



# Southampton Data Science Academy (SDSA) & Chartered Insurance Institute (CII)

Candidate information pack and policies  
Introduction to Data Science & AI for Insurance

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## Essential information

Developed in partnership with the Chartered Insurance Institute (CII), the Introduction to Data Science & AI for Insurance course is delivered by the Southampton Data Science Academy (SDSA). This course is delivered online across a 10-week programme. Candidates will be supported by regular group and periodic individual 1:1 tutorials, delivered online by leading university academics. We strongly advise candidates to plan to attend, participate and revisit (the group tutorials can be accessed after delivery) these opportunities. This course is intended to be challenging and rewarding, with flexible support in place to help guide you when you most need it.

## Course prerequisites

SDSA offers technical (requiring computer programming and statistical skills) and non-technical courses (generally targeted at everyone, although some experience in basic data processing tools such as Excel is strongly advised). **It is a candidate's responsibility to check at the time of registration that they are registering for the appropriate course.**

## Minimum system requirements

These minimum system requirements are commonly achieved with common desktops and laptops.

### For PC:

**Operating System:** Windows 10, Windows 8.1, Windows 8, Windows 7 Service Pack 1, Windows 10 Server, Windows Server 2012 R2, Windows Server 2012, or Windows Server 2008 R2

**Computer /processor:** 1 gigahertz (Ghz) or faster x86- or x64-bit processor with SSE2 instruction set

**Memory (RAM):** 2 GB RAM

**Hard Disk:** 3.0 gigabytes (GB) available

**Display:** Graphics hardware acceleration requires a DirectX10 graphics card and 1280 x 800 resolution

**Browser:** The current or immediately previous version of Internet Explorer; the current version of Microsoft Edge, Safari, Chrome, or Firefox. Get more details.

.NET version: .NET 3.5 required. Some features may require .NET 4.0, 4.5, or 4.6 CLR to also be installed.



**Multi-touch:** A touch-enabled device is required to use any multi-touch functionality. But, all features and functionality are always available by using a keyboard, mouse, or other standard or accessible input device. Note that touch features are optimized for use with Windows 8, Windows 8.1 or Windows 10.

**Additional requirements and considerations:** Some functionality may vary, based on the system configuration. Some features may require additional or advanced hardware or server connectivity.

**For MAC:**

- OS X version 10.5.8 or later
- 1 GB or more of RAM
- 2.5 GB of available hard disk space
- An Intel processor
- A DVD drive or connection to a local area network (if installing over a network), or an internet connection (if downloading from [Uware](#))
- HFS+ hard disk format (also known as Mac OS Extended or HFS Plus)
- 1280 x 800 or higher resolution monitor

## Certification

Candidates need to achieve an overall pass mark of 65% or more, across the total available, to receive a formal SDSA certification, including a digital certificate signed by SDSA Founder, Regius Professor Dame Wendy Hall and the CEO at the CII.

### Certificate of attendance

Candidates who have submitted the assignment and received less than 65% will not be eligible for accreditation or a certificate but can reference they 'attended' the course.

## Canvas Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

All SDSA learning, tutorials and assignments are managed, scheduled and delivered via SDSA's Canvas Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Candidates will have access to the VLE within three business days of the course start date. We highly recommend candidates verify that their basic computer system requirements meet the VLE minimum requirements outlined here: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10721-what-are-the-basic-computer-specifications-for-canvas>



## Enrolment

Course candidates will receive an enrolment email notification from SDSA within three business days of the appropriate course start date. This notification will provide access to Canvas VLE and allow navigation of the course syllabus. Course invitation should be accepted as soon as received.

## Course cancellation

Requests for course cancellations / refunds before candidates receive their enrolment email should be directed to [customer.serv@cii.co.uk](mailto:customer.serv@cii.co.uk). Requests will be taken on a case-by-case basis and may be subject to a cancellation fee. Candidates may choose to cancel course attendance at any time but will not be eligible for a course refund once the course start date has passed.

## Course deferral

Candidates wishing to request deferral to another course or to a different start date must email [customer.serv@cii.co.uk](mailto:customer.serv@cii.co.uk). They should reference DEFERRAL REQUEST in the email subject title, list the course and course start date they wish to defer to, and provide a short summary (no more than 100 words) of the reason for the deferral request. Deferrals are subject to SDSA approval and will consider mitigating circumstances, and course availability.



## Course tutorials

Throughout this course participants have the opportunity to attend group and 1:1 individual tutorials, delivered via web conferences and hosted by SDSA tutors. The individual 1:1 tutorial complements group tutorials and gives the tutor the opportunity to provide in-depth feedback to participants, detailing how marks have been awarded and ways in which future marks may be improved.

SDSA strongly encourages candidates to book (via Canvas VLE) their 1:1 tutorial after the first course assignment. Experience with previous courses has shown timing of this feedback provides both the tutor and the candidate with an opportunity to identify progress in the assessed side of the course, and to maximise their opportunity to pass and gain accreditation.

### Group tutorials and discussion threads

These tutorials will provide an opportunity for candidates to engage with and learn from their course peers, as well as directly interact with course tutors. Group tutorial chat and collaboration threads will also be available to candidates for ongoing reference during the course, if they are unable to attend the 'live' group tutorial.



## Assignments

This course has 1 assignment, worth 80% of the overall grade, with a set of discussion forum contributions making up the remaining 20%. The guidance on appeals and extensions below primarily covers the assignment portion of the assessment but can also be applicable to discussion forum contributions where relevant.

## Assignment extensions

Subject to mitigating circumstances and considered on a case-by-case basis, candidates may request an extension to their assignment. The decision to grant an extension is entirely at the discretion of SDSA's tutor and head tutor, as appropriate.

Candidates requesting an assignment extension must message their tutor via the course messaging system (Canvas VLE "mail" tool). They should reference EXTENSION REQUEST in the subject title and provide a short summary (no more than 100 words) of the reason for the request. In instances where an extension has been agreed, candidates may experience a longer delay in receiving marks (up to seven business days).

Once the final response to the extension request has been communicated to the candidate, the head tutor or wider representatives of SDSA will not enter into any further correspondence regarding the extension. The decision of the head tutor is final and no further appeals are permitted.

## Appealing or challenging assignment marks

The SDSA is committed to providing a fair and transparent learning journey. This procedure is intended to provide a formal means for appealing the outcome of the assignment result. An appeal is distinct from a complaint, which seeks to raise concerns about the quality or delivery of a service received from the SDSA. The policy set out below is designed to ensure that such requests are dealt with in a fair and consistent manner.



The SDSA aims to:

Deal with any requests in a fair and timely manner and keep candidates appropriately informed of the progress of an investigation.

Notify candidates of the outcome reached, and where appropriate, what further action is to be taken.

### Response times from SDSA

Tutors will respond to a candidate request made within the course messaging system (Canvas VLE “mail” tool) in 24 hours. Candidate login requests / support with Canvas should email [sdsa@soton.ac.uk](mailto:sdsa@soton.ac.uk) who have a support time of 18 hours. Miscellaneous candidate email enquiries should also be made to [sdsa@soton.ac.uk](mailto:sdsa@soton.ac.uk).

### Acceptable grounds for appeal

The appeal will ONLY be considered where at least one of the following grounds applies.

Extenuating personal circumstances that affected a candidate’s assignment performance, which they could not reasonably disclose under the mitigating circumstances policy. An explanation for earlier non-disclosure is always required.

It is important to note that appeals based on or arising from the following circumstances, will be deemed invalid and not upheld:



## **Irregular Procedure or Improper Conduct**

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Marking variances –  
clear inconsistency in  
marking of the  
assignments

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Practical issues in your  
learning environment i.e.  
noise / heating etc.

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Comparison of own  
analysis against marks  
awarded e.g. marking  
your own paper

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Challenging the  
academic judgement  
because candidate  
believes they deserve a  
different outcome

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Lack of  
understanding of the  
assignment  
regulations and  
procedures

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Lack of  
understanding of the  
marking guidelines /  
policy

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## **Extenuating Personal Circumstances**

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Unwell during the time of the programme

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Retrospective reporting of mitigating  
circumstances

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Insufficient medical evidence or diagnosis

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Issue with assignment timelines

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Not being aware of timings i.e. time zones for tutoring

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Situation or incident that does not directly have an  
impact on the candidate

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Completing an assignment against the advice of a medical  
professional

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To clarify, the SDSA will not consider an appeal that does nothing more than question the academic judgement exercised or is based on a situation that did not directly affect a candidate's assignment performance. For example, candidates cannot appeal using the procedures and request a remark of the paper, simply because they are unhappy with a mark given.

The SDSA is committed to promoting equality and diversity in all its activities. By submitting an appeal, the candidate's privacy and confidentiality will be respected at all stages of the process. In submitting an appeal, candidates must accept that limited disclosure of all or part of their submission will be required, to enable investigation of the case to proceed.

Candidates have the right to expect that everyone who responds to, investigates or adjudicates upon an appeal will do so impartially. No individual, including assessors, will be permitted to act in any manner in a case in which they have a material interest, or in which any actual or potential conflict of interest may arise.

## **Lodging an appeal**

Any appeal must be submitted by email to [sdsa@soton.ac.uk](mailto:sdsa@soton.ac.uk) within seven days of the receipt of the assignment result.

Candidates will need to summarise (in no more than 100 words) reasons why they believe the grounds of appeal apply and include evidence to substantiate their claim.

On receipt of the form, an email will be sent to the candidate within 48 hours. This is an automatic response which acknowledges successful receipt.



## Consideration of the appeal

SDSA's head tutor will oversee the appeal and take all appropriate steps to ascertain the relevant facts. This can include checking that no administrative, numerical, data transcription, computing or procedural errors have taken place. It will involve consulting where necessary with wider SDSA tutors.

The outcome of the appeal, with reasons, will be communicated to the candidate via the VLE within 30 days from the receipt of the appeal wherever possible. Any delays will be communicated to the candidate. In the event the appeal is upheld, this does not necessarily mean the candidate is entitled to an amendment of their mark or pass / fail decision.

By way of an example, and not intended to be an exhaustive list, the following are available, if the appeal is upheld:

- An explanation or apology.
- An undertaking to review the relevant administrative procedures.
- A remark of the assignment.
- Correction of the mark previously awarded.

If it is felt that a remark is appropriate, and if the candidate agrees to the remark of the assignment, the mark previously awarded may be corrected either up or down from the original outcome. If the corrected mark meets the required standard of the assignment, then the candidate will receive a pass.

Where the outcome of this process indicates a failure in assignment processes that might affect other candidates, the SDSA will take steps to correct or mitigate the effect as far as possible, to ensure such a failure does not occur.

Once the final outcome has been communicated to the candidate, the head tutor or wider representatives of SDSA will not enter into any further correspondence regarding the appeal. The decision of the head tutor is final and no further appeals are permitted.



## Mitigating circumstances policy

The Southampton Data Science Academy is committed to providing candidates a fair and transparent learning journey. This procedure is intended to provide candidates of the course assignment with a formal means for applying for mitigating circumstances, to be taken into account in relation to their performance in the assignment. This policy applies to all candidates of the course assignment. Where there is a discrepancy between this policy and other regulations or handbooks in respect of procedures for the consideration of mitigating circumstances relating to assignments, this policy takes precedence.

SDSA's head tutor is authorised to consider and make judgement in any cases of doubt or where clarification is needed concerning these regulations. The SDSA aims to:

- Treat all candidates equally and fairly in the consideration of their mitigating circumstances.
- Provide candidates with a consistent experience of the mitigating circumstances process.
- Fulfil its commitment to delivering a seamless candidate service.
- Deal with any requests in a timely manner

The SDSA recognises it can be difficult to disclose sensitive, personal information to other parties. As such, please note that all information and documentation provided in support of an application will be treated sensitively and will remain confidential to the relevant Mitigating Circumstances Panel.

## Definition of Mitigating Circumstances

The SDSA considers a mitigating circumstance to be a recognisably unexpected serious or major event, beyond the candidate's control, which might have a significant and adverse effect on their performance in the course assignment, or on their ability to complete the course on time, and that they therefore require an extension.

On-going conditions and other disabilities that affect candidates do not fall in this definition. The SDSA offers access arrangements for mitigating the effect on individuals of such on-going conditions.

Where allowance has been made for a continuing condition, a further allowance should not be made through the consideration of mitigating circumstances, except as described below. Some candidates affected by 'on-going' conditions may encounter specific difficulties related to their condition that impact upon an assignment. Such circumstances may be legitimately considered as meeting the definition of mitigating circumstances above. For example, a candidate who suffers from MS, rheumatoid arthritis, or Crohn's disease, may or may not need constant 'reasonable adjustments' in assignments, but if they had a 'flare-up' around the time of an assignment, they may also need to be

considered under these mitigating circumstances procedures.

In such situations, the SDSA course administration and tutoring team will need to receive information concerning any 'reasonable adjustments' that are in place. The important principle is that no candidate should receive a double compensation through both an on-going 'reasonable adjustment' and an allowance through mitigating circumstances.

## Criteria for submitting a claim

The claim submitted should demonstrate that it meets all of the following criteria:

### Beyond the control of the candidate

The candidate must demonstrate that they could not have done anything to prevent the circumstance arising; that they were unforeseen and unpreventable.

### Effect on assignment

The claim must demonstrate a significant impact on the candidate's ability to complete the assignment. It must make clear the duration of the circumstances and have appropriate documentary evidence to support the claim.

### Have timely relevance

Typically, the circumstance must have occurred within five days of the assignment submission date. Where the event falls before this time, the candidate should be able to demonstrate that the impact it had can be linked to the assignment being claimed for.

SDSA may use its sole discretion to accept or reject applications for mitigating circumstances.

## Submitting a claim

Applications for claiming mitigating circumstances must be completed by messaging the tutor via the course messaging system (Canvas VLE "mail" tool) within seven calendar days from the assignment submission date. The subject line must be marked CLAIM / MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered.

Candidates must provide outline evidence with their submission, in no more than 250 words. This must be submitted seven calendar days from the assignment due date. If the candidate is unable to obtain the necessary evidence within seven calendar days, they must submit the application form within seven calendar days – they can then submit the evidence separately, within 28 calendar days of the assignment.



A decision cannot be made until the evidence is received and if it is not received in time, the application will be rejected and the candidate informed by email.

Candidates should include as much detail as possible in their application to explain how their assignment performance was affected. SDSA will only be able to consider the information and supporting evidence candidates provide and will not generally ask for further evidence.

Only evidence written in English can be considered. It is the candidate's responsibility to obtain and submit a verified translation, if the original evidence is in another language, while adhering to the deadlines laid out above. Applicants will receive a confirmation email informing them of receipt.

## **Guidance on evidence required to support mitigating circumstances**

The following table provides examples of the kinds of circumstances normally considered acceptable mitigating circumstances, with information on what evidence would be required in each case. This list of required evidence is provided as a guide and is not exhaustive; each application will be assessed on its own merits taking into account the specific circumstances and the evidence presented in each case.

SDSA recognises it can be difficult to disclose sensitive, personal information to other parties. As such, please note that all documentation provided in support of an application will be treated sensitively and will remain confidential to the relevant Mitigating Circumstances Panel.

The information presented will be subject to the SDSA's data retention schedule for assignments. Please note that any form of photographic evidence, medical documentation providing detailed information, such as haemoglobin levels, or medications taken, is not required unless requested.



## Appendix 1: Example mitigating circumstances

### Mitigating Circumstance

### What is likely to be accepted and what evidence is required?

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Serious illness

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Confirmation of the illness, the impact it has had on the affected assignment and the dates concerned. There should be a confirmed diagnosis by a registered doctor specifying the nature of the illness. If currently undergoing assignment and no diagnosis has been reached, documentation by a registered doctor specifying symptoms will be considered. Letters stating that the candidate informed them they were unwell will not be accepted. Minor illnesses, such as colds, sore throats, headaches, digestive problems etc, would not normally be acceptable grounds.

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Long-standing medical  
condition or disability

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Diagnosed condition, normally supported through reasonable adjustments (access arrangements), which flares up unexpectedly close to the assignment, meaning the reasonable adjustments are not sufficient for the candidate to fairly attempt the assignment. Or a previously undiagnosed / recently diagnosed condition, for which adjustments have not yet been put in place to make it possible to fairly undertake the assignment. There should be a confirmed diagnosis by a registered doctor specifying the nature of the illness. Letters stating the candidate informed the doctor that they were unwell will not be accepted.

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## Hospitalisation

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Confirmation of the reason for hospitalisation, the impact is had on the affected assignment and the dates concerned. Candidates should also provide an original medical certificate / letter.

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Serious illness (as described above) or death of a member of the candidate's immediate family (e.g. parent, sibling, child, grandparent, spouse, guardian)

Where an immediate family member has a serious illness, independent confirmation of both the illness and how it affected the candidate's assignment should be provided. A diagnosis of the family member is not required, specifying symptoms will be considered. It is more important that the SDSA receive independent confirmation of the effect of the situation on the assignment.

A medical report from a qualified medical practitioner or a copy of a death certificate, coroner's report, letter from medical professional. Accompanied, if necessary, by formal documentation confirming relationship with deceased. While a death certificate is a sensitive and often difficult document to obtain, it is required to prevent fraudulent claims.

Other relationships may be considered subject to there being sufficient evidence of the closeness and impact.

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Severe adverse  
personal /  
family  
difficulties

Confirmation of the circumstances, the impact these had on the affected assignment and the dates concerned. This can include a range of issues, such as separation from spouse / partner, conflict with others, caring duties that could not be done by anyone else, etc.

Examination stress is a common experience and not normally considered a personal mitigating circumstance – some level of sleep disturbance or feeling nauseous can be usual (unless in a serious form, which can be documented either by a counsellor or doctor). This can be a report from a suitable qualified professional such as a GP or counsellor.

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Pregnancy-related illness

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The requirements for illness, hospitalisation etc should be followed if there is a specific incident during pregnancy.

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<p>SDSA virtual learning environment issues</p>	<p>Candidates who experience a significant issue that occurred with our online VLE will need to email <a href="mailto:sdsa@soton.ac.uk">sdsa@soton.ac.uk</a> with the subject title MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES, within seven calendar days of the assignment date. Evidence should be kept in the event this is requested by the SDSA e.g. time / impact as a result of the issue with the online platform.</p> <p>Any correspondence between the candidate and the SDSA flagging the issue. (Note: SDSA does not record telephone conversations, therefore it is recommended the candidate follows up telephone conversations with an email as supporting documentation.) Screenshots of the occurring issue.</p> <p>The SDSA will contact you within seven calendar days of receiving this email to advise if a Mitigating Circumstances application is appropriate.</p>
<p>Victim of crime</p>	<p>Candidates should submit a police report (including a crime reference number). If the incident has resulted in the candidate seeking medical attention, the requirements for illness should be followed.</p>
<p>Legal proceedings requiring attendance at court as a witness or jury service</p>	<p>Documentary evidence from the court or a solicitor, including the dates of the legal proceedings and the requirement for the candidate to attend, should be submitted.</p>
<p>Road traffic incident</p>	<p>If the candidate has been involved in a road traffic incident, either as a passenger or as the driver / rider, evidence detailing the time and place the incident occurred must be provided. This should include a police report (with crime reference number), or an insurance reference number / record of the event.</p>



## Situations not considered mitigating circumstances

The following are examples of the kind of circumstances that will not be considered to fulfil the definition of mitigating. This list is not exhaustive.

### Circumstance

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Medical circumstances

Medical circumstances that do not relate directly to the assignment date in question, or cannot be attributed to having an effect on the assignment. Minor illnesses that could be treated with over-the-counter remedies (colds, coughs, sore throats, etc.).

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Holidays / family events

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All holidays and vacations should take place at a time that will not impact on the candidate's availability to study or undertake / prepare for the assignment.

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Misreading the assignment deadline

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It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure they have an accurate understanding of the due date of the assignment.

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Paid employment or voluntary work

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It is the candidate's responsibility to manage other commitments so they do not adversely interfere with their studies.

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IT and/or computer failure	It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure all work which is electronically stored, generated and/or submitted is sufficiently backed up, and the correct piece of work is submitted.
Foreseeable / preventable circumstances	Where the circumstances are within the candidate's control.

## Scheduling of assignments

Only candidates who have applied for mitigating circumstances and are within three marks of the pass mark will be considered further. SDSA does not guarantee an adjustment will be made. It reviews each case individually and considers the severity, duration and timing of the circumstances, and whether an allocation of extra marks would allow the candidate to reach the pass level. If this is the case, then the candidate will be awarded a mark equal to the pass mark.

Candidates who are more than three marks away from the pass mark and have applied for mitigating circumstances will not be considered, as the initial result is too far away from the pass mark to be mitigated. The original mark awarded will remain.

Candidates should be aware that only factors deemed to have a serious effect on performance (as outlined above) will result in changes to marks. SDSA has limited options when it receives an application – its responsibility is to review what it sees; it cannot accurately or fairly award marks for a level of performance it does not see.

Where SDSA believes the mitigating circumstances affects a larger cohort, (e.g. a VLE outage for a prolonged period of time), it will agree on the fairest way to deal with the error to minimise the effect on all relevant candidates. This will involve escalation to SDSA's head tutor and managing director.



## Outcome

The final result awarded is therefore a reflection of the mitigating circumstances process as stated in this policy. It is assumed candidates' mitigating circumstances will be taken into account as part of the results process, as long as the criteria outlined in this policy have been met.

This process will be undertaken during the timescales normally set for the release of final marks. Should the panel seek further information from the applicant or the relevant examining team, and a delay is expected, the applicant will be informed accordingly and another due date for release of their results given.

Candidates who have been considered at the Mitigating Circumstances Panel will be informed of the outcome of their application within five working days of the results being released. The decision of the panel is final and no further correspondence will be entered into. Candidates cannot contest the outcome of the panel on the grounds of academic judgement. If a candidate wishes to pursue the matter and can evidence that a procedural irregularity has occurred during the mitigating circumstances process, they can consider applying through the appeals process.