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**ACADEMIC BOARD**

**ANNUAL REPORT ON EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES 2012-13**

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**Executive summary**

This paper provides an overview of extenuating claims and circumstances submitted by students during the 2012-13 academic year. 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 2012-13. All the data relates to on-campus students as collaborative partners manage their own extenuation claims.

1.2 There were no changes to the extenuating circumstances procedures in 2012-13, although additional guidance was provided on the website to further assist students in understanding the procedures governing the claim for extenuation.

 In previous years the extenuation panel was chaired by Dr Julie Baldry-Currens director of academic practice and learning enhancement (APLE). Julie is currently on secondment to the HEA, so Gareth Smith, director of student life, has chaired the panel since semester B. It is important that the chair of the panel is neutral and not affiliated to a school as this could potentially impact decisions.

1. **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 provides a summary of the number of extenuation claims by component and period.

**Table 1: Number of component claims by school 2012-13**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | ACE | ADI | Cass | HSB | LSS | PSY | RDBS | Total |
| Sem A | 55 | 105 | 83 | 174 | 169 | 123 | 121 | 830 |
| Accept | 36 | 38 | 59 | 128 | 106 | 81 | 78 | 526 |
| Reject | 19 | 67 | 24 | 46 | 63 | 42 | 43 | 304 |
| Sem B | 127 | 121 | 95 | 157 | 153 | 112 | 69 | 834 |
| Accept | 63 | 49 | 65 | 103 | 91 | 61 | 34 | 463 |
| Reject | 64 | 72 | 40 | 54 | 62 | 51 | 35 | 378 |
| Resit | 3 | 19 | 47 | 39 | 44 | 18 | 13 | 183 |
| Accept | 0 | 3 | 17 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 44 |
| Reject | 3 | 16 | 30 | 30 | 39 | 14 | 7 | 139 |
| **Total** | **185** | **245** | **225** | **370** | **366** | **253** | **203** | **1847** |

The number of claims rose sharply in 2009/10 but has since reduced steadily. The number of claims in 2012/13 was similar to that of the preceding year (chart 1a).



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

2.2 Academic schools typically show distinctive patterns of extenuation activity. Table 2a illustrates the proportion of students that made one or more extenuation claims in 2012/13. Although the number of claims for the School of Law and Social Sciences students was not the highest, it represented the largest proportion of students from a particular school.

**Table 2a: extenuation activity by academic school**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Number of students who applied | Number of enrolments | Proportion of students (%) |
| ACE | 133 | 2477 | 5.36% |
| ADI | 177 | 2328 | 7.60% |
| Cass | 148 | 2332 | 6.34% |
| HSB | 356 | 2227 | 15.98% |
| LSS | 347 | 1844 | 18.81% |
| PSY | 243 | 1838 | 13.22% |
| RDBS | 198 | 2298 | 8.61% |

2.3 In 2012-13 the overall percentage of successful claims was 47.6%

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|   | % Accept |
| Sem A | 63.3% |
| Sem B | 55.5% |
| Resit | 24.0% |
| Total | 47.6% |

 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 not included in the calculation, the average success rate for the 2012-13 academic year is 59.4**%** (see Table 2b), compared to 60.2% in 2011-12. In the 2012-13 academic year the overall proportion of successful claims was 10 percentage points lower compared to 2011-12. One explanation is the reduced number of claims in the re-assessment period and higher percentage of technical rejects.

Success rates for semesters A and B in previous academic years are shown in Chart 2c.



**Chart 2c: % Semester A and B successful claims - annual comparison**

**Chart 2d Extenuation Claims by categories for Semester A and B**

The above chart presents student claims for extenuation under 4 main categories. The data was extrapolated from the individual claims. The categories were calculated based on primary evidence for each claim. In the medical category the claims related predominantly to a range of medical conditions and illnesses. The personal category contained claims related to death, marriage, assault, burglary (criminal activity), and pregnancy. In the technical category the claims were mainly clustered around computer and IT issues. The late work category included claims wherein students noted that their submission was marginally late, but did not include any further supporting evidence to fit one of the other three categories. It is evident that medical grounds accounted for the majority of claims for each school. Medical grounds accounted for over 50% of the reported cases for ACE, ADI, Cass, Psychology and RDBS. For HSB and LSS the proportion was almost 80%.



**Chart 2e – Student referral to Student Health and Wellbeing**

Chart 2e illustrates the combined referral for semesters A, B, R to student health and well-being. Student health and well-being has distinct areas for referral. These include, but are not limited to, general student health and well-being, disability support, dyslexia support, and financial support (SMART). After each claim has been reviewed, the panel may recommend a referral to student health and wellbeing if an ongoing issue is identified that is likely to negatively impact a student’s performance during assessment. LSS (52) and HSB (38) received the largest proportion of referrals. This is in line with these two schools receiving the highest proportion of extenuation claims for the three semesters. Of the overall referrals to student health and wellbeing, only 18% of students made appointments to see a student life case worker. This could be due to the fact that a majority of students are already known to staff in student life.

1. **Feedback for Rejected Claims**

3.1 In 2011-12 a new system was introduced to give students a generic feedback code for rejected claims. Previously, students had not been given any official feedback on their claims, although it was possible, for students to seek feedback from the Students Union Advice and Information Service on an individual basis.

Of the claims which were rejected, the breakdown of feedback codes for 2012-13 are as follows:

**Table 3a – Reasons for rejection**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Feedback Code | Sem A | Sem B | Sem R | Total |
| R1 - module capped | 19 | 22 | 50 | 91 |
| R2 - fourth attempt | 0 | 0 | 11 | 11 |
| R3 - coursework on time | 15 | 10 | 3 | 28 |
| R4 - failed another component | 13 | 14 | 0 | 27 |
| R5 – incorrect completion of form | 0 | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| RC - did not meet criteria | 39 | 47 | 17 | 103 |
| RE - evidence insufficient | 144 | 226 | 36 | 406 |
| RL - late without good reason | 1 | 3 | 0 | 4 |
| RM - multiple | 30 | 42 | 6 | 78 |
| RN - not extenuation | 39 | 12 | 11 | 62 |
| B - failed evidence check | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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 – R5), most of which were submitted during the resit period.

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 reported by level of study and fee status.

**Chart 3a – Proportion of students with extenuation claims and the UEL population by fee status – 2012/13**

Chart 3a compares the proportion of students who applied for extenuation against the UEL population by fee status. A slightly higher proportion of home students applied for extenuation relative to the proportion of home students at UEL. This is in-line with previous years findings as illustrated in charts 3b and c below. The proportion of home students claiming extenuation increased by two percentage points, whilst the proportion of overseas students claiming extenuation, reduced.

**Chart 3b – Proportion of students with extenuation claims and the UEL population by fee status – 2011/12**

**Chart 3c - Proportion of students with extenuation claims and the UEL population by fee status - 2010/11**

This year, postgraduate claims were on average slightly more successful than undergraduate claims

**Chart 4a - Proportion of students with extenuation claims and the UEL population by level of study – 2012/13**

\*Excludes new beginnings and distance learning students

Chart 4a above compares the proportion of students who applied for extenuation and the UEL population by level of study for the 2012/13. A much lower proportion of postgraduate students applied for extenuation compared to the proportion of postgraduate students at UEL. This pattern is consistent with the previous 2 academic years as illustrated in charts 4b and c below.

**Chart 4b - Proportion of students with extenuation claims and the UEL population by level of study - 2011/12**

**Chart 4c - Proportion of students with extenuation claims and the UEL population by level of study – 2010/11**

1. **Equality and Diversity Monitoring**

5.1 Equal opportunities monitoring data for this report was obtained from MIS and DELTA. DELTA was used for the extenuation population data whilst MIS was used for UEL enrolment data analyses.

All data is based on unique values, repeated incidences for a single student were removed.

5.2 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 panel members.

5.3 **Gender**

**Chart 5a - Proportion of students with extenuation claims and the UEL population by gender – 2012/13**

Chart 5a, above compares the proportion of students who applied for extenuation and the UEL population by gender in 2012/13. The proportion of extenuation claims by female students was higher than the proportion of female students at UEL by 7 percentage points. Our annual reports consistently demonstrate that female students are more likely to apply for extenuating circumstances than male students. This trend is reflected in charts 5b and c below.

**Chart 5b - Proportion of students with extenuation claims and the UEL population by gender – 2011/12**

**Chart 5c- Proportion of students with extenuation claims and the UEL population by gender – 2010/11**

5.4 **Ethnicity**

**Chart 6a - Proportion of students with extenuation claims and the UEL population by ethnicity – 2012/13**

Chart 6a above, compares the proportion of students who applied for extenuation and the UEL population by ethnicity in 2012/13. The proportion of white and mixed ethnicity students with extenuation claims was much lower than the proportion of these ethnicities at UEL. In turn the proportion of black ethnicity students with extenuation claims was much higher than the proportion of the black students at UEL. Similar patterns are reflected in previous analyses. These are illustrated in charts 6b and c below.

**Chart 6b – Proportion of students with extenuation claims and the UEL population by ethnicity – 2011/12**

**Chart 6c – Proportion of students with extenuation claims and the UEL population by ethnicity – 2010/11**

* 1. **Disability**

**Chart 7a – Proportion of students with extenuation claims and the UEL population by disability - 2012/13**

\*Excludes where information was not sought

Chart 7a above, compares the proportion of students who applied for extenuation and the UEL population by disability category in 2012/13. The proportion of extenuations by students with a disability was higher than the proportion of disabled students at UEL.

Students with a declared disability were more likely to apply for extenuation by 3 percentage points, whilst students with a disability excluding learning disability were more likely to apply for extenuation by 11 percentage points.

Of the students with a known disability 31% had either made appointments to see, or where known to, staff in student life services.

The extenuation patterns for disability are in-line with previous years and illustrated in charts 7b and c below.

**Chart 7b – Proportion of students with extenuation claims and the UEL population by disability – 2011/12**

**Chart 7c – Proportion of students with extenuation claims and the UEL population by disability - 2010/11**

1. **Conclusions**

6.1 Despite the fall in overall extenuation claims for 2012-13, the panel noted some important concerns and are working to revise policies in-line with assessment practices. These include a revision of the maternity policy (which has been adopted and approved) and the implementation of a “fit to sit” policy aligned with the new academic framework.

**7. Recommendations**

7.1 It is recommended that future reports capture the discrepancies in the proportion of students who apply for extenuation against demographical characteristic. This will allow for a more robust analysis of extenuation practices at UEL.

7.2 As part of the Academic Framework review the decision to allow students to submit work up to 24 hours late and receive a 5% deduction in their grade, may mitigate the percentage of claims received. Often students use the extenuation process as the only means of submitting late work.

7.3 It is recommended that a working group be formed to look in more detail at the Extenuating Circumstances Policy to ensure that both the policy and its procedures are fair and impartial.