



Summary information for staff about ...

# Individual Mitigating Circumstances and assessment

The University has approved principles and procedures for dealing with Individual Mitigating Circumstances (IMCs) that affect students' assessments which came into effect on 2 November 2009. Full information can be found at:

[www.bath.ac.uk/registry/imc/](http://www.bath.ac.uk/registry/imc/)

Individual mitigating circumstances (IMCs) are the University's descriptions of conditions which temporarily prevent a student from undertaking assessment or significantly impair the student's performance in assessment: as such, the measure of their severity is not about impact on the student, but impact on the assessment. They are different from on-going or longer-term conditions or circumstances which might affect the student's ability to study, and which might be better supported through, for example, disability support and/or special assessment arrangements. The University has a single-page summary to describe these distinctions (<http://www.bath.ac.uk/registry/imc/documents/what-are-imcs.pdf>), and to guide you and your students in what might be appropriate as an IMC claim.

Students should be advised to make themselves familiar with the IMC guidance given in "What are Individual Mitigating Circumstances", with your own department/school's information about IMCs, and with services offered by the Students' Union Advice and Representation Centre (<http://www.bathstudent.com/education/>) and by the Student Disability Advice team (<http://www.bath.ac.uk/disabilityadvice/>), as appropriate. This familiarization is best done before IMC (or other) difficulties are encountered. Further guidance and answers to frequently-asked questions are maintained for both you and your students at: <http://www.bath.ac.uk/registry/imc/>.

Students should take advice from the above sources in advance if they become aware of imminent IMC (or related) difficulties. Where conditions or circumstances that are likely to be considered as valid IMCs come into being before an assessment period, they should normally notify the Director of Studies of those conditions or circumstances before the start of the assessment period.

If students wish any IMCs to be taken into account by the Board of Examiners for Programmes, they should notify the appropriate Director of Studies within three working days of the completion of the assessment for which representation is being made.

Students should make their notification to the Director of Studies using the form provided (either at: <http://www.bath.ac.uk/registry/imc/documents/imc-report-form.doc> or in your department/school). They should submit a medical certificate if the circumstances relate to their own illness or injury, or other appropriate corroborating evidence. Departments/schools are required to make clear how an IMC claim should be submitted to the appropriate Director of Studies.

By answering the question on the form about confidentiality, students should indicate whether they require confidentiality to be observed with

**What are Individual Mitigating Circumstances?**

Individual mitigating circumstances (IMCs) are the University's descriptions of conditions which temporarily prevent a student from undertaking assessment or significantly impair the student's performance in assessment: as such, the measure of their severity is not about impact on the student, but impact on the assessment.

The ability to study effectively might also be affected by IMCs, but an on-going or longer-term condition or circumstance which might affect the student's ability to study, and which might be better supported through, for example, disability support and/or special assessment arrangements, are not IMCs. They are different from on-going or longer-term conditions or circumstances which might affect the student's ability to study, and which might be better supported through, for example, disability support and/or special assessment arrangements.

Normal life events such as illness, accidents, and minor stresses that students have to cope with during study should be treated as an event, not one of those that are likely to be considered as valid IMCs. They are treated as an event because they are expected to be temporary and to be overcome by the student. They are not considered as valid IMCs because they are not likely to be considered as valid IMCs.

Resolving an extension for handing in coursework would be the right course of action if failure to do so would be likely to lead to the submission of a valid IMC claim. The Director of Studies should be notified of the impact on the assessment and any other relevant issues.

Personal circumstances are events which cannot have extensions to run a student's course of study. For these and other similar assessment events an IMC claim will seek either to demonstrate a student's absence with good cause, or significantly impaired performance.

**Characteristics of IMCs**

The following events would be likely to be considered as valid IMCs if the timing were such as to have a significant impact on the student's assessment:

- Death, or sudden serious illness, of a close relative or friend.
- A serious or unexpected injury, illness, or medical condition (or a sudden, marked deterioration in an on-going or longer-term condition), or an emergency operation.
- Serious unexpected disruption of personal life.
- The student's disability (or a partner's) or a serious health-care condition. Appropriate corroborating evidence (e.g., a medical certificate for illness) will normally be required in support of IMC claims.

**Events & conditions not normally acceptable as IMCs**

Normally, the following would be unlikely to be considered as valid IMCs:

- IMC claims without appropriate, independent supporting evidence.
- Minor illnesses or ailments (e.g., coughs, colds, hangovers).
- Personal/academic events which could have been anticipated and/or planned otherwise (e.g., moving house, marriage, routine childcare).
- Choice and preferences in personal life (e.g., attending a wedding, holidays, attending social events, sporting fixtures).
- Poor management of time (including over-sleeping or mismanaging deadlines).
- Examination nerves, self-diagnosed stress.
- Failure of computer or other equipment being used to produce work to be assessed, including work not backed up before preparation is needed – see BUOCC advice via <http://www.bath.ac.uk/buo>.
- Involuntary transportation programs, unless due to illness or situations which could not be foreseen or avoided around.
- Reduced cost of travel arrangements.
- Practical difficulties (e.g., very poor weather, disruption of public transport) – see Student Information & Funding <http://www.bath.ac.uk/student-information-and-funding/>.
- Distance of paid or unpaid employment, and job interviews (unless exceptional circumstances prevail) which do not constitute a condition of necessary completion of the programme of study.
- Failure or failure to submit group assignments (contact Departmental School or AVARE [avare@bath.ac.uk](mailto:avare@bath.ac.uk)) before it becomes an individual problem.
- Multiple examinations within a short period.
- Language of assessment not being the student's main language.
- Late application for IMCs (unless good evidence of the unavoidability of the event is also provided).
- Long-term illness or disability where earlier disclosure would have allowed appropriate adjustments to be made.
- Assessments already subject to special arrangements to accommodate disabilities or other special conditions.
- IMC claims which fail to make clear the manner in which performance in assessment had been significantly affected.

What are Individual Mitigating Circumstances?  
<http://www.bath.ac.uk/registry/imc/documents/what-are-imcs.pdf>

**Individual Mitigating Circumstances (IMCs) Report Form**

Please complete this form if BUOCC CAPITAL/D will pass to your Department/School Office for consideration by the Board of Examiners for Programmes

Department/School: \* Student Registration Number: \*  
 Full Name: \*  
 Programme Title: \* Programme Code: \*  
 Programme Stage (if known): \* Year Year of Study: \*

Unit Code	Unit Name	Course work	Examination	Both †

Circumstances (please give a brief description including the impacts on your assessments, using additional pages if required):

Please state the type of supporting evidence you are providing (using additional pages if required):

If you do not wish the nature of your circumstances to be made known to the Board of Examiners for Programmes please tick the box on the right and talk to either your Personal Tutor or the Director of Studies.

Signature of Student: \* Date: \*  
 \* Delete as appropriate † Tick whichever is applicable

Office Use only  
 Date received by the Department/School: \* Authorised Signature: \*

IMC report form  
<http://www.bath.ac.uk/registry/imc/documents/imc-report-form.doc>

respect to the nature of the circumstances and for the information to be confined, for example, to the Director of Studies, the Departmental Administrator, the Chair of the Board of Examiners for Programmes, and the External Examiner(s). They are advised to use clear descriptions of the circumstances, such that the department/school's IMCs Panel will be able to summarize the situation clearly for the Board of Examiners for Programmes (observing confidentiality where necessary). It may be appropriate for a student to discuss an appropriate way of summarizing the details with the Director of Studies.

Departments/schools are now required to arrange for all IMC claims to be considered by an IMCs Panel, which will give them detailed consideration and will adjudicate on which should be accepted. As indicated above, this will depend on the evidence that the student was temporarily prevented from undertaking assessment or that the student's performance in assessment was significantly impaired. Students must now be notified of outcome in a timely manner, once all IMC claims have been considered.

Consideration of claims by the IMCs Panel helps to ensure that, while respecting the individuality of the circumstances affecting a student, it is the severity of their impact on the student's assessments which is most important, and that all students will be treated equitably. The IMCs Panel will prepare summary descriptions and recommendations for the Board(s) of Examiners for Programmes.

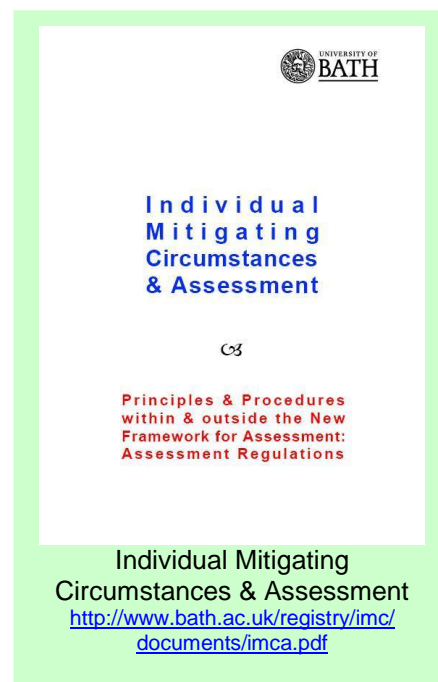
Eventually, the relevant Board of Examiners for Programmes will determine what should happen in respect of the assessments for students affected by valid and significant IMCs. There are limits on how far the Boards can go: they cannot invent evidence for the student's performance, so ultimately it might be that the best they can do is require the student to be assessed again at another time when not be affected by the IMCs. Where the gaps in the evidence of the student's capabilities are smaller, the Board may be able to allow the student to progress with amounts of supplementary assessment which will be different from normal, or make decisions on progression or awards with slightly adjusted parameters. Overall, while being sensitive to individual mitigating circumstances, Boards must ensure that the submission and acceptance of an IMC claim does not place a student at an advantage compared with other students, and that the standards required for University awards, including those accredited by external bodies, are maintained.

The information given in this document is a summary for your general guidance. Full information about the University's principles and procedures governing the treatment of individual mitigating circumstances and assessment is set out in a formal document approved by the University Senate.

*Individual Mitigating Circumstances & Assessment* is one of the resources you can find in a special area of the University web-site (referenced below). That document contains fuller explanations of the principles the University seeks to uphold, and describes the procedures it uses to seek to ensure consistent and fair treatment for all students.

The document includes information about the duties of the IMC Panels, and descriptions of the ways in which Boards of Examiners for Programmes will consider the assessment of students affected by IMCs. Different appendices summarize the ways in which decisions would be made about IMCs affecting decisions in different phases of a programme: when early stages might be solely about progression to the next stage; when the marks might determine both ability to progress *and* count towards the final award calculation; and at the end of the programme in an award calculation.

Further information and guidance about procedure at the meetings of Boards of Examiners for Programmes will be provided.



For further information and guidance, see:

[www.bath.ac.uk/registry/imc/](http://www.bath.ac.uk/registry/imc/)