SECTION 5A

Guidelines for undergraduate and postgraduate taught students on the procedures for handling claims that extenuating circumstances should be taken into account when their performance is being assessed

Students are advised to seek the advice, guidance and support from sabbatical officers in the Students Union and Students’ Union Advice Centre.

1. The University’s regulations permit its assessment boards to take remedial action if they are satisfied that a student’s absence from an examination, or failure to submit work for assessment by the agreed submission date, or failure to pass one or more elements of the assessment resulting in the failure of a module can be attributed either to illness or to other circumstances of a personal nature (extenuating circumstances: ECs). Remedial action for ECs in cases where a module has not been passed is to permit another attempt at the assessment(s) concerned.

2. The purpose of these guidelines is to explain how EC claims should be submitted and how they will then be handled.

3. There are separate procedures for requesting extensions of course work submission dates if a student suffers from a short-term illness or experience serious personal difficulties; such requests should be made in writing, and as soon as possible and no later than two working days after the submission date.

4. The claims that are submitted will first be considered to determine whether they have sufficient strength to warrant action by the Course Assessment Board.

5. The Assessment Boards, which consider a student’s performance on the course and make decisions about progressions and about final awards, normally meet in June/July and for some courses in September/October.

6. If a student fails to attend an examination or to submit assessed work by the agreed submission date (after allowing for any extension that might have been granted) the Course Assessment Boards will record a mark of zero, which may lead to failure in the module, unless it has been informed that there are approved grounds for treating the student differently. If the student has achieved a pass mark for the module/s the marks achieved will be confirmed and credited to the student’s record, and the Course Assessment Board will take the approved claim for extenuating circumstances into account when deciding the classification within the overall discretion parameters set by the University’s Teaching and Learning Committee.

7. If a student wishes to claim that either:
   i) failure to attend an examination, or
   ii) failure to submit work by the agreed submission date, or
   iii) poor performance in any element(s) of the coursework assessment
was due to illness or some other extenuating circumstance, it is the student’s responsibility to make that claim in full and in writing and to submit it via the School Office responsible for the course.

An EC claim for an assessment under examination conditions that has been sat will not be considered in light of the University’s ‘fit to sit’ regulation whereby a candidate undertaking such an assessment is declaring that they are fit to do so.

A written claim for failure to attend an examination must be received no later than five working days after the examination in question (other than in exceptional circumstances).

A written claim for failure to submit work by the agreed submission date must be received as soon as possible and no later than five working days after the submission date (other than in exceptional circumstances). Requests for extensions must be made as soon as possible and no later than two working days after the submission date.

A written claim of extenuating circumstances relating to any element of assessment must be received as soon as possible and no later than five working days after the submission date for the assessment concerned (other than in exceptional circumstances).

Claims must be supported by independent evidence, for example a note from a doctor or a counsellor, and must directly cover the period of assessment. All evidence must be in English or translated into English and signed by a public authority.

8. In deciding whether or not to make a claim, students should be aware that, should the claim be approved, the Course Assessment Board will not attempt to judge how the student might have performed in different circumstances with a view to awarding extra marks. If a claim is approved and the student has failed to pass the module, the remedy will be to allow a further attempt at the assessment(s) concerned. If the student has achieved a pass mark for the module(s) in question but has performed poorly, the marks achieved will be confirmed and credited to the student’s record, and the Course Assessment Board will take a recognised claim for extenuating circumstances into account when deciding on classification within the overall discretion parameters set by the University’s Teaching and Learning Committee.

9. The decision whether or not the EC claim has been approved will be notified to the student in writing within ten working days of receipt of the claim in Registry via the School Office.

10. Students who wish to request a review of the outcome of an EC claim decision must do so in writing to the Head of Registry as soon as possible and normally not later than two calendar weeks after the decision which is disputed has been announced. Some reasonable delay in lodging a request will be allowed where, for example, the student is involved in either sandwich placement or teaching practice as part of his/her course. The request for a review should give a full explanation of the nature of and the grounds for the request.
11. The submission of a request for a review of the decision will not delay the submission of the decision to the Assessment Board. In cases where a request for a review of the decision is successful, the Assessment Board will be notified of the revised decision and will review its own consideration of the candidate accordingly.

12. A request for a review will only proceed on one or both of the following grounds:

   a) that there was a material irregularity in the consideration of the EC claim which substantially affected the outcome;

   b) that the student was subject to extenuating circumstances at the time of the assessment which for a valid reason supported by appropriate evidence the student had been unable to describe or evidence in full at the time when the claim was made.

13. On receipt of a request for a review, the Head of Registry or nominated deputy will review the documentation to identify if 12a) or 12b) has occurred and is demonstrated within the documentation submitted by the student.

14. Where it is considered that the grounds for a review have been established, the Head of Registry or nominee will inform the student and School in writing that the decision has been reconsidered in light of the new evidence.

15. Where it is considered that the grounds for a review have not been established, the Head of Registry or nominated deputy will write to the student with a full explanation.

16. The Head of Registry will prepare an annual statistical report on requests for reviews for the University’s Teaching and Learning Committee. This report will identify any issues which need prompt attention.
SECTION 5B

Guidelines for students on approved courses of supervised research on the procedures for handling claims that extenuating circumstances should be taken into account when their performance is being assessed

Students are advised to seek the advice, guidance and support from sabbatical officers in the Students Union and Students’ Union Advice Centre.

1. The University’s regulations permit the body overseeing the assessment to take remedial action if it has been confirmed that a student’s absence from an assessment, or failure to submit work for assessment by the agreed submission date can be attributed either to illness or to other circumstances of a personal nature (extenuating circumstances: ECs). Remedial action for ECs in cases where an assessment has been affected is to permit a fresh attempt at the assessment(s) concerned. By attending a formal assessment activity, such as a Progression Monitoring meeting or an oral examination, it will be assumed that the student has declared that he or she is fit to undertake that assessment and a claim for ECs will not normally be approved.

2. The purpose of these guidelines is to explain how EC claims should be submitted and how they will then be handled.

3. The claims that are submitted will first be considered by a panel of academic staff, the Extenuating Circumstances panel. That panel will determine whether the claims have sufficient strength to warrant action by the body assessing the student and will meet at regular points during the course of the academic session.

4. If a student fails to attend an assessment meeting or to submit the required documentation by the agreed submission date (after allowing for any extension that might have been granted) the body overseeing the assessment may conclude that the student has failed to satisfy them, unless it has been informed by the EC Panel that there are approved grounds for treating the student differently.

5. If a student wishes to claim that either:
   
i) failure to attend a Progression Monitoring Meeting, or
   
ii) failure to submit work by the agreed submission date, or
   
iii) failure to attend an oral examination

   was due to illness or some other extenuating circumstance, it is the student’s responsibility to make that claim in full and in writing and to submit it via the School Office.

   A written claim of extenuating circumstances relating to any element of assessment must be received as soon as possible but no later than five working days after the assessment date or submission date for the assessment concerned (other than in exceptional circumstances agreed by the EC Panel).
Claims must be supported by independent evidence, for example a note from a doctor or a counsellor, and must directly cover the period of assessment. All evidence must be in English or translated into English and signed by a public authority.

6. In deciding whether or not to make a claim, students should be aware that, should the claim be approved, no attempt will be made to judge how the student might have performed in different circumstances. If a claim is approved, the remedy will be to allow a further attempt at the assessment concerned.

7. The decision whether or not the EC claim has been approved will be notified to the student in writing within ten working days following the meeting of the EC Panel.

8. Students who wish to request a review of the decision of the EC Panel must do so in writing to the Head of Registry as soon as possible and normally not later than two calendar weeks after the decision of the EC Panel which is disputed has been announced. The request for a review should give a full explanation of the nature of and the grounds for the request.

9. A request for a review will only proceed on one or both of the following grounds:

   a) that there was a material irregularity in the conduct of the EC Panel which substantially affected the Panel’s decision;

   b) that the student was subject to extenuating circumstances at the time of the assessment which for a valid reason supported by appropriate evidence the student had been unable to describe or evidence in full at the time when the EC Panel met.

10. On receipt of a request for a review, the Head of Registry or nominated deputy will review the documentation to identify if 9a) or 9b) has occurred and is demonstrated within the documentation submitted by the student.

11. Where it is considered that the grounds for a review have been established, the Head of Registry or nominee will inform the student and School in writing that the EC Panel has been required to reconsider its decision in light of the new evidence.

12. Where it is considered that the grounds for a review have not been established, the Head of Registry or nominated deputy will write to the student with a full explanation.

13. The Head of Registry will prepare an annual statistical report on requests for reviews for the University’s Research Committee. This report will identify any issues which need prompt attention.