About Mitigating Circumstances

Is something unexpected or out of your control stopping you from being able to do your work?

Are your personal difficulties having a negative effect on your ability to study and/or complete your assessments?

The University’s Mitigating Circumstances provision may give you an extra allowance to complete your work (such as an extension of a coursework deadline).

Here you can find out what Mitigating Circumstances are and how to apply.
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. significantly impair your performance in assessment.

All three parts of the definition [above] must be met before we can make an allowance for you.

If my application is successful, what will happen?

If the University accepts that you have been affected by Mitigating Circumstances, the possible outcomes are as follows:

1. an extension to a coursework deadline of up to five weeks where possible so that you would have more time to complete the work; or
2. an opportunity to take an in-class test, presentation, exam etc. at a different time; or
3. an opportunity to re-take an entire module (a “Disregard” grade).

You will never be awarded extra marks.

What do these outcomes mean?

An extension means that you’ll have more time to complete your work. The length of extension you get will depend on how long you were affected by Mitigating Circumstances, though extensions can’t be granted beyond the end of the semester that you’re in.

A re-assessment means that you will get an opportunity to complete the coursework or exam (or both) again during the re-sit period. There is a re-sit period which provides another opportunity for students to be assessed from a previous semester’s module. This will be indicated on your Record and Results page on PIP by a DC, DE or DB grade. If you are unable to complete this re-assessment due to Mitigating Circumstances, please submit a new claim.

A disregard (DR grade), means that your grade for the module(s) will not be included in your final average, and will not count towards the total number of modules in your programme (they have been disregarded). This gives you the opportunity to retake the whole module again at no additional cost.

Requests for re-assessments or disregards are available under “Option 3” in the Mitigating Circumstances application. You need to tick both boxes in option 3 for a disregard if you would prefer this to a re-assessment. Please note that you may not get a disregard if you have asked for it. The allowance that you’re given will depend on how long you have been affected by Mitigating Circumstances (with a maximum of 5 weeks deadline extension).
How do I apply for mitigating circumstances?

All requests must be made through PIP, where possible. There is a link to the request form at the top of your “Record & Results” page in PIP. If this link does not work then you can download a word version from the Student Central web pages (as described below).

There are three types of requests:

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 (re-sit or retake) in the affected assessment or examination (this option can sometimes result in the “Disregard” of a module grade).

The first two options refer to having more time to complete a particular piece of work.

Except for requests of extensions up to one week, which are sent to the Module Leader along with any supporting evidence, once you have completed the online form you must submit your evidence via e-mail sent to: studentrecords@brookes.ac.uk.

You must either provide evidence with your application or tell us if you are unable to provide evidence.

Full guidance is provided on your “Records & Results” page on PIP. It is your responsibility to read the guidance fully before submitting a request for Mitigating Circumstances to ensure you make a complete application.

Please remember to complete the application in as much detail as you would to someone that does not have any understanding of your situation.
What if I can’t apply through PIP/ the online form isn’t working?

You can download a manual version of the form from the following link:

http://www.brookes.ac.uk/students/your-studies/student-request-forms/

Please note that you must return the form to your module leader if you are asking for option 1 (an extension of less than a week or an opportunity to take an in-class assessment on a different date) or to Student Central for options 2 or 3 (an extension of longer than a week or a request for a reassessment or disregard) or if the request is late.

Please note that Mitigating Circumstances applications and their corresponding evidence must always be sent via email to studentrecords@brookes.ac.uk

Paper forms and physical copies of evidence will not be accepted at the Student Central counter.

You can also pick up a Mitigating Circumstances form from Student Central if necessary.

What sort of evidence should I provide?

The supporting evidence that you submit with your Mitigating Circumstances application is crucial in order for you to demonstrate that the circumstances you face are genuine and to enable the University to understand your situation fully and give appropriate allowances.

For extensions of more than one week, or in relation to an examination, it is essential that you provide full and sufficient evidence to:

1. confirm the circumstances which have affected you; and
2. be written or typed in English; and
3. be from a relevant and objective third party; and
4. confirm the dates of the period that you were affected by Mitigating Circumstances (this includes confirmation if the situation is on-going, where appropriate)

As noted above: there are many types of circumstances that meet the definition of Mitigating Circumstances and so the types of evidence will vary too. For example, a Doctor to confirm illness, a police report or crime reference number to confirm a crime, or a death certificate to confirm a death. If you have been to see a Doctor, they may be able to write a letter to confirm that you have been unwell. If you have attended counselling you could ask your Counsellor to confirm that you have had personal difficulties. (Doctors and counsellors won't provide letters for Mitigating Circumstances unless you have seen them recently).

We remind students that it isn't appropriate to attend the Medical Centre purely for the purpose of getting evidence for a Mitigating Circumstances claim: if you have a medical issue then you should approach the Medical Centre for treatment of that issue. It may be that the GP or nurse is able to provide evidence in support of a Mitigating Circumstances application, but this should not be the primary purpose of a visit

We also wish to remind students of the importance of registering at the Medical Centre when they first enrol at Brookes: this gives the Medical Centre a better view of your medical history, which can be relevant when trying to obtain evidence for a Mitigating Circumstances application

Students should attend the medical centre, where possible, while they are ill rather than afterwards - the Medical Centre can't provide evidence relevant to a Mitigating Circumstances claim which states that a
student was ill before they attended. The medical centre does run a nurse-led service where people can be seen on the day.

Please refer to their website for more information: https://www.brookes.ac.uk/students/support-services/medical-centre/

If you want to talk to someone about whether your evidence is appropriate to your application, you can contact your Student Support Co-ordinator or the Brookes Union Advice Service.

If you have a Disability Equality Memo supplied by the Disability Services, and your application relates to your disability, please also submit this as part of your application. However please note that a Disability Equality Memo is not normally sufficient evidence, on its own, for a Mitigating Circumstances application – you’ll need to provide evidence which shows that you’ve been affected in a way which isn’t covered by the allowance made in your Disability Equality Memo.

In all situations the evidence must be written and in English. If the evidence is not written in English you must arrange for a verified translation. Please contact your Student Support Coordinator or BUAS if you need help with this.

The person or institution providing the evidence must be relevant and objective, and acting in a professional capacity. Objective means that they are not personally connected with you (for example, a relative cannot provide evidence of the impact of an illness on you, even if they are a medical professional). Acting in a professional capacity means that they’ll need to submit the evidence on headed paper or other documentation which makes it clear that they’re providing evidence in their professional role and not in a personal capacity. Relevant means that their professional role is relevant to the circumstances they’re providing evidence for – for example, a doctor providing medical evidence or a police officer providing evidence of a crime.

Unfortunately it has been the case that some students attempt to falsify evidence or mislead the University by misrepresenting their personal circumstances. If we can see that you’ve submitted false evidence, you may be subject to disciplinary action by the University.

Might I be asked to provide more evidence if I don’t provide enough?

You should submit all of your evidence as soon as possible, along with your application. Unless you clearly state that you intend on handing in some of your evidence at a later date for practical reasons and wish for your application to be on hold, you will not be able to submit more evidence later.

Can I ask whoever is considering my application to “contact me if you need more evidence”?

No, you must make sure you provide as much evidence as you have with your application at the first opportunity. If you have some evidence that you are trying to get hold of that is taking a while, please note in your application that further evidence is on its way. When you get this evidence you should forward it to studentrecords@brookes.ac.uk or bring it in to Student Central.

Will I be asked to provide evidence for an application for an extension of one week or less?

For extensions of up to one week, it’s possible for students to self-certify, i.e. submit an application without evidence. However, it’s at your Module Leader’s discretion whether to accept an application without evidence. You should provide evidence if you can as this is likely to help your case.
When should I make a mitigating circumstances request? Should I wait to see my results first?

**Always as soon as possible!** Your request should be made before a submission of coursework deadline or exam date where possible. **You should never wait to see your results before deciding whether to make a Mitigating Circumstances application.** Before you get your results you’ll know whether or not you were affected by Mitigating Circumstances. The only reason for submitting an application after your results is if there was no way you could have submitted it earlier (see below).

If you get to a coursework deadline and you think you need an extension due to Mitigating Circumstances, but haven’t yet made an application, you should always submit some coursework by the deadline. If you miss a coursework deadline and then make a Mitigating Circumstances application which is rejected, you’ll get a 0F grade for that piece of work. If you hand in something by the deadline, and then make a successful application for an extension through Mitigating Circumstances, you’ll then have the chance to submit the more complete piece of work.

What if my request is late?

There are two instances where an application is considered to be “late”. **A late application would meet one or both of the following criteria:**

1. If you miss the original coursework deadline or exam date/time.
2. If you submit it after the Mitigating Circumstances Panel (MCP) deadline. The MCP deadline will be shown here: [https://www.brookes.ac.uk/students/your-studies/mitigating-circumstances/](https://www.brookes.ac.uk/students/your-studies/mitigating-circumstances/) each semester. If you’re not sure when the MCP deadline is, you can ask your Student Support Coordinator.

If you’ve missed a coursework deadline, you should still submit your work as soon as possible. You should also submit a request for Mitigating Circumstances. Your work will only be marked if your Mitigating Circumstances application is successful.

If you’ve missed the deadline for consideration at an MCP, you should still submit your request and explain why you missed the deadline, in addition to your request for Mitigating Circumstances.

In both cases, your application will only be considered if you can provide a valid reason, with evidence, for why it couldn’t have been submitted on time.

What evidence do I need to provide with late applications?

If you are submitting a late application then you will also need to provide evidence of why you could not submit an application by the relevant deadline and at no point before the time when you did submit your application. This evidence needs to comply with the same rules that are described above. **When a late request is received, the first consideration is whether there were circumstances beyond your control which prevented you from submitting your application, by the relevant deadline and up to the point at which you did submit your application. Only if it is accepted that you did have a valid reason for not making your application before the deadline, will your application then be considered against the criteria for Mitigating Circumstances.** It is therefore possible that you could have been affected by Mitigating Circumstances but that your [invalid reason for] late request means these cannot be considered.
Examples of reasons for lateness which are frequently rejected include “I didn’t realise I’d been affected until I received my results”, and “I didn’t know I could apply for Mitigating Circumstances”. Those aren’t valid reasons for lateness because it’s your responsibility to make sure that you’re familiar with the University’s regulations and procedures, and to make applications at the time you’re affected, unless there’s a valid reason why you couldn’t.

Please seek support from your Student Support Co-ordinator - www.brookes.ac.uk/students/support-services/ssc/ or BUAS - www.brookesunion.org.uk/advice to help you complete a late application.

What if I’m dissatisfied with the outcome of a Mitigating Circumstances application?

Included in the letter and/or email containing the outcome of your application, are instructions on how to request a review of the decision that has been made.

You simply need to email your reason for requesting a review to latemitcircsreview@brookes.ac.uk

Who can help me further with making a Mitigating Circumstances request?

This brief guide doesn’t cover all the regulations relating to Mitigating Circumstances and is just 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 the Student Support Co-ordinators in your Faculty, or Student Central,

The Brookes Union Advice Service (BUAS) provide independent advice on Mitigating Circumstances applications and other issues relating to your course and your life as a student:

http://www.brookesunion.org.uk/advice

Your Record and Results page on PIP will tell you who your Student Support Coordinators are and how to contact them.

You can find further advice from Student Central here:

http://www.brookes.ac.uk/students/support-services/student-central/

And the full set of University Regulations here:

https://www.brookes.ac.uk/regulations/current/core/a3/a3-5/

Finally if you are concerned about your own or someone else’s well-being, please see the following link to the University’s Wellbeing team which contains a lot of useful information and help:

https://www.brookes.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/