

## Modern language courses

### Mitigating Circumstances and Notification of Withdrawal.

#### ➤ Withdrawal in week 1

No fee due when the [withdrawal form](#) is completed by the end of week 1.

#### ➤ Withdrawal in weeks 2 to 20 or attendance below 70% per term

£ 100 fee due. Please fill in a [Mitigating Circumstances Form](#) if you wish your case to be reviewed.

### About this Guidance

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the University's [Mitigating Circumstances: Guidance for Students](#). It provides information to support you if you experience difficulties while enrolled on a modern Language course.

In order to ensure fair access to these popular courses, you are asked to think carefully before applying for a place on a language course. Once a place has been offered and accepted, you are expected to attend regularly (at least 70% of classes) and to notify your tutor as soon as possible if you are unable to attend, so that we can register and validate your absence. As stated on the course application form, you may be charged a withdrawal fee if you fail to attend or if your attendance is poor. This fee can be waived if you submit satisfactory evidence to excuse your absence.

### Overview

A mitigating circumstance is defined by the University as:

“[A] serious, significant and unforeseen event and its consequences have significantly impaired the academic performance of a student...” (SR4.26)

The following principles apply when claims for mitigating circumstances are reviewed:

- You are responsible for notifying your tutor that you wish to withdraw from the course and submit a claim for mitigating circumstances.
- You must do this by submitting a Mitigating Circumstances Form online and uploading any supporting evidence.

- Your notification of withdrawal and claim for mitigating circumstances must be submitted as soon as possible, i.e. as soon as you know you wish to withdraw, and before the end of the Programme
- All information contained within a claim for mitigating circumstances will be treated as strictly confidential.

All cases will be considered formally and carefully, but not all will be accepted. Some circumstances are clearly beyond your control, but others are not. For example, the normal pressures and challenges of student life are unlikely to be accepted as mitigating circumstances and a legitimate reason for withdrawal from a course. Likewise, if you could have *reasonably foreseen* the circumstances, they are unlikely to be accepted.

### **Examples of Mitigating Circumstances**

The following list is not exhaustive, but rather provides an indication of the mitigating circumstances which might be accepted in cases of withdrawal from Modern Languages courses.

Examples of circumstances which would **normally be accepted** (with evidence):

- Bereavement involving a relative or a friend to whom you were close.
- Serious illness or accident resulting in your hospitalisation, or other medical emergency.
- Serious infectious disease.
- Timetable change leading to a timetable clash.
- Starting a placement in the second half of the course (where this was not known beforehand).
- Childbirth, or pregnancy complications leading to your hospitalisation.
- Jury service.

Examples of circumstances which **might be accepted** (with evidence):

- Planned medical operation.
- Planned hospital tests.
- Victim of crime (with Police reference number).
- Significant accident, injury, acute ailment or condition requiring medical or other professional attention.

Examples of circumstances which would **not normally be accepted**:

- Illness in the family (unless it is a dependant).
- Exam nerves.
- Feeling generally anxious, depressed or stressed (where this is not a diagnosis of a mental health condition).
- Clash of course timetable with paid employment.
- Minor accidents or injuries.
- Minor conditions (e.g. cold, cough, throat infection).
- Childcare problems which could have been anticipated.
- Pregnancy.
- Day-to-day domestic problems.
- Time management problems.
- Legal problems.
- Planned absence due to holiday.
- Accommodation and travel changes.
- Ignorance of the Regulations.

### **Supporting Evidence**

You must include supporting evidence when submitting a claim for mitigating circumstances. Without evidence, your claim may not be accepted and you may be required to pay a withdrawal fee.

Examples of acceptable documentary evidence:

- Bereavement – copy of death certificate.
- Legal – letter from police, lawyer, court.
- Medical – letter or medical certificate from hospital, GP or University Health Centre.
- Timetable clash – submission of full degree timetable. □ Placement – letter confirming offer of placement.

Please note: a letter from a doctor or a counsellor simply stating that you have been to see them is not useful supporting evidence. A letter from a medical professional should include: a diagnosis, details of treatment or referral, dates of illness or condition and, ideally, a professional opinion on how your condition will affect your ongoing studies.

Students with disabilities or chronic medical conditions, please see [point 7 of the University's policy on Mitigating Circumstances](#).

## **Further Support and Advice**

Please remember that it is important to make the University aware of issues affecting your studies as soon as possible. If you require any support or advice, you can contact:

- Language Tutor
- Head of modern Languages
- Departmental Senior Tutor
- College Associate Dean (Student Welfare)
- Disability and Dyslexia Service