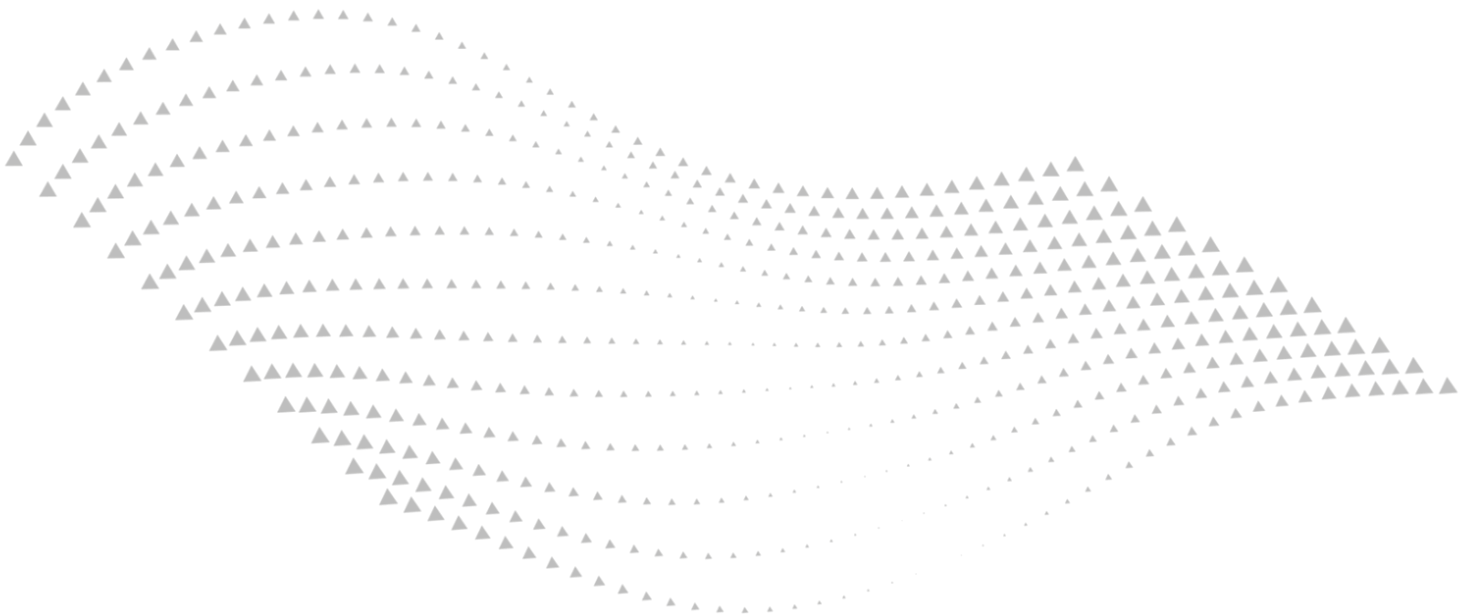


## **Exceptional Circumstances Policy**



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## Overview, purpose and scope

This policy is designed to support students in circumstances that may impact their ability to submit work for assessment in time to meet assessment submission deadlines or that impair the quality of their work. This policy applies to all students registered on BIMM University courses and modules.

## Automatic 24-hour penalty-free submission

Because we understand that sometimes, however hard you try, you may not be able to submit your work on time, we do not apply any penalty for work submitted within 24 hours of the assessment deadline (this does not apply to Retrievals<sup>1</sup>). Beyond 24 hours, there may be a penalty for late submission, but this will depend on the level of study and how late your work is. Please see the [Undergraduate](#) or [Postgraduate](#) Academic Regulations for details.

## Exceptional circumstances

We also understand that things may not go as planned during your studies with us, so our mitigation Process is here should you need it. Mitigation seeks to reduce the impact of such occurrences on your ability to complete assessments on time or to the best of your abilities. The mitigation claim process can support you through sudden and unforeseen circumstances that temporarily prevent you from completing an assessment or significantly impact your performance in an assessment, such as an accident, illness or a family crisis.

Each Campus has a Mitigating Evidence Committee (MEC) chaired by the Academic Services Manager and attended by the Heads of School and the academic Administration Team Leader. MEC makes decisions on student mitigation claims, and the terms of reference for MEC can be found [here](#).

When applying for mitigation, you should follow the process outlined below.

## Evidence-based mitigation

For assessments where the Automatic 24-hour penalty-free submission outlined above will not be sufficient, and for examinations and other non-Canvas submitted assessments, you must apply for evidence-based mitigation.

The mitigation claim process is unsuitable for long-term or permanent issues such as disability or mental health issues, which are covered by the Individual Support Plan (ISP) process outlined in the university's [Student Disability Policy](#).

The three types of evidence-based mitigation are:

- **A standard extension:** seven days of extra time may be granted to enable you to complete a coursework assessment. This extension removes any penalty for work submitted over 24 hours and up to seven days late.
- **An uncapped Retrieval:** you will be allowed to retake the assessment without penalty and will be given a new deadline to complete the uncapped Retrieval. New deadlines set due to a successful mitigation claim will typically be two weeks from the date of approval, but may be up to six weeks, depending on your circumstances.
- **Impairment:** your performance in an assessment has been impaired due to exceptional circumstances. Following a successful mitigating evidence claim for impairment, you can either retain

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<sup>1</sup> A Retrieval is an opportunity for you to make a second attempt at a failed assessment without repeating the module.

your current mark for the assessment or accept the offer of an uncapped Retrieval. If you accept the offer, the highest mark achieved will stand.

**If you need one of these evidence-based Mitigation options, follow the three steps outlined below.**

## **A. Advice**

Before you make any final decision to claim mitigation, we recommend talking about it with someone such as:

- Your Course Leader or Deputy Course Leader.
- Your Campus Student Support Team.

You should consider the potential consequences of delaying the submission of an assessment, such as added pressure if you have too many assessments to complete simultaneously.

For information on how delaying assessments will affect you if you are an international Student Route Visa holder, please get in touch with the [Immigration & Compliance Team](#).

## **B. Apply for Mitigation**

You must complete the Mitigation Form, which is available from your campus Student Support Team.

You have up to seven days after your assessment deadline to apply for evidence-based mitigation, and you may also apply up to seven days before the assessment deadline.

You should use one form for each assessment. If you have difficulty filling out the form, please ask the Student Support Team for help.

When you submit your application form, you will need to provide verifiable and/or independent evidence of the circumstances which have affected your ability to undertake the assessment either with the form or within fourteen days of submitting the form. Evidence must be related to the current assessment period.

Applications cannot be processed until the relevant evidence is provided. You can find a list of appropriate evidence examples in Appendix 1 at the end of this policy.

## **C. Outcome**

When evaluating your mitigation claim, the Mitigating Evidence Committee (MEC) will consider the timing and severity of your mitigating circumstances and the validity of the evidence you have provided.

The MEC will process your application, and you will typically receive an outcome within ten working days of submitting your evidence (sometimes longer during busy periods).

Your mitigation claim will be judged to be either accepted, rejected or lacking sufficient evidence. If the evidence is insufficient, the MEC may request additional information, which must be submitted within fourteen days of the request. If the claim is rejected, there will be no further opportunity to present evidence.

Once you have applied, you should start preparing your assessment work for the new deadline.

However, please be aware that an uncapped Retrieval assessment might not take the same format as the original one (your Course Leader will be able to advise you on this). For example, it may not be possible for you to participate in a group-based assessment, and in such cases, an individual version of the assessment brief will be provided to you.

## Appeals

If your mitigation application is not approved, or if you believe that there has been an error in the decision-making process, you have the right to appeal.

Appeals can be made on one or more of the following grounds:

- New circumstances or evidence have become available that could affect the decision, but this information was not available to, or known by, those making the decision at the time. You must explain why this information could not reasonably have been provided earlier.
- Procedural irregularity, where the University's procedures were not followed correctly, and the outcome may have been different had this not occurred.
- Evidence of prejudice or bias on the part of those involved in making the decision.

Appeals must be submitted by emailing [casework@bimm.ac.uk](mailto:casework@bimm.ac.uk) within 15 working days of being notified of the outcome of your mitigation application.

Your appeal will be reviewed by a senior member of staff who was not involved in the original decision. They will consider the information provided and determine whether:

- the original decision should be upheld;
- the original decision should be overturned; or
- the matter should be reconsidered by a newly constituted Mitigating Evidence Committee.

You will normally receive a written outcome (known as a Completion of Procedures Letter) within 20 working days of submitting your appeal. If additional time is required, you will be informed of the reasons for the delay and provided with an updated timeframe.

If you remain dissatisfied following the completion of the University's procedures, you have the right to request an independent review of your case by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) [by completing the form here](#). Requests to the OIA must be made within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures Letter.

## Examples of mitigating circumstances

| Examples of circumstances likely to be accepted:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Examples of circumstances likely to be excluded:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serious short-term illness or injury.</li> <li>• Worsening of an existing illness or disability, including mental health conditions.</li> <li>• Symptoms of an infectious disease that could be harmful if passed on to others.</li> <li>• Death or serious illness of a close family member or friend.</li> <li>• Unexpected caring responsibilities for a family member or dependent.</li> <li>• Significant personal or family crisis leading to acute stress.</li> <li>• Witnessing a traumatic incident.</li> <li>• A crime that has had a substantial impact on you.</li> <li>• Accommodation crisis, such as eviction or your home becoming uninhabitable.</li> <li>• An emergency crisis that prevents you from attending an in-person assessment or submitting your assessment online.</li> <li>• A technical failure of the university's online submission portal.</li> <li>• Significant failure of a local power network or internet connection outage that prevents you from submitting online.</li> <li>• A vehicle breakdown and/or suspension of public transport that prevents you from attending an in-person assessment.</li> <li>• Safeguarding concerns that prevents you from attending an in-person assessment or submitting your assessment online.</li> <li>• Unavoidable work commitments due to factors outside your control.</li> <li>• A work placement or internship that prevents you from attending an in-person assessment.</li> <li>• Observance of holy days or religious festivals.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holidays, moving house or other events that could reasonably be expected.</li> <li>• Minor illness such as a cold or hay fever, unless the symptoms are particularly severe (e.g., a serious throat infection ahead of a singing assessment).</li> <li>• Assessments that are scheduled close together.</li> <li>• Misreading your assessment brief/schedule.</li> <li>• Poor time management.</li> <li>• Computer or printer failure (you are advised to back up all work for assessment).</li> <li>• Normal assessment stress.</li> <li>• Minor life events, unless the circumstances have had a disproportionate impact.</li> </ul> |

## **Other reasons why your mitigation application may not be approved**

Examples of why an application may not be approved include the following:

- A statement that indicates the existence of an acute medical condition, but no medical evidence is submitted, or the medical certificate lacks detail to support the claim, such as a 'retrospective' medical note, where consultation dates do not support the period of the claim.
- Where an uncapped Retrieval deadline beyond the maximum period of six weeks is requested.
- A request for an uncapped Retrieval deadline beyond week 14 of semester/trimester 2 for a semester/trimester 1 assessment.
- A request for an uncapped Retrieval deadline beyond the summer Retrieval deadline for a semester/trimester 2 assessment.
- Where there are outstanding extended deadlines for four or more modules.
- Where deadline extensions will result in an unmanageable assessment schedule for you, whether due to short-term assessment bunching or overall workload (your track record may be considered when making this judgement), in such cases, the MEC will recommend you intermit and return in the following academic year to complete any outstanding assessments.
- Computer equipment failure will not generally be an acceptable reason for mitigation, as we expect you to take responsibility for backing up your data. However, the failure of BIMM University systems and the failure of internet and electricity providers will be taken into account.

## **Occasional authorised absences from practical or in-person assessments**

If you wish to observe religious festivals and holy days, engage in a work placement, internship commitment or professional engagement which may clash with a scheduled in-person assessment, you may make a formal request to the Course Leader accompanied by a letter from the religious/sporting/placement/event organiser confirming your intention to observe/attend/take part in the event/placement and the date/duration. Any requests must be made four weeks before the in-person assessment. The Course Leader will consider the request and the evidence and inform the Campus Academic Services Team.

## **Special scheme of study policy**

This policy, available [here](#), is designed to meet the needs of students at BIMM University who may be offered professional opportunities in the creative industries during their studies. In such cases, this policy allows Course Leaders to propose adjustments to teaching and assessment that will enable students to continue their studies whilst taking on professional engagements that will benefit their professional development.

## **Appendix 1: Acceptable Mitigating Circumstances Evidence**

All documents submitted should be written in English; a translated version must accompany any evidence in another language. All evidence from third parties (anyone other than the student) must be emailed to the Student Support Team.

### **Ill health or a decline in mental health**

- Doctor's note: either a sick note signing you off or a handwritten note from the GP explaining your current circumstances. Notes must include dates of consultation and diagnosis.
- Other medical evidence, including hospital admission records and notes from other practising medical professionals, including dates of consultation and diagnosis.
- Mental health professional evidence: we do not accept evidence from university Student Support Advisers, but will accept evidence from a counsellor/psychotherapist, including a university-employed Student Counsellor.
- A letter from Student Support confirming that 'reasonable adjustments' are required but not yet in place.
- A lateral flow test result indicates if you have contracted COVID-19.

### **Bereavement**

- Death certificate.
- Funeral order of service.
- An emailed statement from a family member.

### **Recent traumatic event**

- A doctor's letter, if possible, to evidence a decline in mental health due to a traumatic event.
- Evidence from a specialist support service that works with individuals who have been through trauma/assault.
- A written statement from a Student Support Adviser.

### **Mitigating evidence for caregivers**

- If you are a caregiver and your responsibility to provide that care, for example, to a sick child, impacts your ability to complete an assessment, then we will accept evidence from a third party (GP, school or another verifiable source).

### **Work commitments**

- We usually expect you to plan your time so that work commitments do not impact your ability to submit assessments on time. However, there may be occasions when significant working deadlines clash with university deadlines. These cases will be reviewed on merit, and you will need to clarify why the clash of deadlines occurred because of factors outside your control that could not have been foreseen for your claim to be accepted. You will also need to provide appropriate evidence, such as a letter from your employer.

**Other acceptable evidence (this is not an exhaustive list, and other circumstances may be considered as a basis for mitigation)**

- Housing: a letter/statement from the landlord or agency where an eviction or other significant housing-related event has impacted your studies.
- Vehicle breakdown en route to an in-person assessment: breakdown provider/garage receipt, etc.
- Statement from the Course Leader or Head of School if the university is responsible for an issue that has made you unable to submit your work.

Please note that falsifying mitigation evidence may lead to an investigation under the [Student Disciplinary Procedure](#).