

Mitigating Circumstances & Deferrals Evidence Guidance

Mitigating Circumstances are defined as unforeseeable and unavoidable circumstances that have a detrimental effect on academic performance, while *Deferrals* are sought when a student is either unfit to enter an examination or assessment or their performance in the examination or assessment would be significantly and adversely affected (*MoPPs/ Part H/ Section 4, Paragraphs 9-15 & Section 6, Paragraph 2*). This Guidance is aligned with the BPP University *MoPPs/ Part H/ Sections 4 & 6*.

All *Mitigating Circumstances* applications must be submitted online via www.bpp.com/login, whilst *Deferral* applications are submitted using the prescribed form available on the *Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)*, under the *Registry & Student Support* category.

1) General Evidence Requirements

Evidence submitted as part of a *Mitigating Circumstances/Deferral* claim must be **authoritative, objective, proximate and relevant** to the assessment for which the concession is being sought. It is the student's responsibility to submit evidence along with this form and to pay for any costs incurred obtaining evidence.

Acceptable evidence should be:

- i. Original, signed documentation from an appropriate official (e.g. a registered medical practitioner, hospital consultant, solicitor, police officer) giving details of:
 - Circumstance
 - Duration
 - Impact
- ii. Supplied on official headed paper.
- iii. Signed and **dated** by the author.
- iv. Written in English or a certified translation. If a translation is submitted, the original must also be provided.

Evidence Notes

- i. E-mail correspondence may be acceptable if the e-mail has been sent by the author from the official domain name of the author's organisation, and should include the author's formal email signature with physical address and telephone details. *E-mail as a format of evidence will always be accepted in cases regarding blind or visually impaired students.*
- ii. If the evidence is in e-mail format, full 'header' details should be included, i.e. the senders' name and email address, date sent, address sent to, and subject line.
- iii. If accompanied with evidence, an unaltered scanned copy should be sent as an e-mail attachment (preferably in .PDF format).
- iv. If **international evidence** is provided, the certifier must be licensed to practise in the country in question and the same rules on evidence apply.
- v. All evidence must be proximate and relevant to the assessment for which the concession is sought and clearly evidence how the student's academic performance has been adversely affected by unforeseeable and unavoidable circumstances.

BPP University reserves the right to check the authenticity of all documentation submitted as part of a *Mitigating Circumstances/Deferral* claim. It is a serious offence to supply fraudulent documentation and may lead to disciplinary action.

2) Categories of Evidence

The following table sets out the different categories in which disrupting circumstances could apply and the types of valid evidence which will be required to support each claim:

Circumstance	Evidence Required	Unacceptable Evidence
Medical grounds	An original medical certificate or letter from a registered medical practitioner confirming the nature and time of the illness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospital or other medical appointment letters, unless accompanied by a medical report; • Self-certification of illness from either the student or a close relative, without supporting medical documentation; • Medical evidence from alternative/homeopathic practitioners unless they are on the below list of recognised practitioners*; • Prescription forms.
Death or serious illness of a relative	Death certificate, or an original medical certificate, or letter from a registered medical practitioner confirming the nature and time of the illness.†	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence not clearly linked to the student or the close family member in question.
Significant change in personal circumstance (e.g. <i>crime, housing, divorce</i>)	An official correspondence from a relevant professional such as a: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solicitor • Police or fire officer • Court or tribunal officer • Social worker • Local government officer • Bank/building society official 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anecdotal evidence without supporting documentary confirmation; • Photographs or media extracts relating to events which are not accompanied by clear evidence of their relevance to the student or the assessment in question; • Statements from friends, relatives or other associates stating whether a student has been a victim of crime; • Crime reference numbers alone without separate, independent confirmation of the reported incident; • Any evidence that is not clearly contemporaneous with the learning and teaching activities or assessment in question.

†Note on Bereavement

Bereavement is a traumatic experience and has a significant impact on people. It can be classified as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and how it manifests is not a linear process. If you have been affected by a death of someone other than a partner, parent, child or close family member, the University sensitively requires you to explain the relationship to the deceased and the impact upon your studies. Please seek advice from your *Personal Tutor* to understand how bereavement affects you upon application.

3) *Recognised Medical Practitioners

BPP University recognises medical certification from UK-based practitioners that are recognised by the following bodies:

Regulatory Body	Recognised Professions
British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) ¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counsellors • Psychotherapists
General Chiropractic Council (GCC) ²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chiropractors
General Dental Council (GDC) ³	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dentists • Dental nurses, technicians, hygienists and therapists • Clinical dental technicians • Orthodontic therapists
General Medical Council (GMC) ⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctors
General Optical Council (GOC) ⁵	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optometrists • Dispensing opticians • Student opticians • Optical businesses
General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) ⁶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Osteopaths
General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) ⁷	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pharmacists
Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) ⁸	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art therapists • Biomedical Scientists • Chiropodists/ podiatrists • Clinical Scientists • Dieticians • Hearing Aid dispensers • Occupational therapists • Operating department practitioners • Orthoptists • Paramedics • Physiotherapists • Practitioner psychologists • Prosthetists/orthotists • Radiographers • Speech and language therapists • Social Workers in England
Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) ⁹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurses • Midwives

¹ BACP registered practitioners can be searched [here](#).

² GCC registered practitioners can be searched [here](#).

³ GDC registered practitioners can be searched [here](#).

⁴ GMC registered practitioners can be searched [here](#).

⁵ GOC registered practitioners can be searched [here](#).

⁶ GOsC registered practitioners can be searched [here](#).

⁷ GPhC registered practitioners can be searched [here](#).

⁸ HCPC registered practitioners can be searched [here](#).

⁹ NMC registered practitioners can be searched [here](#).

4) Unacceptable Circumstances for Mitigation/Deferral

Students are expected to plan their work so that they can meet assessment deadlines at the same time as other obligations which they may have inside and outside of the University. BPP University will not consider *Mitigating Circumstances/Deferral* claims under the following circumstances:

Unacceptable Circumstances	Further Notes
Holidays, sporting commitments, moving house and events that were planned or could reasonably have been expected.	
Assessments that are scheduled close together or on the same day.	
Misreading the assessment timetable or other misunderstanding of the requirements for assessment including not adhering to the guidelines concerning permitted assessment materials.	
Inadequate planning or time management.	
Failure, loss or theft of a computer or printer that prevents submission of work on time	Students should back up work regularly and not leave completion so late that they cannot find another computer or printer.
Consequences of employment, paid or unpaid, including work experience.	Note: for part time students, evidence of a sudden, significant and unexpected increase in workload at the time of the assessment or of an unavoidable work commitment that prevents the student from preparing for or attending the assessment may be acceptable
Receiving unfavourable results of an assessment.	
Ignorance of the Mitigating Circumstances/Deferral procedure.	The University's regulatory framework is available to all students on the BPP website, on the <i>Students' Association</i> website, and on the <i>Academic Registry</i> tab of the student intranet.
Minor disruption in an examination room during the course of an assessment	Major disruption in an examination room should be discussed with the <i>Programme Leader</i> before submitting a <i>Mitigating Circumstances</i> application.
Last-minute or careless travel arrangements	However, a major transport network disruption on the day of the examination will be considered and must be evidenced by official correspondence and confirmation from the transport provider.
Pregnancy	Pregnancy is not considered to be an illness. However, events may arise during pregnancy that may constitute <i>Mitigating Circumstances</i> and these will be considered on an individual basis.

5) Disability or Long-Term Medical Conditions

Pre-existing disability and/or learning difficulty, including medical conditions (unless it has suddenly deteriorated), are **not** usually considered as valid grounds for *Mitigating Circumstances* or *Deferrals* claims in themselves since these are known beforehand and can be addressed by means of a *Learning Support Agreement* or special arrangements including enhanced pastoral support. If a student is already registered with the *Learning Support Office* but their circumstances have changed, they should contact that *Office* as soon as possible to ensure that the correct adjustments are in place for them.

6) Fit to Sit Declaration

BPP University operates a 'Fit to Sit' policy which means that if a student submits coursework or sits an assessment, they have deemed themselves fit to do so. It is the responsibility of the student to determine whether they are fit to participate in assessment. Being 'fit' generally means that the student is not aware of any impediment, physical, emotional or otherwise, which could affect their performance. Therefore, if the student is feeling unwell because of medical or personal difficulties in the run-up to the assessment, they should not attend, but take the course of action applicable to their circumstances, for example, use of the *Deferral of Examination* procedure or *Extension of Deadline Date for Assessment procedure (MoPPs/Part H/Sections 4 & 5)*.

A student who has signed a fit to sit declaration may not submit a *Mitigating Circumstances/Deferral* application unless:

- i. they are affected by unforeseen circumstances beyond their control after signing the declaration but before the end of the examination, or
- ii. they were suffering from a condition of which they were unaware of at the time; or
- iii. they were suffering from a condition which impaired their ability to make a rational judgement as to their ability to sit or submit the assessment. In all of these cases, students must provide objective and authoritative evidence of their condition (*MoPPs/Part H/Section 6/Paragraph 6*).