible.

What is the likely outcome of requesting Mitigating Circumstances for a missed examination?

Mitigating Circumstances applications are considered confidentially by a panel which makes recommendations to the Examination Board for your programme. The panel's consideration is based on the University's [Mitigating Circumstances policy](#).

It is not possible to make generic statements concerning the recommendations of Mitigating Circumstances panels as each case can be unique to the individual student. Where a panel accepts, on the basis of the evidence provided, that a student has a valid reason for having missed an examination, then the most likely recommendation for Foundation Year, UG Year 1, UG Year 2 or PGT students is that they will be required to undertake a deferred assessment – an opportunity to be assessed with no cap on the mark that you can achieve (also known as a 'resit as a first attempt').

This recommendation allows you to demonstrate your capability in the subject and provides the Examination Board with the most robust assessment of your performance when making progression or degree award decisions. Typically, deferred assessments will take place in the August Resit Examination Period.

For UG Year 3 and Year 4 students, departmental Mitigating Circumstances panels will need to consider carefully how to best mitigate for a missed Semester 1 examination as there are typically many issues and constraints, including limits on the number of credits that can be excluded from the calculation of year marks, professional body accreditation requirements, and the impact of referred or deferred assessments on graduation. Where necessary, Departmental Examination Boards may allow programmes to use alternative forms of assessment to enable students to graduate within the academic year.

As stated in the [2021/22 Assessment Commitment](#), the University will not charge any resit fees in 2021/22 and this applies to all deferred assessments.

We fully understand that graduating students may be anxious that deferred assessments in the August Resit Examination Period will result in a delay to graduation. The departments will naturally aim to minimise the number of such deferred assessments and will support students in this position with letters to employers and educational institutions.

Do Mitigating Circumstances Panels decide how students will be assessed if they have missed an examination?

No. In the case of a missed examination, the Mitigating Circumstances panel will consider the request from the student, including the evidence presented, to decide if there was a valid reason for the absence. If it is agreed that there was a valid reason, then one possible recommendation from the panel is a deferred assessment.

The type of deferred assessment is an academic decision taken by the Unit Leader in consultation with the Discipline Head of Education.

We wish you every success in the forthcoming examinations.

Peter Green, Vice Dean for Teaching, Learning and Students
Andrew Horn, Head of Education, School of Natural Sciences
Tim Jones, Head of Education, School of Engineering

On behalf of the Teaching College Leadership Team, Faculty of Science and Engineering.

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