COVID-19 Response

Mitigating Circumstances Guidance for Students

Updated: 14 June 2021

Introduction

This guidance was developed by teaching and professional services staff and Birkbeck Students’ Union representatives. This guidance should be read in conjunction with the Mitigating Circumstances Policy and Procedure.

The College recognises Coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to impact student’s lives. We amended the mitigating circumstances processes since the beginning of the pandemic that have been beneficial to students, and that we will continue to use during the 2021/22 academic year. For 2021/22 we publish this guidance to accompany the Mitigating Circumstances Policy and Procedure.

If you have suffered significant personal or family illness, bereavement or serious personal, emotional or financial challenges as a result of COVID-19 or other unforeseen circumstances unrelated to COVID-19, then you may wish to submit a claim for Mitigating Circumstances. Claims should be submitted if these factors have impacted on your ability to submit the assessment or on your ability to perform well on the assessment.

Mitigating circumstances

Submission of a claim

We now have an online process to receive mitigating circumstances claims. You can submit a mitigating circumstances claim at any point in advance of an assessment and up to 14 days after the assessment submission date. It is important that you submit claims in this timeframe. View the step-by-step process below.

When to submit a claim

You should consider submitting a mitigating circumstances claim if your circumstances have affected your ability to submit your assessment, submit your assessment on time or have impacted negatively on your performance.

COVID-19 Acceptable Grounds

The Birkbeck Mitigating Circumstances Policy and Guidance remains applicable but with the following amendments in relation to COVID-19 that are applicable during this period.

- No documentary evidence is required for any claims.
- The addition of the following examples as acceptable grounds for claims.

Examples of circumstances beyond the reasonable control of the student:

N.B. this list is not exhaustive.

- Bereavement due to COVID-19
- Hospitalisation due to contracting COVID-19
- Self-isolation due to having COVID-19 or COVID-19 like symptoms
- Financial impacts due to furlough, loss of work or redundancy
- Difficulties in completing work because of limited access to a computer, internet or quiet study space
- Reduced capacity to study due to having to home-school, children/or caring for vulnerable
relatives etc.
- Taking on extra work in employment to cover staff absences/ extra shifts as a key worker
- Deterioration of existing mental ill health conditions or development of such conditions

**Consideration of claims**

Departments will consider your claims through the Sub Board of Examiners and mitigating circumstances panels. You will be notified of the outcome of your claim at the earliest opportunity after an exam board has made a decision. Please be assured you will be offered the maximum support, given the unprecedented international situation and whilst maintaining academic standards.

Exam boards will make a decision on the appropriate mitigation for you in line with the mitigating circumstances policy. The following are the most likely outcomes for accepted claims.

- If you are claiming for a late submission and your claim is accepted, then your assessment submission will not be penalised for late submission.
- If you are claiming for non-submission and your claim is accepted you will be either permitted to be given a module mark based on an already completed assessment (i.e. marks from non-affected assessments will be used to decide the module result) or offered the opportunity to be reassessed without penalty.
- If you are a finalist and your claim is accepted, if your weighted average is within 2.00% of a borderline, you may be considered for award of the higher classification.

**Claiming mitigating circumstances for multiple modules**

Since we removed the requirement to submit evidence for a mitigating circumstance claim, and have simplified the claim process, the number of claims made is very high.

While we want to support you to be able to make any mitigating circumstances claims that you need to, submitting multiple mitigating circumstances claims can also be an indication that you are struggling with the course and may benefit from additional support. To support your academic development and your progression and completion goals, if you submit multiple mitigating circumstances claims, we may highlight these and direct you to our student services.

**Queries**

If you have any questions regarding the Mitigating Circumstances please raise a query via ASK.

**Further reading**

A full list of College Policy and Regulations can be found at: [http://www.bbk.ac.uk/registry/policies/policies-2020-21](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/registry/policies/policies-2020-21)

**Registry Services**

June 2021
STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS TO SUBMIT A MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCE CLAIM

1. Make a new claim

- Go to My Birkbeck, where you can start a new claim via the My Records menu option and selecting “My mitigating circumstances”.

![Menu Screenshot](image-url)
Selecting this menu takes you to a screen where the student can list their modules.

**MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES**

Birkbeck recognises that the academic year 2019/0 may be disrupted in various ways by the situation related to coronavirus. We have developed the mitigating circumstances process to be as flexible as possible this year.

- All Mitigating Circumstances claims are to be made through My Birkbeck.
- We are continuing the additional acceptable reasons for mitigating circumstances due to the impact of Covid-19 that were introduced in Spring 2020.
- The deadline for submission of claims remains as per the normal mitigating circumstances policy at the latest 14 days after the assessment deadline. Please do not submit a mitigating circumstance claim after this date.
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- Acceptance of mitigating circumstances claims is at the discretion of the College only.
- All information submitted as a claim of mitigating circumstances will be treated as confidential.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic year</th>
<th>Course title</th>
<th>Module code</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019/0</td>
<td>MSc Management</td>
<td>MOMN011H7 AAA</td>
<td>Research Methods in Management (Postgraduate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019/0</td>
<td>MSc Management</td>
<td>MOMN061H7 AAA</td>
<td>Digital Creativity and New Media Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019/0</td>
<td>MSc Management</td>
<td>MOMN040H7 AAA</td>
<td>Perspectives on Organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 - 3

Start a new claim

To make a new mitigating circumstances claim, select individual, multiple or all modules and select ‘Start a new claim’ button:

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Start a new claim
- Review and select the reason for the claim, whether coronavirus was a major factor for making the claim and if so, what. You must also enter a description of reasons for the claim and click on Submit claim to start the claim:

   NEW CLAIM

   In order to complete the claim you MUST provide supporting reasons for the circumstances under which you are making this claim for the course modules listed. After submitting your claim, you will receive an ASK where you will be able to attach all supporting documents as evidence to help us process your claim effectively.

   Please provide details of the circumstances that have significantly affected your performance for each course module listed. Limit of 4000 characters.

   * What is the claim for?
     Late submission

   Is the major impacting factor coronavirus?
   - No
   - Yes

   If yes, how has coronavirus impacted you?
   Increased caring responsibilities

   * Reasons
     Dear Sir/Madam,
     I am sorry to say that due to the extended personal duties for my family I have was unable to completed the above mentioned modules on time and

   Explain how your circumstances have affected your work or studies.

   Please focus your explanation on the period of time in which you were undertaking the piece of assessment. A major factor in determining the validity and impact of your claim will be a review of the connection between the date(s) of the mitigating circumstances concerned and the date of your assessment. Instructions for attaching supporting evidence will be given on the next page.

   Submit claim Cancel

- You will see a confirmation message with the ASK number (in bold) and can either make another claim or return to the home page. You will receive an email (this will be an ASK email template).

2. Submit your evidence

- You should now submit your documentary evidence.
• To submit documentary evidence, follow the same process as for submitting the claim initially: go to My Birkbeck, go to the My Records menu option and select “My mitigating circumstances”. You will now see your existing claims together with any unclaimed modules.

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These are claims you have made

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Claim Nr</th>
<th>Date submitted</th>
<th>Ask Nr</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Academic year</th>
<th>Module code</th>
<th>Occurrence</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>16-Oct-2020</td>
<td>30617</td>
<td>CLOSED</td>
<td>2019/0</td>
<td>BUMN017H7</td>
<td>AAA</td>
<td>Marketing Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>16-Oct-2020</td>
<td>30617</td>
<td>CLOSED</td>
<td>2019/0</td>
<td>BUMN055H7</td>
<td>AAA</td>
<td>Public Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>16-Oct-2020</td>
<td>30617</td>
<td>CLOSED</td>
<td>2019/0</td>
<td>BUMN061D7</td>
<td>AAA</td>
<td>MSc Dissertation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121</td>
<td>19-Oct-2020</td>
<td>30618</td>
<td>OPEN</td>
<td>2019/0</td>
<td>BUMN085H7</td>
<td>AAA</td>
<td>Principles of Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>142</td>
<td>21-Oct-2020</td>
<td>30626</td>
<td>OPEN</td>
<td>2019/0</td>
<td>MOMN011H7</td>
<td>AAA</td>
<td>Research Methods in Management (Postgraduate)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• The claimed modules have a Claim number (e.g. 142) and associated ASK number (e.g. 30626). Click on the Claim number to view more details.

Clicking on the ASK number will take you directly to the ASK.
• Click on Update Ask

• Ensure that the upload button is then clicked to complete the upload:
• You will receive notification when your claim is reviewed. You can view the progress of your claim by clicking on ‘My mitigating circumstances’ in My Birkbeck.