

**Extenuating Circumstances** – a student can expect a response around 14 days from the date of submitting the form, although it could take slightly longer if submitting during Bank Holidays and/or the winter/summer or spring Holiday period.

- A student emails/telephones Programmes Administration requesting an extenuating circumstances form (*please see section 1 overleaf for further details*).
- The extenuating circumstances form with guidance is then emailed to the student with Cella and Klaus copied in.
- The student would be advised to complete the form in full, detailing to what extent their performance has been affected, writing down the 'to' and 'from' dates they have been affected as well as providing independent corroborating evidence to support their claim (*please see section 2 overleaf for further details*). The student then emails (if scanning facilities are available) or posts the form and corroborating evidence to Cella and Klaus for signing.

The student has the option, if necessary, to have their claim treated with the utmost confidentiality (*please see section 3 overleaf for further details*).

- Once the extenuating circumstances form has been signed by Cella/Klaus, the form and corroborating evidence are either emailed (to the staff support mail box [am.staffsupport@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:am.staffsupport@plymouth.ac.uk)) or posted to the Programmes Administration office:

Room 109, Roland Levinsky Building  
Faculty of Arts  
University of Plymouth  
Plymouth  
Devon PL4 8AA

- When we are in receipt of the paperwork, the details will be logged into the Extenuating Circumstances Database and passed on to the Faculty of Arts Registrar, Donna Sanders.
- Donna then considers the paperwork and if deemed valid and the student has claimed for late submission, they would be able to submit their work after the official deadline (in liaison with their tutor), in or around a 20 working day timeframe. If uncharacteristic performance (atypical) applies, the student *may* retake the work again as a referral after the Post Graduate Taught (PGT) Faculty Board have met, depending on other failed modules and ultimately the board's decision (*please see section 5 overleaf for further details*). The outcome of the Extenuating Circumstance application would be emailed to the student, Cella, Klaus and Sarah Bennett (to keep Sarah in the loop).
- If the form is not clearly valid, the student's claim would go to a Panel to deliberate over the claim. If a claim is invalid after deliberation, the student would be emailed an explanation via the programmes office with Cella, Klaus and Sarah Bennett copied in (*please see section overleaf 4 for further details*).

## Extenuating Circumstances Reference Guide

- 1 This Regulation applies to students who have registered for one or more modules, started their studies, and then found themselves in circumstances outside their control which impacted on their performance in one or more elements of assessment.

Extenuating circumstances are circumstances which:

- are exceptional;
- are outside the student's control;
- can be corroborated by independent evidence;
- occurred during or shortly before the assessment in question; and
- may have led to an unrepresentative performance in relation to the student's previously demonstrated ability

Students who wish extenuating circumstances to be considered should:

- obtain an Extenuating Circumstances form from Faculty Office;
- complete the form;
- attach corroborating evidence;
- obtain the appropriate signature;
- submit as soon as feasible.

## 2 Corroborating Evidence

All claims must be accompanied by independent corroborating evidence; specific about the nature, timing and severity of the problem and if possible provide an independent assessment of the effect the problem may have had on the student's performance.

Corroborating evidence may include:

- A medical note.
- A letter from a counsellor.
- A note from the Accommodation Office confirming a particularly severe problem.
- An official document - police report with a police reference number, court summons.
- A letter from a solicitor, social worker or other official agency.
- An insurance claim document supported by a letter from the insurance company.
- Corroboration from support staff in e.g. the Chaplaincy, Student Funding.
- Academic staff who have been closely involved in the pastoral care (must be countersigned by the member of staff designated as responsible for the co-ordination of pastoral care within the School). It is the responsibility of the staff member concerned to obtain a valid countersignature.

Full-time students cannot claim pressures of work, since such students have by implication made a commitment to make available the time necessary for study; part-time students in full-time employment or self-employed can.

Students should not seek to obtain corroborating evidence retrospectively.

### **3 Confidentiality**

Claims are confidential to the Screening Panel and Board other than if they need to be considered as part of a student appeal.

They can enter the word 'Confidential' on the form in the boxes headed 'Brief Description' and 'Comments' and attach written evidence in a sealed envelope.

Personal Tutors (and possibly other staff) may need to be notified about the outcome of their tutee's extenuating circumstances claim, although not the details of the case.

### **4 Consideration of Extenuating Circumstances: Screening Panel**

Each Faculty has a Screening Panel. The Panel includes Faculty Registrar, Associate Dean T&L as Chair plus appropriate academic staff.

The Panel determines whether the claim is valid within the Regulations (exceptional, outside the student's control, and corroborated).

Screening Panels will meet in January, March, June and September prior to Panels and prior to Referred and PG Boards.

In this Faculty the Faculty Registrar (FR) is authorised to approve circumstances claims outside formal meetings, where the claim is clearly valid. If the FR, and Chair are not convinced that a claim is valid, it must be considered by the Screening Panel.

Claims are logged and tracked on the Extenuating Circumstances database. The Faculty Office notifies students of the outcomes and where invalid, must explain why this decision has been reached.

### **5 Consideration of Extenuating Circumstances: Award Assessment Board**

Valid claims are forwarded to the Board for consideration in mitigation of:

- Atypical or uncharacteristic performance
- Failure to attend (an) examination(s), end-of-module test(s) or in-class test(s)
- Failure to submit work by the appointed time
- Failure in the relevant assessment
- Failure to meet other programme requirements

Students are normally required to undertake an assessment at the same attempt.