

## 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 BUCS advice via <http://www.bath.ac.uk/bucs/>).
- 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 Funding Advice (<http://www.bath.ac.uk/student-services/money-service/>)).
- 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 Students' Union Advice & Representation Centre (<http://www.bathstudent.com/academic/>) 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* (<http://www.bath.ac.uk/registry/imc/>).
- For advice, as appropriate, consult your department/school, the Students' Union Advice & Representation Centre (<http://www.bathstudent.com/academic/>), Student Funding Advice (<http://www.bath.ac.uk/student-services/money-service/>), and the Student Disability Advice team (<http://www.bath.ac.uk/disabilityadvice/>).