



Hull University Union Advice Centre

# Academic Issues

How we can help





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# Introducing the **Advice Centre**

The Advice Centre provides a free, confidential and impartial and non-judgemental service for all students at the University of Hull. We are independent of the University and can help you with any issues you face whilst a student here.

Like a Citizens Advice Bureau or a Law Centre, we give practical advice on all kinds of subjects relating to student life.

Whether it's debt and funding issues, academic problems, housing and tenancy queries or consumer and employment issues, we will have a member of staff that can help. We also have a free phone so you can call student finance without having to worry about the cost of the call.

Alongside staff, we also have trained Student Volunteers in the Advice Centre, who help deliver our services. They are given expert training and help thousands of students throughout the year. We are an Advice UK member and subscribe to Citizens Advice and Advisernet. Both organisations provide us with updated information that enables us to give current and accurate information at all times.

**Visit us the Advice Centre on the third floor of University House (Students' Union Building) between 11am-3pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. If you can't make these times please email the team on [huu-advice-centre@hull.ac.uk](mailto:huu-advice-centre@hull.ac.uk) or call them on 01482 466263 to arrange a more convenient time for you.**



# Problems With **Your Course?**

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If you are experiencing difficulties with your course you have a number of options:

- **Your first point of contact is your Personal Supervisor.**

This will be an academic member of staff from your department. Every student should have one, so if you don't, ask for one. Your Personal Supervisor is there to be informed of any problem you are experiencing, give you advice and guidance in your academic process and to point you in the direction of further help, support and advice. Each Faculty is also assigned a 'Senior Tutor'. This is someone from another Faculty who you can approach for independent support if you cannot resolve a matter internally.

- **Students are often unhappy and homesick, especially at the start of their course.**

It is important to remember that you are not the only one and there are services to help. There is a University Counselling Service to help you through this, and the Advice Centre has details of organisations that can help with specific problems.

- **Study skills can often be a problem, especially if you have not come to University straight from school or college.**

The University Skills Team offers support to students on a wide range of areas. Just some of the things they can help with include the transition from school to University, gathering information, presentation of essays, basic grammar, revision, exam stress, maths and IT skills.

- **If a disability or ill health is affecting your study (or any other aspect of University life), then contact Disability Services who can provide support, advice and assistance.**
- **At some point you may well feel that it has all gone wrong. Problems that affect your studies may be taken into account when your work is marked.**

It may also be possible to request extensions to an assessment or absence from examinations. The on-line student handbook gives a full explanation of this process, and it is important to inform your Personal Supervisor in writing of any problems which may disrupt your studies before they do.

- **There are 'Mitigating Circumstances Forms' you can use to give details of your situation to your department.**

These are available from your department or the Advice Centre. You need to fill them in when requesting extensions, absence from exams or that your situation is taken into account when marking your work. We can assist you with the form and advise you about your options.

- **If you fail your course or do not feel you can continue with it.**

We can advise you regarding options that may be available, such as re-sits, repeating part of it, doing another course or intercalating (taking some time out during your course).

- **Some of these options, such as re-sits, are at your department's and the University's discretion; it helps to be able to show good reasons why you have failed.**

Talk to your Personal Supervisor and find out your options. Repeating study may effect your funding, so it is important that you seek advice from the Advice Centre and Student Finance England.



- **If you want to transfer to another course, again talk to your Personal Supervisor.**

You will need permission from your own department and the one you are transferring to (whether at Hull University or elsewhere). Again, your funding may be affected.

- **If you are an International student and are considering a course of action that would extend your stay in this country, for example intercalation or repeat study, then you should seek advice from the Immigration Office as this could have serious implications for your immigration status.**

- **If you are unhappy at the start of your course, you can defer your place until next year, with the University's permission.**

This will mean that you will not be classed as a student until you take up your place.

- **If you want to intercalate, you require your department's approval.**

You will need to read the Intercalation Code of Practice found on the Portal / University of Hull website and complete the Intercalation form SAS-I.

- **If you are unhappy with your course or your treatment you can complain.**

If you are not happy with the support of your Personal Supervisor then you can change to another.

# Intercalation

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## Definition and Process

### **1. Intercalation is suspending or taking a break from your studies.**

Students may request a period of intercalation at any time during their studies, for any reason. Intercalation may be planned, in the case of time off to travel or work, or be in response to illness or personal problems which are affecting the student's ability to study effectively.

### **2. Students should discuss their wish to intercalate with their Programme Director (or equivalent) in advance of making a formal request.**

Personal Supervisors should also be informed at an early stage. Student on 'Joint' or 'With' programmes must discuss the proposed intercalation with the Programme Director (or equivalent) to ensure that both departments are aware of all issues.

### **3. Students thinking of intercalating should always read the Intercalation Code of Practice found on the Portal / University of Hull website.**

### **4. Students must apply in writing, using the appropriate form (SAS-I) available on the 'portal' and attach evidence of the reasons for the request.**

The student then hands this completed documentation to their home academic department. Once approved by the department, the form is then forwarded to Student Administrative Services.





**5. Initial Intercalations which are for a period of up to 12 months need the approval of the Head of Department.**

**6. International students wishing to intercalate must see the University Immigration and Cultural Adviser before submitting their intercalation form to the department.**

The Immigration and Cultural Adviser will sign the form to indicate that the student has been given the appropriate advice as this may cause visa and immigration problems.

**7. Extensions of periods of intercalation, requests for intercalation of more than 12 months, retrospective intercalation and any requests which are otherwise 'unusual' must have the approval of the University Student Progress Committee, using their form (SAS-S) available on the 'portal'.**

Students requesting extensions of intercalation will be expected to provide evidence of the ongoing problems affecting their return to study. This form is not completed by the student.

**8. Students must inform Student Finance England as this may affect student funding.**

# Problems Affecting Your Studies

## **Mitigating Circumstances**

### **What are Mitigating Circumstances?**

'Mitigating Circumstances' refers to personal situations that may affect or have affected your studies and performance. These circumstances vary depending on the individual student, and can include things such as illness, personal issues and bereavement.

If you think you are going to be absent from your course for any period of time, you must check with your Department before your absence.

Problems with study skills are not Mitigating Circumstances. You need to discuss study skills problems with your Personal Supervisor and visit the Skills Team, located on the ground floor of the Brynmor Jones Library.

### **What should I do if my studies have been affected?**

The first thing you should do is notify your Personal Supervisor of your circumstances. All information you give will be treated confidentially and is required so that you will be considered fairly during examinations and assessments.

Remember, if you do not tell your Department about situations affecting your performance, they will not know that you are not performing to the best of your ability. Your Personal Supervisor is there for study support as well as general support throughout your degree. Further guidance on specific issues affecting your performance is available at the Advice Centre.



You should notify your Department as soon as possible and submit the appropriate form(s) mentioned below.

## Guidance on Completing the **'Mitigating Circumstances' Form:**

### Which form should I use?

- SAS-M -This form is to be used to inform the University of circumstances which they feel may have affected their performance in assessments or led to them being absent from an examination. Exceptionally, you may use this form where you have been unable to submit coursework on time and were unable to request an extension in advance.
- SAS-EXT – This form is to be used when requesting a coursework extension in advance of the submission date.
- SAS-GP – This form is to be completed by a doctor or other health professional to certify an illness if the student cannot obtain medical evidence of their problems any other way.
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There is a standard deadline for claiming mitigating circumstances of 7 days after the assessment. All forms are available on the University Portal and from the Student Union Advice Centre.

### **What do I do with the form?**

Once you have completed the form, you need to take it to your Departmental office, along with any evidence (provide photocopies and keep your originals).

It is useful to keep a copy of your written statement/form for future reference.

### **What happens next?**

It must be noted that not all circumstances you consider to be "mitigating" will justify special consideration.

You may not receive a response to your 'Mitigating Circumstances' form. However, there are ways of finding out whether your circumstances have been considered.

When looking at your modules results on portal, if you see 'SSC' written on the right hand-side, this means that your circumstances have been considered.

If you are concerned that your circumstances have not been considered, then the Advice Centre can help further.



# Plagiarism: Undergraduates & Taught Postgraduates

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## What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is the use of another person's idea or a part of their work as your own. It is CRITICAL that you research and understand how to reference your work accurately as:



**Using incorrect referencing could result in an accusation of plagiarism.**

Your departmental handbook contains information on how you should reference. You can also get further information or help with referencing from the Skills Team at the Library.

## Determining Penalties

When deciding on the penalty, the panel take into account the following:

- The nature and severity of the breach.
- The extent of plagiarism in relation to the whole assignment (if applicable).
- The number of breaches.
- The stage of programme at the time of the breach.
- Statements of mitigation or explanation and supporting documented evidence.

## Possible Penalties

A University Warning is issued for all proven breaches.

<b>Min. penalty range</b>	<b>Plagiarism</b> The mark of the module tainted by plagiarism as a whole shall be reduced to the extent considered appropriate in the academic judgement of the Panel. Where plagiarism is extensive and exact, a mark of 0 for the module must be awarded. Other forms of unfair means The award of zero for any module which, in the judgement of the Panel is tainted by the conduct in question.
<b>Min. to max. penalty range</b>	Denial of reassessment of the module tainted. Denial of compensation/condonement. Denial of referral. Termination of the programme of study, mark of 0 awarded for module tainted and student allowed to leave with the qualification and/or credits accrued whilst studying.
<b>Max. penalty range</b>	Termination of the programme of study, without prior issue of any form of warning, no award or other qualification.

## Second Breaches:

(Not including simultaneous second breaches)

The panel assumes a termination of programme unless persuaded otherwise, were a lesser penalty can be imposed.



There are exceptions to these penalties but these are only implemented in extraordinary cases.

### **Explanation of terms:**

**Condonement:** A failed module of 20 credits which is disregarded for final degree classification. This is only available in the final year and is at the discretion of the University.

**Referral:** The permission to re-do the whole module again during the following year. The module must be passed in order to progress. The mark will be assessed as a first attempt and a resit will be permitted if necessary.

**Reassessment as a first attempt:** The mark for the assessment shall not be limited to 40 (for Undergraduates) or 50 (for Postgraduates) even though it is a reassessment.

**Reassessment as a second attempt:** The mark for the assessment will be limited to 40 (for Undergraduates) or 50 (for Postgraduates), as it is a second try at the assessment.

**Simultaneous second breaches:** When a second offence has been found during the identification and investigation of the first offence.

# Unfair Means

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## **What are Unfair Means?**

'Unfair Means' describes any kind of academic misconduct, for example, plagiarism, cheating in an exam, conspiring with another person to produce work, or falsifying results for coursework – all of which the University regards as unacceptable according to the Regulations governing the Use of Unfair Means.

The Regulations governing the Use of Unfair Means is available from the Advice Centre or through the Portal / University of Hull website.

## **What to do if an allegation is made against you.**

If the University thinks that you have breached the Regulations governing the Use of Unfair Means, you will receive a letter from the University specifying exactly what kind of Unfair Means they think you have used.

You have 21 days to respond to this letter. It is in your best interest to respond, as it gives you the opportunity to explain your case. The Advice Centre can check over your response statement for you and offer further advice.

Whether you respond or not, the 'Unfair Means' procedure will continue and a panel hearing will take place. You will be notified of the date of this meeting by post.

The "Adjudicating Panel" will be made up of the Chair, and at least two members of academic staff. The panel will look at the facts of your case objectively and determine the penalty within 3 working days of the panel meeting or often at the meeting.





## **Your Response Letter**

Your response letter gives you the opportunity to explain why you have/have not used Unfair Means. You need to explain fully as those dealing with your case may not know you. All information you give will be treated confidentially and is your chance to explain yourself so that the “Adjudicating Panel” can investigate the case fully.

In your response, you are entitled to do the following:

State whether you admit/deny the allegation.

- Explain why you admit/deny the allegation, providing evidence to support your case if possible/useful.
- If you are admitting to the allegation, you need to explain clearly why you used Unfair Means.

## **What Happens Next?**

After you have submitted your response letter and attended the panel hearing, the “Adjudicating Panel” will discuss your case and a decision will be made. If you are found to have used Unfair Means then a penalty will be decided.

# Academic Appeals

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If you wish to appeal against a recommendation of a Module or Programme Board of Examiners or a Department or Faculty, you must complete an academic appeal form to the Secretary of Student Progress Committee (Student Administrative Services) within 14 days of receiving official notice of the recommendation that you are appealing against. Academic appeals are governed by the University's Academic Appeal Regulations.

Grounds for appeal:

(a) That there existed circumstances affecting the candidate's performance of which the examiners had not been aware when the recommendation or decision was made, and that had the examiners been aware of those circumstances it is reasonable likely that the examiners would not have made the recommendation or would have made a different recommendation or decision.

Please note that failure to produce evidence of such circumstances to the examiners when such evidence was available at the time, and now to use that evidence in support of this appeal will probably result in the appeal being rejected, other than in very exceptional circumstances.

(b) That there were procedural irregularities in the conduct of the assessment process (including administrative error), of such a nature as to cause reasonable doubt as to whether the examiners would have reached the same conclusion had the irregularities not occurred.

(c) That there are reasonable grounds to believe that the recommendation or decision was influenced by prejudice or bias on the part of one or more of the examiners.

Students are advised to keep a copy of all the paperwork submitted. The Senior Tutor investigates the case, therefore the student is advised to contact his/her Senior Tutor to discuss their appeal once the appeal has been submitted. All Senior Tutor's are members of the Student Progress Committee and from a separate department to your own.

The academic appeal form and regulations and details of your Senior Tutor can be found at the Advice Centre.

All the University forms/regulations can be found on the Portal/University of Hull website with referral to the Student Handbook and Quality Handbook.

