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/

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 your 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 in what might be appropriate as an IMC claim.

You should make yourself familiar with the IMC guidance given in “What are Individual Mitigating Circumstances”, with your own department/school’s sources of information about IMCs, and with the services offered by the Students’ Union Advice and Representation Centre (https://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 is maintained at: http://www.bath.ac.uk/registry/imc/.

You should take advice from the above sources in advance if you 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, you should normally notify the Director of Studies of those conditions or circumstances before the start of the assessment period.

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

You should make your 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). You should submit a medical certificate if the circumstances relate to your own illness or injury, or other appropriate corroborating evidence. Your department/school will make clear how an IMC claim should be submitted to the appropriate Director of Studies.

By answering the question on the form about confidentiality, you should indicate whether you require confidentiality to be observed with 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). You should 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 you to discuss an appropriate way of summarizing the details with the Director of Studies.

Your IMC claim will be considered, alongside those of other students, by an IMCs Panel within your department/school, which will give it detailed consideration and will adjudicate on whether it should be accepted. As indicated above, this will depend on the evidence that you were temporarily prevented from undertaking assessment or that your performance in assessment was significantly impaired. You will 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 you, it is the severity of their impact on your assessments which is most important, and that all students will be treated equitably.

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 your performance, so ultimately it might be that the best they can do is require you to be assessed again at another time when you will not be affected by the IMCs. Where the gaps in the evidence of your capabilities are smaller, they may be able to allow you 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 your individual mitigating circumstances, they 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 your ability to progress to the next stage; when your marks might determine your ability to progress and count towards your final award calculation; and at the end of the programme in an award calculation.

For further information and guidance, see:

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