Mitigating Circumstances
Guide for students

- Are unexpected circumstances impacting your studies?
- 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 assessments (such as an extension of a coursework deadline).
Definition of Mitigating Circumstances 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 an assessment.

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

Remember, you should be able to provide evidence in relation to the circumstances. If you cannot, you need to explain why.

The following list of examples are likely to be considered valid mitigating circumstances when submitting an application and valid evidence.

- Bereavement – death of close relative/significant other
- Serious short term illness or accident
- Evidence of a long term condition (physical or mental health) worsening or a flare up occurring
- Significant adverse personal/family/welfare circumstances
- Caring responsibilities e.g. where pre-established caring arrangements temporarily break down

The following list of examples are unlikely to be considered as valid mitigating circumstances when submitting an application:

- An illness or medical condition without reasonable evidence (medical or otherwise) to support it.
- Medical circumstances outside the relevant assessment period or learning period,
- If there is a reasonable case that circumstances relied on were foreseeable or preventable.
- Long term health condition for which you are already receiving reasonable or appropriate adjustments through an Inclusive Support Plan
- Minor illness or ailment
- Holidays.
- Financial issues
- Personal computer/printer problems.
- Poor practice e.g. no back up of electronic documents, poor time management, claims that you were unaware of the dates or times of submission / examination.
- Submission of incorrect document or submission of correct document to the incorrect location
How do I apply for mitigating circumstances?

Paper forms and physical copies of evidence will not be accepted at the Student Central counter. It is your responsibility to read the guidance fully here before submitting a request for Mitigating Circumstances to ensure you make a complete application.

You can download an editable pdf and word version from the Student Central web pages.

There are three types of requests:

1. Request for a coursework extension of up to 1 week or an opportunity to take an in-class assessment on a different date
   Please return the completed form to your module leader
2. Request for a coursework extension of 1 to 5 weeks and/or an alternative opportunity to do an in-class test, presentation etc.
   Please email the completed form with your evidence to studentrecords@brookes.ac.uk
3. Request for reassessment (re-sit or retake) in the affected assessment or examination (this option can sometimes result in the “Disregard” of a module grade.
   Please email the completed form with your evidence to studentrecords@brookes.ac.uk

You must either provide evidence with your application or email studentrecords@brookes.ac.uk if you are unable to provide evidence.

What sort of evidence should I provide?
As the panel are not aware of your your situation, please remember to complete the application in as much detail as possible.

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)
5. Disability Equality Memo

Circumstances and the dates of the period that you were affected

   DO NOT send photographs as evidence (unless they are photographs of documents.)

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 go to your GP they can provide you with a Fit to Work note which is free and normally gives a single line explanation of the problem and the dates you have been unwell, they may also write a letter to confirm that you have been unwell to provide evidence in support of a Mitigating Circumstances application,
Medical Centre
It is important to register at the Medical Centre when you first enrol at Brookes, for them to have an understanding of your medical history, which will be relevant when trying to obtain evidence for a Mitigating Circumstances application.

It is inappropriate to attend the Medical Centre purely for the purpose of getting evidence for a Mitigating Circumstances claim; you should attend the medical centre, where possible, *while* you are ill rather than afterwards as the Medical Centre cannot provide evidence relevant to a Mitigating Circumstances claim which states that a student was ill before they attended.

Further information: [https://www.brookes.ac.uk/students/support-services/medical-centre/](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.

Written or typed in English
In all situations the evidence must be written 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.

Relevant and objective third party
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.

Inclusive Support Plan (ISP) - Previously known as DEM
If you have a Inclusive Support Plan supplied by the Disability Services, and your application relates to your disability, please also submit this as part of your application. However, please note the Mitigating Circumstances panel does not have automatic access to your Inclusive Support Plan note and that a Inclusive Support Plan 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 Inclusive Support Plan.
Might I be asked to provide more evidence if I don’t provide enough?
You will not be asked for more evidence, you should submit all of your evidence at the time of submitting your application and list the evidence that you have submitted on the application.

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 can with your application.

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.

When should I make a mitigating circumstances request? Should I wait to see my results first?
You should never wait to see your results before deciding whether to make a Mitigating Circumstances application. Always request as soon as possible!

Before you get your results you’ll know whether or not you were affected by Mitigating Circumstances. Your request should be made before a submission of coursework deadline or exam date where possible. The only reason for submitting an application after your results is if there was no way you could have submitted it earlier.

Your request should be made before a submission of coursework deadline or exam date where possible.

- If you apply after your results have been released, and your application is accepted, you won’t be eligible for a re-sit in the assessment in which you were affected. Your mark for that module will be disregarded and you’ll be given the opportunity to take the module again without charge.
- If you apply before your results have been released, and your application is accepted, you will be eligible for a re-sit in the assessment or a disregard of the module in which you were affected. The disregard gives you the opportunity to take the module again without charge.

What if I am close to a coursework deadline?
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 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 possible. 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 happens if I submit a form after PIP has published my results?
If your full application, including evidence, is received after your results for modules that have been published on PIP, it will be assessed as a late application, and you need to bear in mind these two things:

1) You’ll need to:
   a) Have a valid reason for the lateness of the request, supported by evidence, as well as valid mitigating circumstances relating to the assessment(s) to the date of the application submission date.
   b) You need to explain why circumstances beyond your control prevented you from submitting your claim by the relevant deadline.

2) If your late application is successful, the only possible allowance is to be awarded a Disregard (DR) grade for that module and be given the opportunity to take the whole module again. You can’t be given a resit following a late application, except in highly exceptional circumstances.

So, if you do have mitigating circumstances, it’s important that you make every effort to submit your application before you see your results.

What evidence do I need to provide with late applications?
If you are submitting a late application then you will need to provide evidence of why you could not submit an application by the relevant deadline.
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.

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.

To complete a late application you could seek support from:
- Student Support Co-ordinator - www.brookes.ac.uk/students/support-services/ssc/
- BUAS - www.brookesunion.org.uk/advice

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 semesters 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).

What if I’m dissatisfied with the outcome of a Mitigating Circumstances application?
In the email containing the outcome of your application, are instructions on how to request a review of the decision that has been made.

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

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

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/