

Major Incident Group Protocol - Unforeseen Closure of BU Buildings/Campuses

1. Although closure of university buildings or campuses is rare, from time to time it may be necessary to restrict access to some or all of our estate. This will normally be due to health & safety issues such as snow, fire etc.
2. Many centrally provided services are already accessible on an online self-service basis (e.g. Library, online assignment submission) and work is underway to develop self-service provision further. However, where a self-service option is not yet available or appropriate, wherever possible staffed services such as askBU, library enquiries etc will operate on a reduced service basis. This may take the form of offering email, telephone or 'chat' support rather than face to face if all the university buildings are closed, or a reduced face-to-face service provided from the open campus if only one campus is closed. If the IT infrastructure is also affected, it may still be possible to operate an off campus service for some activities as chat, and email can be managed from home. Schools also need to give consideration to any remote/alternative support that they may be able to provide in the event of building or campus closure.
3. Arrangements for reduced service operation in the case of building or campus closure are outlined in each school/service business continuity plan.
4. Where there is a need to close university buildings or campuses, there may be an impact upon teaching and/or assessment which is scheduled during the closure period. This protocol outlines the principles that have been agreed by the Major Incident Group (MIG) to ensure parity of treatment for all students. The protocol applies to all schools.
5. Deadlines for written coursework
Where a deadline for written work (assignment, project, dissertation etc) that is required to be submitted in hard copy falls on a day that the building/campus is closed, students will be permitted to submit on the next day that the university is open for business without penalty. The only exception will be where at least one campus remains open and schools have already identified alternative submission arrangements in their business continuity plan.
6. Where a deadline for coursework which is due to be submitted online falls on a day that the university is closed, students will be expected to submit within the published deadline as normal. Any student who is unable to submit due to local technical issues, and is unable to access appropriate support because of campus closure, should submit a mitigating circumstances form in accordance with normal process.
7. Where a deadline for coursework which is due to be submitted online falls on a day when the IT infrastructure has failed, students will be permitted to submit on the next day that the IT infrastructure is working properly without penalty.
8. Exams or other scheduled assessment (except coursework – see above)
Where exams or other assessment (eg presentation) are scheduled for a day when the university building/campus is closed, these should be rescheduled to take place as soon as possible following the building/campus reopening. The only exception will be where at least one campus remains open and schools have already identified alternative locations for the assessment in their business continuity plan.

9. Teaching

It may not always be possible to reschedule teaching which is cancelled due to building/campus closure. However, best efforts should be made to reschedule. In all cases, appropriate alternative tutorial support must be available for students (or material covered in an appropriate alternative way) once the building/campus reopens so that students can catch up. Students will be informed that it may always not be possible to reschedule a specific lecture or seminar but that academic support will still be available.

10. Any student who has an assignment deadline for shortly after the building/campus closure period, and who feels that their work may have been affected by not being able to access BU facilities (e.g. Library) during the closure period, will need to request an extension or submit mitigating circumstances in the normal way. Students will be reminded that many library and learning resources and other services are available online through the web and myBU, or on an alternative reduced service basis

11. Communications

Marketing and Communications are responsible for communicating the above messages on our social media and askBU will also use the above as a basis for dealing with student enquires.

12. In the event of building/campus closure, schools and services should ensure that the MIG coordinator is informed as soon as possible of any local arrangements for business continuity so that these can be included in the communications.