

MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES – CERTIFICATION POLICY

Heriot-Watt University operates a Mitigating Circumstances Policy, which is overseen by the University's Student Learning Experience Committee. The policy may be accessed on the University website. The policy allows students to plead a variety of mitigating circumstances to be taken into account by School Examination Boards, in support of an appeal procedure in regard to academic assessments.

The University Health Service is often approached by students for medical evidence to be submitted in support of mitigating circumstances appeals. In respect of providing such evidence the following considerations will operate:

1. Medical evidence will be provided for substantive causes, and not for trivia. For instance: The student will have required prescription medication or treatment; or the student attended other specialists eg hospital consultant / counsellors; or required hospital treatment / admission.
2. In general certification for retrospective events which are non-verifiable will **not** be provided. If there is no prior documentary evidence (eg previous practice consultations, admissions to hospital, clinic appointments) then documentation should not be provided.
3. In general the UHS would prefer requests for evidence at face-to-face consultations. However in exceptional circumstances, provided point 1 above is satisfied, the doctor may provide certification without an appointment.
4. Where there is no objective evidence in history or clinical examination, we will only be able to provide a statement to such effect.
5. A standard 'request for medical evidence' form will suffice for support of mitigating circumstances in most cases. In certain circumstances the Doctor may exercise discretion to provide a more detailed letter for the School Examination Board.
6. Certification will be addressed "To Whom It May Concern" and provided to the student to attach to the Mitigating Circumstances appeal.
7. The University Health Service will not charge for sickness certification (students providing medical evidence from other Practices may be charged for such certification).
8. The UHS will provide certification in respect of students registered as patients. Registration specifically undertaken for the purpose of providing evidence will **not** be acceptable.

Dr R G Ewing

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