



Fairfield School of Business

Mitigating Circumstances Policy for **Birmingham Newman University (BNU)** Taught Degree Programmes

Version: 1.0

Category: Academic Regulations (externally validated programmes)

Owner(s): Registry Lead

Approved by: The Board of Governors

Access: **Public** – Anyone can view this document

Scope: This policy applies to student on courses leading to awards from
Birmingham Newman University

1. Policy for Externally Validated Programmes

- 1.1. Fairfield School of Business delivers higher education programmes that lead to awards from external awarding bodies. Under these arrangements, you are enrolled as a student of the awarding body and subject to its academic regulations.
- 1.2. Students enrolled on programmes leading to an award from **Birmingham Newman University (BNU)** will have their mitigating circumstances requests dealt with in the following way:
 - You should request an assignment extension or mitigating circumstance from FSB's Registry team (registry@fairfield.ac) in the first instance;
 - Your request will then be submitted to, and dealt with by Birmingham Newman University in accordance with their General Academic Regulations, which can be read here: <https://www.newman.ac.uk/knowledge-base/general-academic-regulations/>
 - If you are not happy with the outcome of your request, you may have recourse to a review of the decision under *Section 8: Academic Appeals (Representation against an academic decision)* of BNU's General academic regulations. All such appeals will be submitted to, and decided by staff and BNU.

Note that Assignment Extensions and Mitigating Circumstances are two separate processes.

If you require an extension to an assignment deadline, please speak to your programme leader. Extensions can normally only be granted if the request is made before the due date for the assignment. However, extensions may be agreed up to one week after the due date, in exceptional circumstances and where relevant evidence is provided.

2. What are Mitigating Circumstances?

- 2.1. **Mitigating Circumstances** (sometimes referred to as 'Extenuating' or 'Exceptional' circumstances) are unforeseen or unavoidable circumstances that can occur in a student's life that affect their performance in an assessment, leading to them achieving a lower grade than they would otherwise be capable of. Such circumstances may also have prevented them from attempting an assessment. These would be:
 - i. short-term disruptive circumstances,
 - ii. beyond the control of the student,
 - iii. happen shortly before or during an assessment,
 - iv. have had a material effect on the students' ability to undertake the assessment.

- 2.2. Mitigating Circumstances do not apply to an ongoing disability, specific learning need or mental health condition that a student may already be receiving support for under our Reasonable Adjustments Policy. Students should speak to their on-campus Student Support office if they have any long-term support need. This policy may however apply in the event of a severe episode or an acute worsening of these conditions.
- 2.3. A list of examples of what are considered Mitigating Circumstances is given in Section 6 of this policy.
- 2.4. Depending on the circumstances and the type of assessment, students may be granted an extension, a resubmission attempt without academic penalty, or an alternative form of assessment (if sanctioned by the appropriate Assessment Board).
- 2.5. We expect those who enrol on a study programme with us to be able to balance their personal life commitments with their academic deadlines, manage their workloads independently and cope with the pressure of meeting all assessment requirements. Issues arising from these would not normally be considered as valid Mitigating Circumstances and the school's Students Services and Academic Support Services can assist students who are struggling to reconcile their study/life balance or experiencing feelings of stress.

2.6. **Deferral**

If Mitigating Circumstances are approved, this would normally 'defer' a student's coursework deadline to the next assessment deadline in the academic year. Deferred assessment is treated as a first attempt (i.e uncapped), with the full range of marks available. Students can also seek to 'defer' a referred (capped) piece of work to the next assessment period through this policy.

- 2.7. An approved Mitigating Circumstances claim will not excuse students from completing their assessment(s) but will defer the coursework deadline for those modules or assessments approved on the claim to the next assessment point. Students will still be required to demonstrate that they can achieve the required learning outcomes to successfully pass each of their modules and to meet the programme requirements for progression or award.

Fit to Sit/Submit Principle

- 2.8. Students enrolled on Birmingham Newman University programmes will be subject to its 'Fit to Submit' principle.
- 2.9. In those exceptional circumstances where mitigating circumstances are granted for an assessment already submitted due to 'fit to submit' issues, the original submission will be marked as zero and the student will be allowed the opportunity to submit for an uncapped mark at the first resit opportunity. The work for the original submission cannot be resubmitted.

3. Submitting a Request

- 3.1. The student completes the mitigating circumstances form with supporting evidence (for help on the process see Academic Support Services/ Programme Coordinator or Exams Team). The FSB Registry Team (registry@fairfield.ac) can assist with this.
- 3.2. The form and supporting evidence is then submitted to Exams Team.

4. Considering the Request

- 4.1. Applications are then considered by Mitigating Circumstances Board/Chair of the Board or by the Exams Team (for applications approved clerically).

5. Outcome of a Mitigating Circumstances Procedure

- 5.1. The Decision of Mitigating Circumstances Board or Exams team (for applications approved clerically) is confirmed to student. This will be of the following:
 - a. Request accepted. Student resits without penalty during the next resit period.
 - b. Request accepted. Student resits but mark is capped due to earlier non-submission/failure/academic offence.
 - c. Request not accepted; standard resit applies. Appeal processes available following Programme Assessment Board.
 - d. Recommendation student is granted a Reasonable Adjustment Plan (RAP) / Individual Learning Plan (ILP).
 - e. Request for further evidence to be provided.

6. Examples of Mitigating Circumstances

FSB is required to use the University's definitions of what would constitute mitigating (or 'extenuating') circumstances, for the purpose of this policy.

6.1. The following examples are likely to be considered eligible for mitigating circumstances claims:

- Serious personal accident, injury or illness
- Hospitalisation (including operations)
- Death or serious illness of close family member, dependent, partner or friend
- National disruption or national mourning
- Serious complications in pregnancy or maternity
- Unexpected caring duties for child, family member or friend
- Sudden deterioration or escalation of ongoing illness, condition or disability
- Serious personal disruption (such as a relationship breakdown, separation, divorce, house move, victim of crime)
- Serious incident (such as assault or harassment)
- Major household problem (such as break-in, fire, homelessness)
- Absence for public service (such as jury service, service with reserved forces)
- Recent diagnosis of disability or long-term condition
- Recent change, commencement or cessation of medication
- Delay in the receipt of appropriate support for disability or long-term condition
- IT issues (such as digital poverty or laptop malfunction or theft)

6.2. The following examples are likely to be considered as ineligible exceptional circumstances and students should use these as a guide to whether their circumstances would meet the Exceptional Circumstances criteria.

- Computer failure
- Pressure of work
- Number of deadlines close together
- Unaware of the submission date
- Unaware of closing times for Registry
- Unaware of the Drop Off Box facility
- Holidays
- Weddings.

7. Review and Update of this Policy

7.1. This policy will be reviewed annually and updated in accordance with periodic changes to BNU's General Academic Regulations and the terms of the Partnership agreement between FSB and BNU. Changes to this policy will be verified by the University and approved for publication by FSB's Board of Governors.



Version Tracking:

Version	Author / revisions by	Changes summary	Approved by	Date
1.0	Quality Manager (FSB) Registry Lead (FSB) Programme Leader (FSB)	First version adapted from BNU's General Academic Regulations localised for FSB as per agreed responsibility under partnership agreement.	Board of Governors	Sep 2024 (C.A.)

Date of next review: September 2025