



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 any on-going or long-term inability to study should lead to consideration of the need to suspend study.

On-going or longer-term conditions or circumstances are not IMCs, and may be handled by disability support and/or special assessment arrangements: they are likely to give rise to valid IMC claims only if they first come to light or are diagnosed, or become unexpectedly and markedly worse, at assessment time.

Normal life throws up difficulties and problems, and minor illnesses, that students have to cope with during study in just the same way as everyone does at home or at work: they are expected to take appropriate steps to minimize the impact of these, since such events are unlikely to be accepted as valid IMC claims.

Requesting 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 after the coursework deadline: timing and the severity of the impact on the assessment are both critical aspects here.

Formal examinations are events which cannot have extensions to run a few days later for individual students: 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 examples 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(s):

- Death, or sudden serious illness, of a close relative or friend.
 - A serious or incapacitating 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.
 - Premature childbirth (self or partner), or related post-natal care.
- 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/domestic events which could have been anticipated and/or planned otherwise (e.g., moving house; marrying; routine childcare).
- Choices and preferences in personal life (e.g., attending a wedding; holidays; attending social events, sporting fixtures).
- Poor management of time (including oversleeping) or misunderstanding deadlines/dates.
- Examination nerves, self-diagnosed stress.
- Failure of computer or other equipment being used to produce work to be assessed, including work not backed up (better preparation is needed — see DD&T advice via <https://www.bath.ac.uk/professional-services/digital-data-and-technology/>).
- Individual transport/travel problems (unless due to strikes or disruptions which could not be foreseen or worked around).
- Relative cost of travel arrangements.
- Financial difficulties (if very serious, suspension of study might be appropriate — see Student Money Advice (<https://www.bath.ac.uk/professional-services/student-money-advice/>)).
- Demands of paid or unpaid employment, and job interviews (unless exceptional circumstances prevail in work that is undertaken as a condition or necessary counterpart of the programme of study).
- Failure of others to submit group assignments (consult Department/School or the SU Bath Advice & Support Centre (<https://www.thesubath.com/advice/>) before it becomes an intractable problem).
- Multiple examinations within a short period.
- Language of assessment not being the student's main language.
- Late applications for IMCs (unless good evidence of the unavoidability of the delay 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 known conditions.
- IMC claims which fail to make clear the manner in which performance in assessment had been significantly affected.

- For full guidance on IMCs, see *Individual Mitigating Circumstances & Assessment* (<https://www.bath.ac.uk/guides/imc-reference-documents-index>).
- For advice, as appropriate, you can consult your department/Faculty/School, your Director of Studies, the SU Advice & Support Centre (<https://www.thesubath.com/advice/>), Student Money Advice (<https://www.bath.ac.uk/professional-services/student-money-advice/>), and the Disability Service (<https://www.bath.ac.uk/professional-services/disability-service/>).