

What to Do When Things Go Wrong

Narrative Guide

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Introduction

This information is for guidance only. Its purpose is to provide students with clear accessible information in relation to **BPP University's General Academic Regulations (GARs)** and *Manual of Policies and Procedures (MoPPs)*. Where there is conflict between this guidance and the **GARs** or **MoPPs**, the latter will take precedent.

This guide should accompany the What to Do When Things Go Wrong - Procedure Diagrams document on the **VLE** or **The Hub**.

What to Do Should Things Go Wrong

At **BPP University** we are aware that sometimes things do not go according to plan and unfortunately problems can and do arise. If this happens to you then there is help and support available to you.

We take your well-being seriously and if you are unwell or suffer any unforeseen problems, your recovery, rather than your studies, should be your main priority.

Regulatory Framework

All academic courses at **BPP University** are covered by a regulatory framework which includes the *General Academic Regulations* and the *Manual of Policies and Procedures*. This booklet has been devised to provide you with an overview of the regulations you will need to know when things do not go according to plan. For detailed information on the **University's** regulatory procedures, please see the references to the relevant parts of the regulations.

The **GARs** and the **MoPPs** can be accessed via the **VLE** or **The Hub**.

Points of Contact

Should you require any guidance or advice on the best course of action for you to take, you should speak to your *Personal Tutor* in the first instance, or a member of your *Programme Team*. You can also speak to the Independent Advice Service run by the Students' Association, who can provide feedback on mitigating circumstances or academic appeal applications, advise on the complaints procedure, and support the academic misconduct process. They can be contacted via the Students' Association website.

Virtual Learning Environment

Further information and guidance is published on the *Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)* and on **The Hub**¹. The relevant forms for the procedures set out in this booklet can be found on relevant section of the **VLE** or **The Hub**.

This booklet is divided into sections that may be relevant to you at different times. Please read this booklet so that you have an initial overview of the actions that are available to you. Keep this booklet in a safe place and refer to it when you feel you may need it.

¹ Your course will be run via either the **VLE** or **The Hub**.

We sincerely hope that your time here is enjoyable and problem-free, and on behalf of the staff at **BPP University** we wish you the very best of luck on your chosen programme of study.

Your Programme

Interruption of Studies

If you experience problems that impact on your ability to successfully continue on your programme, such as prolonged health issues, maternity/paternity, or the death of a close relative, you may request what is called an *Interruption of Studies (IoS)*. This will allow you to put your programme on hold and then recommence at a later date.

Process

You will need to discuss your circumstances with your *Programme Leader*. All discussions are treated in confidence. The *Programme Leader* will be able to advise you if there are any barriers preventing you from taking an **IoS**, such as student funding or if you are an international student on a Tier 4 Visa².

An application for an **IoS** must be made using the **IoS** form on the Student Services tab on the **VLE** or through **The Hub**. Once completed, the form must be sent to the *Programme Leader*, along with any objective and authoritative evidence supporting the application. The *Programme Leader* will then record their decision on the form with their grounds, the dates of the **IoS**, any issues noted relating to the programme of study, any conditions for re-entry, any fees, and any action to be taken. This will be sent to the student. The form will then pass to the *Student Records Office*.

Outcome

If there are no barriers preventing you from taking an **IoS**, your *Programme Leader* will inform you of your return date and you will recommence your studies from this point. If there are barriers that may prevent the granting of an **IoS**, your *Programme Leader* may advise you on further action that could be taken such as changing your mode of study (i.e. from full-time to part-time).

Further reading

Please see *Rules and Procedure for Suspension of Registration and the Granting of Interruption of Studies* in: **MoPPs/Part G/Section 3**.

² Due to Home Office requirements, Student Route visa students will need to provide evidence to justify a lack of engagement. Your *Personal Tutor* can advise further on this.

Your Assessments

Many students complete their studies at **BPP University** without encountering any difficulties. These pages are dedicated to helping you understand what the process is at various stages if an issue occurs which may either affect your performance during an assessment or prevent you from sitting an assessment altogether.

When things go wrong, they are likely to impact on your revision or your performance in an assessment, and you may not reach your true academic potential.

At **BPP University** we ask all students to take responsibility for their own actions, and this includes the taking of assessments. Therefore, if you know in advance that your performance may be affected due to illness or other foreseeable circumstances, you should defer your assessment to the next available sitting.

We recognise that when things go wrong, they are mainly outside of your control.

When you defer an assessment, you should discuss the impact that this will have on your academic progression with your *Personal Tutor* or *Programme Leader*.

If you have a long-term or chronic illness, we ask that you discuss assessment arrangements with our *Learning Support Office* on learningsupport@bpp.com. Ongoing or chronic conditions are not usually considered as valid mitigating circumstances since these are known in advance and it can be expected that these are being managed on an ongoing basis. If you use the same mitigating circumstance on more than one occasion, you may be asked to take an **IoS** and return at a later date, once you have recovered or your illness is being successfully managed.

Fit to Sit Policy

At **BPP University** we operate a Fit to Sit Policy which requires students to take responsibility for their own well-being and actions. The underlying principle is that if you attend an examination, whether it is written or oral, or submit an assessment, then by doing so you are declaring yourself fit to take that assessment. Only in very exceptional circumstances will a mark awarded be removed if you have sat the assessment.

Being 'fit' generally means that you are not aware of any impediment, physical, emotional or otherwise, which could affect your performance. Therefore, if you are feeling unwell because of medical or personal difficulties in the run-up to the assessment, you should not attend, but take the course of action applicable to your circumstances.

Further reading

Please see *Rules on Mitigating Circumstances and Concessions* in: **MoPPs/Part H/Section 6**.

Deferral of Assessment

If you are unable to sit your examination due to illness or circumstances beyond your control, your *Programme Leader*, or nominee, may grant you a deferral, whereby you will be expected to sit or submit the assessment at the next available opportunity.

Process

If you wish to apply to defer an examination, you must submit a completed deferral application (using the prescribed deferral form found on the **VLE or The Hub**) to your *Programme Leader*, or nominee, **by 12 noon the working day before** the date of the examination.

You will need to have your deferral approved by your *Programme Leader*, or nominee, and you will be required to provide evidence in support of your reasons for deferral.³ Only your *Programme Leader*, or nominee, has discretion to grant or reject your deferral application. You will be notified of the outcome of your application by your *Programme Leader* or nominee.

Outcome

You will be notified on the outcome of your deferral application by **18:00pm on the day before the assessment**. If your application for a deferral is granted, you will be expected to attempt the assessment at the next available opportunity.

If you have not received confirmation of the deferral prior to the examination, you should assume that it has not been granted and should therefore expect to sit the originally scheduled examination or assessment. If you do not sit the examination at the next opportunity, the examination you did not attend will be counted as one of your remaining attempts and your re-sit mark will be capped.

Deferral applications will be considered for circumstances including, but not limited to: illness, death or serious illness of a member of immediate family, or a significant and unforeseen change in personal circumstance.⁴

Further reading

Please see *Deferral of Examination Procedure* in: **MoPPs/Part H/Section 4**.

³ For further guidance on evidence for deferrals, please see the *Evidence Guidance Document* on the **VLE or The Hub**. Please note, as per the document *Arrangements for Returning to the University's General Academic Regulations – 3 June 2021, v1.3*, until 24 September 2021 students will be able to self-certify the reasons for absence from an assessment as it may currently be difficult to obtain evidence.

⁴ For further guidance on valid circumstances for deferrals, please see the *Evidence Guidance Document* on the **VLE, or The Hub**.

Extension of Assessment

Extensions are only applicable to assessments that are examined by way of submitted written coursework – not including online exams. If you do not submit your work by the required deadline, you will usually be given a mark of zero.

Process

If you are affected by circumstances which mean you are unable to meet an original deadline for submission of work, you should contact your *Programme Leader* immediately to discuss and request an extension of time. Extensions are granted at a *Programme Leader's* (or *nominee's*) discretion after considering individual circumstances which may have affected your ability to complete or submit the assessment within the deadline.

The deadline for submitting an extension request is **12.00 noon on the last working day**⁵ before the submission is due. Extensions must be submitted using the prescribed extension form found on the **VLE/The Hub**.

Outcome

If your extension is granted, your *Programme Leader*, or nominee, will inform you of your new deadline. Extensions are normally granted for up to **three** calendar days to the assessment deadline for **full-time students** or up to **five** calendar days for **part-time students** and/or for **modules worth 40 credits and above**, unless a Learning Support Agreement explicitly provides otherwise. If applicable, you will also be informed of any specific submission instructions. The *Programme Leader* (or *nominee*) has discretion on the evidence submitted to grant/refuse an extension⁶.

If you have had extenuating circumstances and you failed to submit your work by the deadline without an agreed extension, you must refer to the guidelines on submitting a Mitigating Circumstances application.

Further reading

Please see *Extension of Deadline Date for Assessments Procedure* in: **MoPPs/Part H/Section 5**.

Mitigating Circumstances

An application for Mitigating Circumstances should only be made when the deadline for submitting a deferral or extension application has passed or if you have attended the

⁵ A working day is defined as Monday to Friday, excluding weekends and public holidays.

⁶ Please note, as per the document Arrangements for Returning to the University's General Academic Regulations – 3 June 2021, v1.3, until 24 September 2021 students will be able to self-certify the reasons for absence from an assessment as it may currently be difficult to obtain evidence

assessment and strongly feel your performance was affected by unforeseeable and unavoidable circumstances beyond your control.

Process

Mitigating Circumstances are serious, unforeseen, unpreventable circumstances that significantly impair your performance in an assessment, including rendering you unable to submit a deferral or extension application within the required deadline.

It is important to note that if you are taken ill during a face-to-face assessment you are required to notify the invigilator before leaving the venue to ensure the time and nature of your illness is noted. As a matter of courtesy to your fellow students, if you are taken ill in the assessment you should leave after notifying the invigilator. If you are sitting an online exam, it is important that you let your Programme Leader or Personal Tutor know at the first possible opportunity. This information may be requested by the *Office of Regulation and Compliance* when considering your application. You will also be required to seek medical attention on the day if you feel your performance was adversely affected and you intend to submit a Mitigating Circumstances application form⁷.

Your application and accompanying independent evidence must demonstrate that the circumstances meet the following criteria:

Timely	<i>Circumstances occurred during or in very close proximity to the assessment</i>
Severe	<i>Circumstances have had a significant impact on performance</i>
Acute	<i>Circumstances are not ongoing</i>
Unexpected	<i>Affected by an unplanned circumstance that could not have been foreseen</i>

The completed Mitigating Circumstances online application form must be submitted to the *Office of Regulation and Compliance (ORC)* no more than **10 working days after** the assessment took place or was due to be submitted for written coursework.⁸ The Mitigating Circumstances application form must be accompanied by objective and authoritative evidence showing the time and character of the circumstances.⁹

Once submitted, your application will be considered by **ORC** to determine if the information provided by you satisfies the threshold for a valid mitigating circumstances application. You will then be notified in writing, usually online with your application, normally **within 10 working days** of the outcome.

⁷ As per the document *Arrangements for Returning to the University's General Academic Regulations – 3 June 2021, v1.3*, until 24 September 2021 students will be able to self-certify the reasons for absence from an assessment as it may currently be difficult to obtain evidence. It is recommended that students applying for mitigating circumstances submit their application no more than 10 working days after the assessment took place/was due.

⁸ Mitigating Circumstances applications are submitted using an online form on [The Hub](#). Students whose course is run via the **VLE** will need to create an account in The Hub before accessing 'My Applications' then 'BPP University Mitigating Circumstances Form'.

⁹ For further guidance on evidence for valid mitigating circumstances, please see the *Evidence Guidance Document* on the **VLE** and **The Hub**.

If your application is rejected, you may request a review by the *Deputy Vice-Chancellor*, or nominee, **within 5 working days**, accompanied by reasons why you feel the decision of **ORC** is unsound.

If threshold conditions are met but the application is not immediately granted by the *Deputy Vice-Chancellor*, or nominee, it will be referred to the *Office of Regulation and Compliance* for consideration.

For coursework* (i.e. 'traditional' coursework, not online exams): If your application is **successful**, you may select your desired outcome when completing the form:

- To have the assessment disregarded, and to take it again at the next available sitting;
- Or
- Where you submitted the coursework late without an extension having been granted before the deadline - to have the assessment considered as being received on time.

**Please note: if the application is granted, the coursework will be marked and you will retain the mark awarded. The mark will not be removed should you fail the assessment.*

For written assessment(s): If your application is **successful**, your original assessment attempt will be disregarded, and you will take it again at the next available sitting.

Outcome

If your application for Mitigating Circumstances is rejected no action will be taken and your results, as confirmed by the *Board of Examiners*, will stand.

Please note that Mitigating Circumstances applications cannot be made for matters where a Learning Support Agreement has been agreed to provide for individual learning or support needs. If a student has a Learning Support Agreement in place but experiences additional mitigating circumstances, or the circumstances covered by the Learning Support Agreement significantly worsen during the assessment, then they may apply through the Mitigating Circumstances procedure.

Further reading

Please see *Rules on Mitigating Circumstances and Concessions* in: **MoPPs/Part H/Section 6**.

Academic Appeals

A student may appeal against a **University** decision where there is reasonable ground, supported by authoritative and objective evidence, to believe that an administrative or procedural error has affected the outcome; or that the decision was manifestly unreasonable¹⁰; or there is new evidence which for good reason could not have been submitted earlier.

A student may appeal against the result of any investigation or action taken under the **MoPPs**, the unconfirmed result of a module or assessment element or the unconfirmed result on the completion of a designated stage in a programme.

A student may appeal under the following grounds:

- a) there is reasonable ground supported by authoritative and objective evidence to believe that there has been administrative or procedural error of such a nature as to have affected the outcome of the investigation or result; or
- b) the decision in the case was manifestly unreasonable; or
- c) there is **new** evidence that for good reason, objectively and authoritatively documented, could not be submitted earlier.

The *Academic Appeals Board* does not make decisions on mitigating circumstances. Such decisions are made by the *Office of Regulation and Compliance (ORC)*. You can however appeal against decisions made on mitigating circumstances, including those that have already been considered by the *Office of Regulation and Compliance*. Students submitting an appeal based on mitigating circumstances that existed at the time of assessment must explain why they were unable to submit a mitigating circumstances application at the time. However, students should note that an appeal against a grade is unlikely to be accepted where the issue was known at the time of the assessment.¹¹

Process

All submitted appeals must be submitted via the online form available on **The Hub**¹² You must support your academic appeal application with documented evidence supporting your ground(s) of appeal. This evidence should be authoritative and independent. Impartial advice on submitting an appeal may be sought from your *Personal Tutor* or *Programme Leader* in the first instance.

An academic appeal should be lodged with **ORC within 20 working days** of receiving unconfirmed results or **within 20 working days** of the written confirmation of the decision against which you wish to appeal.

Students should be aware that if they re-open their online application after it has been submitted, it will be considered withdrawn. If it is resubmitted, this will be taken as the date received, which may be outside of the **20 working day** timeframe and will be considered as a late application.

¹⁰ A decision is “manifestly unreasonable” if it can be demonstrated unequivocally that an Officer of **BPP University** or a properly constituted *University Panel* or *Board* has made an irrational, perverse or logically flawed decision.

¹¹ *Arrangements for Returning to the University’s General Academic Regulations – 3 June 2021, v1.3,*

¹² Students whose course is run via the **VLE** will need to create an account in The Hub before accessing ‘My Applications’ then the appeals form.

A late appeal shall only be accepted if **ORC** is satisfied that circumstances exist which made it reasonable for the appellant not to have applied within the period specified above. Evidence of grounds for a late appeal must be supplied by the appellant. Once you have submitted your appeal, **ORC** will initially review your appeal to ensure that it has been submitted in accordance with the **GARs** and also to establish whether the information presented by the student has produced a case that satisfies the threshold conditions for a valid appeal.

You will be notified by **ORC** normally **within 10 working days** whether your application is accepted or rejected at the initial consideration stage.

Should your appeal be successful at this initial stage it will then be referred to the *Academic Appeals Board* who will carefully consider your case and the evidence that you have provided.

Outcome

ORC will write to you to inform you of the outcome of your appeal normally **within 5 working days** whether the *Academic Appeals Board* upholds or rejects your appeal.

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator

If you are dissatisfied with the decision of the *Academic Appeals Board*, you may refer your complaint to the *Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)*, within 12 months of **BPP University** issuing a Completion of Procedure Letter. The **OIA** is an independent body established by Government and funded by the university sector to run an independent student complaints scheme for universities in England and Wales. For more information about the **OIA** and the procedure for submitting a complaint, students can visit the **OIA** website [here](#).

Please see *Student Appeals Procedure* in: **MoPPs Part K, Section 3** and *Academic Appeals* in: **GARs/Part K, Section 3**

Complaints

Informal Complaints

If you are dissatisfied with an aspect of service or treatment that you have received from the University, a complaint can be made.

In the first instance, complaints should be raised informally with the person concerned, e.g. where the complaint relates to a tutor's teaching methods the matter might be most effectively resolved by discussion with that tutor.

If discussion with the person concerned is not possible or not appropriate, then an informal complaint should be raised with:

- a) the Student Advice and Guidance Team; or
- b) the student's personal tutor; or
- c) the Module Leader; or
- d) the Programme Leader or Deputy Programme Leader; or
- e) the Head of Programmes.

The student must decide with whom to raise the matter, depending on the nature of the complaint and the urgency of the matter. On receipt of an informal complaint, and with the student's consent, the member of staff consulted may refer the complaint to a more appropriate member of staff to address it.

The following guidelines should be followed:

- (a) Complaints against individuals should not be raised at the staff-student liaison meeting.
- (b) Where the complaint concerns the conduct of a member of the academic or support staff the complaint should normally be made to the Programme Leader.
- (c) Where the complaint concerns a Programme Leader it should normally be made to another Programme Leader or the Head of Programmes.
- (d) Exceptionally, the serious nature of the complaint may justify making a formal complaint (see below) without first making an informal complaint.

The person to whom the informal complaint is made will seek to resolve the matter within **15 working days** of the complaint being made.

Further reading

Please see *Student Complaints Policy and Procedure* in: **MoPPs/Part K/Section 2.**

Formal Complaints

After an informal complaint is made, it is for the student to decide whether to escalate their complaints according to the following;

- (a) the student is not satisfied that the matter has been resolved by the informal process;
- (b) the student is asked to lodge a formal complaint because of the possibility of disciplinary action being taken against a member of staff or student;
- (c) because of the serious nature of the complaint, the student elects to make a formal complaint without first making an informal complaint.

Process

A formal complaint should be made using the **Formal Complaint Form** which can be found on the **VLE** or **The Hub**. The completed form should then be sent to the Office of Regulation & Compliance (ORC@bpp.com) within **40 calendar days** of the occurrence of the subject of the complaint.

The complaint must detail what informal attempts have been made to resolve it, for example, with the Personal Tutor, Programme Leader, Student Records Office or Student Finance Office. The student must also provide any documentation or evidence that they are relying on to support the complaint and detail the remedy they seek.

Students should normally expect to receive an acknowledgement of the receipt of the complaint within **five working days** on receipt of a completed formal complaint form, and the outcome of the investigation into the formal complaint in writing normally within **28 working days**. Students will be informed if, for any reason, there is likely to be a delay in the process.

Outcome

The outcomes of a formal complaint may include the complaint being:

- (a) upheld in whole with a statement as to the remedy;
- (b) upheld in part with a statement as to the remedy and an explanation regarding those parts dismissed;
- (c) dismissed with a statement as to the reasons.

If the student is satisfied with the written response from the ORC, the complaint is deemed to be resolved.

Late Formal Complaints

A formal complaint should be made as soon as possible after the informal procedures have been exhausted, and formal complaints will only be considered outside this timescale if there are good reasons, supported by objective and authoritative evidence, for not complying within this timescale.

Students should enclose a covering letter explaining the reasons for lateness and enclose any relevant evidence to support the lateness with the **Formal Complaint Form**.

The Office of Regulation and Compliance (ORC) or nominee will consider the reasons why the form is late and will decide whether or not to accept the formal complaint for review.

Appeals against the Outcome of Formal Complaints

If a student considers that their formal complaint has not been properly investigated under the formal complaints procedure, they may appeal to the Vice-Chancellor, (vicechancellor@bpp.com), to review their complaint, for which there is no prescribed form. The appeal must be sent to the Vice-Chancellor within **10 working days** of the notification of the outcome of the formal complaint. It will only be considered outside the **10 working day** timeframe if there are good reasons for not complying, which are supported by objective and authoritative evidence.

Appeals to the Vice-Chancellor against the outcome of a formal complaint will only be considered where:

- (a) there were procedural irregularities in the investigation of the formal complaint; or
- (b) new evidence can be presented which could not reasonably have been available to the investigator of the formal complaint.

The student must also specify:

- (c) the grounds on which the complaint should be reviewed; and
- (d) the resolution that the student seeks; and either:
 - I. the procedural irregularities that occurred in the investigation of the formal complaint; or
 - II. the new evidence that has become available that was not considered in the original investigation.

Where the appeal does not satisfy at least one of the grounds and is rejected, ORC shall issue a Completion of Procedures Letter to the student.

The Vice-Chancellor, or nominee, will review how the formal complaint has been investigated and the decision reached. The form and conduct of the review is at the discretion of the Vice-Chancellor, or nominee. The student will be notified of the outcome of the review in writing by the Vice-Chancellor, or nominee, (normally by email) **within 28 working days** of receipt of the appeal. The Students will be informed by Vice-Chancellor, or their nominee if, for any reason, there is likely to be a delay in the process.

The Vice-Chancellor, or nominee, may as a result of their investigation:

- (a) confirm the outcome of the formal complaint; or
- (b) substitute their own decision for that of the original investigator; or
- (c) order a new investigation.

Where the Vice-Chancellor, or nominee, confirms the original outcome of the formal complaint there shall be no further mechanism for appeal and the University's internal complaints procedure shall be deemed to have been exhausted. The student will then be issued with a 'Completion of Procedures Letter'.

Further Appeal against the Outcome of Formal Complaints

Where the student has exhausted the University's internal procedures and remains dissatisfied with the outcome, they may refer their complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The OIA is an independent body established by Government to run an independent student complaints scheme for universities in England and Wales.

The student must refer their complaint to the OIA **within 12 months** of the date of the Completion of Procedures Letter.

For more information about the OIA and the procedure for submitting a complaint, students can visit the OIA website at www.oiahe.org.uk.

Further reading

Please see *Student Complaints Policy and Procedure* in: **MoPPs/Part K/Section 2**.

Help

Which procedure should I use?

Below we have given some examples of issues and the procedures which need to be followed. If you are in any doubt about which process is applicable to your circumstances, you should speak to a member of staff who will be happy to advise you.

Issue	Procedure
I have unavoidable commitments on the day of my exam	<i>Deferral or Mitigating Circumstances</i>
I am ill and my <i>examination</i> is taking place in less than 1 working days' time	<i>Mitigating Circumstances</i>
I am ill and my <i>examination</i> is taking place in more than 1 working days' time	<i>Deferral</i>
I have a <i>written assessment</i> to submit in more than 1 working days' time and I have become ill	<i>Extension</i>
I woke up on the morning of the exam and felt ill	<i>Mitigating Circumstances</i>
I have been diagnosed with an illness that is going to affect my studies	<i>Interruption of Studies</i>
I have started my unseen assessment and I have been taken ill	<i>Mitigating Circumstances</i>
I was granted an extension for my assessment, but was still unable to hand my work in	<i>Mitigating Circumstances</i>
I disagree with a decision reached by the University	<i>Academic Appeal</i>
I have exhausted the University's appeals procedure and remain dissatisfied with the outcome, which I believe, for good reason, to be unfair	<i>Make referral to the OIA within 12 months of the <u>Completion of Procedures Letter</u></i>

Who should I contact?

For further information on any of the procedures set out in this booklet, please contact your *Personal Tutor*, your *Programme Leader* or a member of your programme team. You can also speak to the Independent Advice Service run by the Students' Association, who can provide feedback on mitigating circumstances or academic appeal applications, advise on the complaints procedure, and support the academic misconduct process. They can be contacted via the Students' Association website.

Alternatively, please contact **ORC** (*Office of Regulation and Compliance*) by email: orc@bpp.com.