

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 the IPC mitigating circumstances form (available in Microsoft Word on Moodle) and e-mailed to ipc_courses@brookes.ac.uk. 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 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 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 resit an entire module 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 and you will not be able to submit more evidence later. 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.

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 a mark of 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 University Regulations on mitigating circumstances here: <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/regulations/current/core/a3/a3-5/>

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 a maximum of a year out can be given provided there are course spaces available at a later date 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.