

Institute of Public Care

Mitigating Circumstances

What are they and how to apply for them?

A brief guide for students

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1 What are mitigating circumstances

Mitigating Circumstances are circumstances which:

1. are beyond your control; **and**
2. could not be reasonably accommodated by you; **and**
3. seriously impair your performance in assessment.

There are many types of circumstances that meet this definition: it could be personal difficulties, health problems or genuine last minute emergencies. If you have been affected by such circumstances you can submit a request for an allowance. All three parts of this definition must be met before we can make an allowance for you.

2 If my claim is accepted, what will happen?

If we accept that you have been affected by mitigating circumstances, in most situations you will be given:

1. an extension to a coursework deadline of up to five weeks where possible; **or**
2. an opportunity to take an in-class test, presentation, exam etc on another occasion; **or**
3. an opportunity to re-sit an entire module at a later date.

We will never simply give you extra marks. The point of accepting your performance has been affected by mitigating circumstances is to give you another opportunity to take the assessment when you aren't affected by mitigating circumstances.

3 How do I apply for mitigating circumstances?

All requests must be made on-line through PIP or on the IPC mitigating circumstances form (available in Microsoft Word). There are three categories of request:

1. Request for a coursework **extension** of up to 1 week
2. Request for a coursework **extension** of 1 to 5 weeks and/or an alternative opportunity to do an in-class test, presentation etc.
3. Request for **re-assessment** in the affected assessment or an opportunity to resit an entire module at a later date.

Once you have completed the form you must submit it, **with your evidence**, to IPC in person, through the post, or attached to an e-mail sent to:

ipc_courses@brookes.ac.uk.

Until the copy of the form and evidence are received by us, your request will not be considered. It is essential that your supporting third party evidence is received at the same time as the request.

It is your responsibility to read the guidance and regulations fully before submitting a request for mitigating circumstances to ensure you make a complete application.

4 Why do I need to provide evidence?

The evidence is needed for you to demonstrate that the circumstances you face are genuine and to enable the mitigating circumstances panel to understand your situation fully.

5 What evidence should I provide?

For extensions of up to one week, it is not essential for you to provide evidence as you will normally be able to self-certify your circumstances. You should still provide evidence if you can.

For extensions of more than one week, or in relation to an alternative opportunity to do an in-class presentation, or an opportunity to resit an entire module at a later date, **it is essential** that you provide sufficient evidence to support your request. A decision can only be made on the basis of information provided by you. The evidence should:

1. confirm the circumstances which have affected you; and
2. be written in English; and
3. be from an independent and authoritative third party.

6 When do I make a request for an extension to a coursework deadline?

You should submit your request and your evidence as soon as possible and in any case always **before** a coursework deadline. If you miss a deadline you will not only need to demonstrate that you were affected by mitigating circumstances but you will also need to provide evidence that you were **unable** to submit your claim by the deadline.

If you've missed a coursework deadline, you should still submit your work. You should also submit a request for mitigating circumstances and explain why you missed the deadline, in addition to your request for mitigating

circumstances. If you have a valid reason why your request was late, your request will be considered.

7 What if I miss a deadline without mitigating circumstances?

If you miss an assessment deadline without approval for valid mitigating circumstances you will receive zero for that assessment.

8 What if I need more help or advice?

This brief guide does not cover all the regulations relating to mitigating circumstances and is an introduction to cover a few of the more important things you need to know. If you need more help or advice, including if you feel you need a period of **temporary withdrawal** from the University, rather than an allowance for your mitigating circumstances, then you can contact us at ipc_courses@brookes.ac.uk.

You can find the full set of University Regulations here:

<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/uniregulations/current/core/assessment/mitigatingcircumstances>

9 Time out/temporary withdrawal

If for other personal or work circumstances you are not able to continue with your course you should discuss this with your Academic Adviser and Programme Lead(s) whether you would benefit from time out of the course. This is called 'Approved Temporary Withdrawal'. **The University has to formally agree that you can do this.**

If you decide that you wish to temporarily withdraw you should complete the IPC temporary withdrawal form in advance of your request. If agreed, you will restart your course at the same point within the module at which you left it. You will be responsible for any additional costs that a temporary withdrawal might incur.

Approval for up to a year out can be given provided there are course spaces available and that you will not be continuing your studies whilst suspended. This approved time out is excluded when considering the normal length of an award but is still included as part of the total time allowed.

10 Leaving the course

If you are thinking of withdrawing, please do not make a hasty decision. Sleep on it; go and talk to someone - your Academic Adviser, another tutor, your line manager or another student. Remember that there are often alternatives to leaving and your tutor will be willing to discuss these with you before you make your final decision. Please note that IPC will not refund your course fees once you have started the course.