

Mitigating Circumstances

What are they and how to apply for them?

A brief guide for students

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1 Introduction

Mitigating circumstances are circumstances which:

- are beyond your control; and
- could not be reasonably accommodated by you; and
- seriously impair your performance in assessment.

There are many types of circumstances that meet this definition: it could be personal difficulties, health problems or 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 request is accepted, what will happen?

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

1. an extension to a coursework deadline of up to one week; or
2. an extension to a coursework deadline of up to five weeks; or
3. an opportunity to re-sit an assessment at a later date to be agreed i.e. longer than five weeks extension.

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?

To apply for mitigating circumstances you must submit a request form with third party supporting evidence. Requests are made on the [IPC mitigating circumstances request form](#). The form and all supporting evidence must be scanned and sent to ipc_courses@brookes.ac.uk.

There are three categories of request:

1. Request for a coursework extension of up to 1 week, which the IPC Module Leader can agree.
2. Request for a coursework extension of 1 to 5 weeks or an alternative opportunity to do an in-class presentation, which the IPC Mitigating Circumstances Panel sub-group can agree.
3. Request to re-sit an assessment at a later date, which must be agreed by the Faculty Mitigating Circumstances Panel (MCP).

Until the form and evidence are received by us, your request will not be considered. Your supporting third party evidence must be 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 University to fully understand your situation.

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. However, 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 re-sit an assessment at a later date, it is essential that you provide full and sufficient evidence to demonstrate the extent of the difficulties you face. A decision can only be made on the basis of information provided by you at the time of submitting the form. 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; and
4. confirm the start and end dates when you were affected by mitigating circumstances.

There are many types of circumstances that will meet the definition and so the types of evidence will vary too. For example, a doctor to confirm illness, hospital appointment letters, a police report to confirm a crime, or an employer to confirm change in work circumstances for part time students.

There might also be more than one way in which you can provide evidence. For example, if you have been affected by bereavement you might be able to provide either a note from a counsellor or evidence of the bereavement such as a death certificate.

The person providing the evidence must be independent and authoritative. Independent means that they are not personally connected with you such as a relative. Authoritative means that they are a recognised expert for the evidence they are providing.

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 and have not submitted a mitigating circumstances request you can submit a late request and explain why you missed the deadline. If you have a valid reason why your request was late your request

will be considered, but you will need to demonstrate that you were affected by mitigating circumstances and provide evidence that you were unable to submit your claim before the deadline.

If your course has more than one assignment then please remember that your assignment are not linked. Therefore you must continue to work to your other assignment deadlines even if you have not received your previous assignment result or decision i.e. mitigating circumstances have to be applied for separately for each assignment.

7 What happens next?

We will acknowledge receipt of your application and forward it to the Mitigating Circumstances Panel for consideration. Panels are not held every week, so you may not hear straightaway, but we will let you know the outcome of the Panel's decision.

8 What if I miss a deadline without mitigating circumstances?

If you miss an assessment deadline without approval for valid mitigating circumstances you will receive a mark of 0% for that assessment.

9 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. You can download the full [University Regulations on mitigating circumstances](#). If you need more help or advice then you can contact us at ipc_courses@brookes.ac.uk.

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.