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**ACADEMIC BOARD**

**ANNUAL REPORT ON EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES 2013-14**

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**Executive summary**

This paper provides a brief overview of the use of extenuating circumstances procedures by students in the academic year 2013-14. An evaluation of claims by demographical characteristic was conducted in line with equality and diversity monitoring.

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1. **Introduction**
   1. This report covers the operation of extenuating circumstances procedures for the academic year 2013-14. All the data shown is for this institution only, as collaborative partners manage their own extenuation claims.
   2. There were no changes to our procedures for extenuating circumstances in 2013-14. However the Chair of the Extenuation Panel changed on 20th August 2014. Gareth Smith left UEL and Gayle Stocken, Director of Student Support, succeeded him as Chair of the Extenuation Panel.
   3. As recommended by the 2012-13 Extenuation Report, a working group was organised to revise and review the Manual of General Regulations Part 6: Extenuating Circumstances, in light of the introduction of the new Academic Framework in 2014-15.
2. **Summary of Claims**

2.1 Students must make a separate claim for each component of assessment for which they seek to have their extenuating circumstances considered. Table 1 below provides a short summary of extenuation claims by component, received over Semesters A, B and the reassessment period in 2013-14.

**Table 1: Number of component claims by school and semester 2013-14**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | ACE | ADI | CASS | HSB | LSS | PSY | RDBS | Grad School | Total |
| Sem A | 47 | 109 | 98 | 235 | 173 | 82 | 92 | 1 | 837 |
| Accept | 19 | 58 | 61 | 158 | 88 | 48 | 52 | 0 | 484 |
| Reject | 28 | 51 | 37 | 77 | 85 | 34 | 40 | 1 | 353 |
| Sem B | 78 | 90 | 102 | 264 | 142 | 138 | 72 | 0 | 886 |
| Accept | 52 | 49 | 72 | 186 | 76 | 94 | 40 | 0 | 569 |
| Reject | 26 | 41 | 30 | 78 | 66 | 44 | 32 | 0 | 317 |
| Resit | 16 | 23 | 23 | 40 | 44 | 15 | 16 | 0 | 177 |
| Accept | 0 | 7 | 8 | 11 | 9 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 43 |
| Reject | 16 | 16 | 15 | 29 | 35 | 10 | 13 | 0 | 134 |
| **Total** | **141** | **222** | **223** | **539** | **359** | **235** | **180** | **1** | **1900** |

2.2 The number of claims rose sharply in 2009/10 but has since reduced steadily. The number of claims in 2013-14 was similar to that of the preceding year (Chart 1a) and has now plateaued.

**Chart 1a: Total number of extenuation claims since 2005**

2.3 Table 2a below highlights the percentage of students from each school who made at least one claim for extenuation in 2013-14.

**Table 2a: Extenuation activity by academic School**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Number of students who applied | Enrolments | %Students who applied |
| ACE | 84 | 2277 | 4% |
| ADI | 117 | 2208 | 5% |
| Cass | 123 | 3323 | 4% |
| HSB | 239 | 2153 | 11% |
| LSS | 186 | 1774 | 10% |
| PSY | 120 | 1888 | 6% |
| Grad School | 1 | 18 | 6% |
| RDBS | 104 | 1865 | 6% |

The table above shows that, although the Cass School of Education and Communities has the highest number of students enrolled (3323), it has one of the lowest percentiles of students making at least one claim (4%). In contrast the School of Health, Sport and Bioscience has the highest percentile of students making at least one claim (11%) despite having the 4th lowest number of students enrolled (excluding the Graduate School).

2.4 In 2013-14 the overall percentage of successful claims was 57.68%.

**Table 2b: % Accepted claims by semester**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | % Accept |
| Sem A | 57.83% |
| Sem B | 64.22% |
| Reassessment | 24.29% |
| Total | 57.68% |

As modules are capped if not passed on the first attempt, claims for reassessment are more likely to result in a technical reject. When the reassessment period is taken out of the calculation, the average success rate for 2013-14 was 61.11%.

Success rates in previous academic years are shown in Chart 2c below:

**Chart 2c: % claims accepted annual comparison**

1. **Feedback for Rejected Claims**

3.1 In 2011/12 a mechanism was introduced which gave students a generic feedback code for rejected claims. Prior to 2011/12, students did not receive any official feedback on their claims, although students could seek feedback from UELSU on their individual claims.

Of the claims which were rejected, the breakdown of feedback codes was as stated in Table 3a below.

**Table 3a: Reasons for rejection**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Feedback Code | Sem A | Sem B | Resit | Total |
| R1 - module capped | 24 | 23 | 88 | 135 |
| R2 - fourth attempt | 0 | 0 | 17 | 17 |
| R3 - coursework on time | 22 | 22 | 3 | 47 |
| R4 - failed another component | 18 | 0 | 0 | 18 |
| RC - did not meet criteria | 28 | 31 | 9 | 68 |
| RE - evidence insufficient | 173 | 183 | 22 | 378 |
| RL - late without good reason | 32 | 5 | 0 | 37 |
| RM - multiple | 12 | 15 | 0 | 27 |
| RN - not extenuation | 40 | 29 | 1 | 70 |
| B - failed evidence check | 2 | 4 | 1 | 7 |

The largest category of rejected claims occurred where students had failed to supply adequate evidence for their claim/s. There was also a fairly substantial number of technical rejects (codes R1 – R4), the majority of which were submitted during the reassessment period.

For undergraduate claims, as of 2014/15, there will not be any technical rejects under the R4 failed another component category or R1 module capped. This is because, under the new UG Extenuating Circumstances Regulations, capping is applied at component and not module level and students will be permitted to submit an extenuation claim at the reassessment opportunity even if the component is capped.

There were 7 claims across the 2013-14 Academic Year where the evidence submitted was deemed not to be genuine. This may be attributed to the more rigorous processes that have been in place this year.

A more detailed explanation of the feedback codes can be found on the extenuation website, <http://www.uel.ac.uk/qa/extenuation.htm>

1. **Mode of Study**

4.1 Since 2010-11 claims have been analysed by undergraduate and postgraduate status, and the number of claims from home and international students have also been noted. From 2013-14 the number of claims from part time and full time students are also being included in the analysis.

As with last year’s report, claims from home students were more successful than claims from international students (Table 4a below). This year, postgraduate claims were on average slightly more successful than undergraduate claims (Table 4b below).

**Table 4a: Number of claims accepted for Home / International students 2013-14**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Total** | **Accept** | **Reject** | **% Accepted** | **No. Students who applied** | **No. Enrolments** | **% Students who applied** |
| Home | 1744 | 1021 | 723 | 58.54% | 882 | 13824 | 6.38% |
| International | 100 | 46 | 54 | 46.00% | 50 | 1548 | 3.23% |
| Unknown | 56 | 29 | 27 | 29.00% | 42 |  |  |
| **Total** | **1900** | **1096** | **804** | 57.68% | **974** | **16920** | **5.76%** |

4.2 Home students were almost twice as likely to apply for extenuation as international students. This may be at least partly because some extenuation outcomes, such as repeating a module uncapped, are less useful to students whose visas only allow them to stay in the UK for a limited period.

Table 4b below illustrates that postgraduate students are much less likely to apply for extenuation than undergraduate students. However postgraduate student claims have just over a 2% higher acceptance rate than undergraduate claims.

**Table 4b: Number of claims accepted for UG / PG students 2013-14**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Total** | **Accept** | **Reject** | **% Accepted** | **No. Students who applied** | **No. Enrolments** | **% Students who applied** |
| Postgraduate | 125 | 75 | 50 | 60.00% | 80 | **3635** | 2.20% |
| Undergraduate | 1735 | 1006 | 729 | 57.98% | 869 | **13285** | 6.54% |
| Unknown | 40 | 15 | 25 | 0.86% | 25 |  |  |
| **Total** | **1900** | **1096** | **804** | **57.68%** | **974** | **16920** | **5.76%** |

**Table 4c: Number of claims accepted for full time and part time students 2013-14**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Component claims | Accept | Reject | %Accept | No. Students who applied | No. Students enrolled | % Students who applied |
| Full Time | 1428 | 825 | 603 | 57% | 722 | 13121 | 5.50% |
| Part Time | 437 | 246 | 191 | 56% | 230 | 3221 | 7.14% |
| Unknown | 35 | 25 | 10 | 71% | 22 | 578 | 3.81% |
| **Total** | **1900** | **1096** | **804** | **58%** | **974** | **16920** | **5.76%** |

4.3 Almost 3 times as many component claims were received from full time students compared to part time students, although the acceptance rate was comparable. However when the number of part time and full time students enrolled for 2013-14 is analysed further just over 1.5% more part time students than full time students made an extenuating circumstances claim during the period.

1. **Equality and Diversity Monitoring**

5.1 All equal opportunities monitoring data for this report was obtained from DELTA.

5.2 In order to maintain the fairness of our processes, all claims are considered anonymously by the Extenuation Panel. No data relating to the claimant’s gender, age, ethnicity or disability is included on the form or available to the members of the Extenuation Panel.

5.3 Gender

The annual reports consistently demonstrate that female students are more likely to apply for extenuating circumstance than male students, and are also more likely to have their claims accepted and 2013-14 follows that trend.

Table 5a overleaf displays information about the number of assessment components applied for by gender in 2013-14 and the % of the UEL population that made a claim.

**Table 5a: Extenuation statistics for 2013-14 by gender**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Component claims** | **Accepted** | **Rejected** | **%Accept** | **No. students who applied** | **No. students enrolled** | **%Students who applied** |
| Female | 1301 | 790 | 511 | 60.72% | 646 | **9966** | 6.48% |
| Male | 599 | 306 | 293 | 51.09% | 328 | **6925** | 4.74% |
| Unknown |  |  |  |  |  | **29** |  |
| **Total** | **1900** | **1096** | **804** | **57.68%** | **974** | **16920** | **11.22%** |

Female students accounted for 1304 out of 1900 claims and 60% of these claims were successful (790 out of 1307). Almost twice as many females (646) submitted claims in comparison to their male counterparts (328). That equates to just under 2% more of the female than male UEL population. Female component claims were just under 10% more successful than males.

5.4 Ethnicity

Table 5b overleaf provides a breakdown by ethnicity of the number of extenuation claims received during 2013-14, and the number of students who submitted these claims:

**Table 5b: Extenuation claims by ethnicity 2013-14**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Component claims | Accepted | Rejected | % Accept | No. students who applied | No. students enrolled | % Students who applied |
| ASIAN |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ASIAN OTHER | 121 | 81 | 40 |  | 51 |  |  |
| BANGLADESHI | 104 | 55 | 49 |  | 50 |  |  |
| CHINESE | 7 | 4 | 3 |  | 2 |  |  |
| INDIAN | 96 | 64 | 32 |  | 45 |  |  |
| PAKISTANI | 81 | 49 | 32 |  | 40 |  |  |
| **subtotal** | **407** | **253** | **156** | **62.16%** | **188** | **3211** | **5.85%** |
| BLACK |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| BLACK AFRICAN | 600 | 343 | 257 |  | 328 |  |  |
| BLACK CARIBBEAN | 180 | 97 | 83 |  | 94 |  |  |
| BLACK OTHER | 47 | 27 | 20 |  | 26 |  |  |
| subtotal | **827** | **467** | **360** | **56.47%** | **448** | **4683** | **9.57%** |
| WHITE |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| WHITE - BRITISH | 220 | 138 | 82 |  | 119 |  |  |
| WHITE - IRISH | 29 | 22 | 7 |  | 13 |  |  |
| WHITE - SCOTTIS | 2 | 1 | 1 |  | 2 |  |  |
| OTHER WHITE | 93 | 26 | 67 |  | 54 |  |  |
| **subtotal** | **344** | **187** | **157** | **54.36%** | **188** | **5528** | **3.40%** |
| MIXED |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| WHITE & AFRICAN | 50 | 21 | 29 |  | 24 |  |  |
| WHITE & ASIAN | 35 | 25 | 10 |  | 14 |  |  |
| WHITE & CARIBBEAN | 25 | 20 | 5 |  | 17 |  |  |
| OTHER MIXED | 40 | 18 | 22 |  | 24 |  |  |
| **subtotal** | **150** | **84** | **66** | **56.00%** | **79** | **972** | **8.13%** |
| OTHER | 111 | 72 | 37 |  | 51 | 896 | 5.69% |
| UNKNOWN | 61 | 33 | 28 |  | 20 | 1630 | 1.23% |
| **Total** | **1900** | **1096** | **804** | **57.68%** | **974** | **16920** | **5.76%** |

When all ethnic groups are analysed 5.76% of the total UEL population submitted an extenuating circumstances claim. Further analysis of the data highlights that almost 10% of black students made a claim. However the fairly consistent success rate for all groups attested to the equity of our system.

5.4 Disability

Table 5c below provides a breakdown of claims by disability:

**Table 5c: Extenuation claims by disability 2013-14**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Component claims | Accepts | Reject | % Accept | No. Students who applied | No. Students enrolled | % Students who applied |
| No disability | 1482 | 860 | 622 | 58.03% | 779 | 15455 | 5.04% |
| Known disability | 418 | 236 | 182 | 56.46% | 195 | 1432 | 13.62% |
| Unknown |  |  |  |  |  | 33 |  |
| Total | **1900** | **1096** | **804** |  | **974** | **16920** | **5.76%** |

5.04% of the total UEL population that declared no disability submitted a claim, compared to almost 14% of students that disclosed a disability. The acceptance rate of both groups is consistent at 58.03% and 56.46% respectively.

Table 5d below provides further information regarding the disability type of the students that submitted claims.

**Table 5d: Breakdown of claims by disability type**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Disability type | Component claims | Accept | Reject | %Accept | No. Students who applied |
| learning difficulty | 129 | 80 | 49 | 62.02% | 65 |
| mental health | 79 | 54 | 25 | 68.35% | 36 |
| multiple disabilities | 70 | 28 | 42 | 40.00% | 27 |
| physical impairment or mobility | 23 | 15 | 8 | 65.22% | 10 |
| visual impairment | 5 | 2 | 3 | 40.00% | 3 |
| hearing impairment | 4 | 1 | 3 | 25.00% | 3 |
| health condition | 41 | 16 | 25 | 39.02% | 20 |
| other disability | 67 | 40 | 27 | 59.70% | 31 |
| **Total** | **418** | **236** | **182** | **56.46%** | **195** |

Students with learning difficulties made the highest number of claims with 65. Claims submitted from students with a disability have varying success rates

ranging from 25% – 68.35%. However the overall acceptance is consistent with the overall acceptance of other categories at just over 55%.

**6. Conclusions**

6.1 This year’s equal opportunities monitoring data indicates that our processes for extenuating circumstances operated with equity and consistency during the 2013-14 academic year.

**7. Recommendations**

7.1 New Academic Framework

1. Transition Modules be monitored to prevent a skew of the figures;
2. Review the Extenuation process and the Extenuation Panel if the number of extenuating claims submitted increase significantly.

7.2 Assess the impact of the new centralised Student Helpdesk by monitoring:   
 i) The number of claims submitted;  
 ii) The validity of the claims submitted;  
 iii) The accuracy of the students’ completed extenuating circumstances forms;  
 iv) The accuracy of the completed individual Schools’ Extenuating Circumstances spreadsheets;  
 v) The consistency of the completed individual Schools’ Extenuating Circumstances spreadsheets.

**8. To Note**

8.1 It should be taken into consideration that with the introduction of the new Academic Framework in 2014/15 (and the subsequent Transition Modules) that there may be an increase in the number of extenuation claims submitted in the 2014/15 Academic Year.  
  
 8.2 It is anticipated that the new Academic Framework will lead to a decrease in extenuation claims in the longer term as going forward students will only have 2 opportunities at module components and not 4 as was previously the case.

8.3 It should also be noted that whilst the 2014/15 Regulations governing UG Extenuating Circumstances have been revised in light of the new Academic Framework, PG claims are being considered under the previous Regulations for the 2014/15 academic year. Therefore 2 sets of Extenuating Circumstances Regulations are in operation for 2014/15. The Extenuating Circumstances Regulations relating to PGT are currently being revised and will align with the UG Regulations from the 2015/16 Academic Year.