



ACADEMIC BOARD

(Wednesday 23 November 2016)

Extenuation Annual Report 2015-16

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Prepared on: 14 November 2016

Status: Discussion and Approval

Executive summary

The purpose of this paper is to consider data relating to the number of Extenuating Circumstances claims which were submitted in academic year 2015-16 for Term 1 and 2 (UG)/ Semester A and B (PG) and the Resit period for both UG and PG students. Please note that data relating to Semester C claims is not included in this document.

Further to the analysis of the number of component claims and number of individual students who applied for extenuation, the report also considers the number of claims which were accepted and provides a breakdown of components submitted, the number of students this comprises and the number of claims accepted by cross referencing enrolment data with an evaluation of claims by demographical characteristic, conducted in line with equality and diversity monitoring.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report covers the operation of extenuating circumstances procedures for the academic year 2015-16. The following considerations are addressed in this report:
- A summary of extenuation claims by school and semester for academic year 2015-16;
 - An analysis of the number of extenuation claims since 2005-06;
 - Consideration of the percentage of students who applied for extenuation from each school;
 - The overall acceptance rate of extenuation by Semester/Term for academic year 2015-16;
 - A breakdown of the reasons why extenuation claims were rejected in relation to extenuation feedback codes;
 - Consideration of extenuation claims by mode of study in terms of Home, International, EU and Unknown students;
 - An illustration of extenuation claims in relation to Postgraduate and Undergraduate students;
 - The ratio of Full-time and part-time students who applied for extenuation;
 - Section 5 considers equality and diversity monitoring and analyses extenuation claims in relation to gender, ethnicity and disability.
- 1.2 Section 6 of the report considers the conclusions and recommendations which can be drawn from the data analysis within the report, in relation to trends from previous years, as well as emergent themes identified for 2015-16 academic year to bear in mind for the forthcoming 2016-17 academic year.
- 1.3 All the data shown is for this institution only, with the exception of *The Institute of Child Education and Psychology Europe*, as all other collaborative partners manage their own extenuation claims.
- 1.4 Following the centralisation of Student Helpdesks through the creation of the Student Hubs at each campus, claims are now processed by Hub Advisors in liaison with Hub Supervisors, who are responsible for oversight of logging forms, resolving student tickets and answering queries in relation to extenuation claims.
- 1.5 The decisions spreadsheets continue to be sent to the Assessment Unit who remain responsible for inputting Delta codes.

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 1a below provides a short summary of extenuation claims by component, received over Terms' 1 and 2 and Semesters' A and B and the reassessment period in 2015-16.

| | ACE | ADI | Bus & Law | Cass | HSB | PSY | Soc Sci | Total |
|---------------------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| Term 1/Sem A | 27 | 21 | 70 | 55 | 49 | 74 | 61 | 357 |
| Accept | 11 | 11 | 41 | 33 | 37 | 46 | 42 | 221 |
| Reject | 16 | 10 | 29 | 22 | 12 | 28 | 19 | 136 |
| Term 2/Sem B | 53 | 57 | 157 | 118 | 165 | 106 | 62 | 718 |
| Accept | 35 | 42 | 108 | 77 | 120 | 74 | 40 | 496 |
| Reject | 18 | 15 | 49 | 41 | 45 | 32 | 22 | 222 |
| Resit | 44 | 21 | 68 | 43 | 32 | 48 | 2 | 258 |
| Accept | 33 | 7 | 36 | 17 | 21 | 37 | 2 | 153 |
| Reject | 11 | 14 | 32 | 26 | 11 | 11 | 0 | 105 |
| Total | 124 | 99 | 295 | 216 | 246 | 228 | 125 | 1333* |

*This figure does not include the one component claim that did not proceed to panel because the evidence that the student submitted was returned as not being genuine.

**Table 1a: Number of component claims by school and semester
2015-16**

- 2.2 The number of claims rose sharply in 2009/10 but has since reduced steadily. The number of claims in 2015/16 was over 300 fewer than that of the preceding year (Chart 1b).

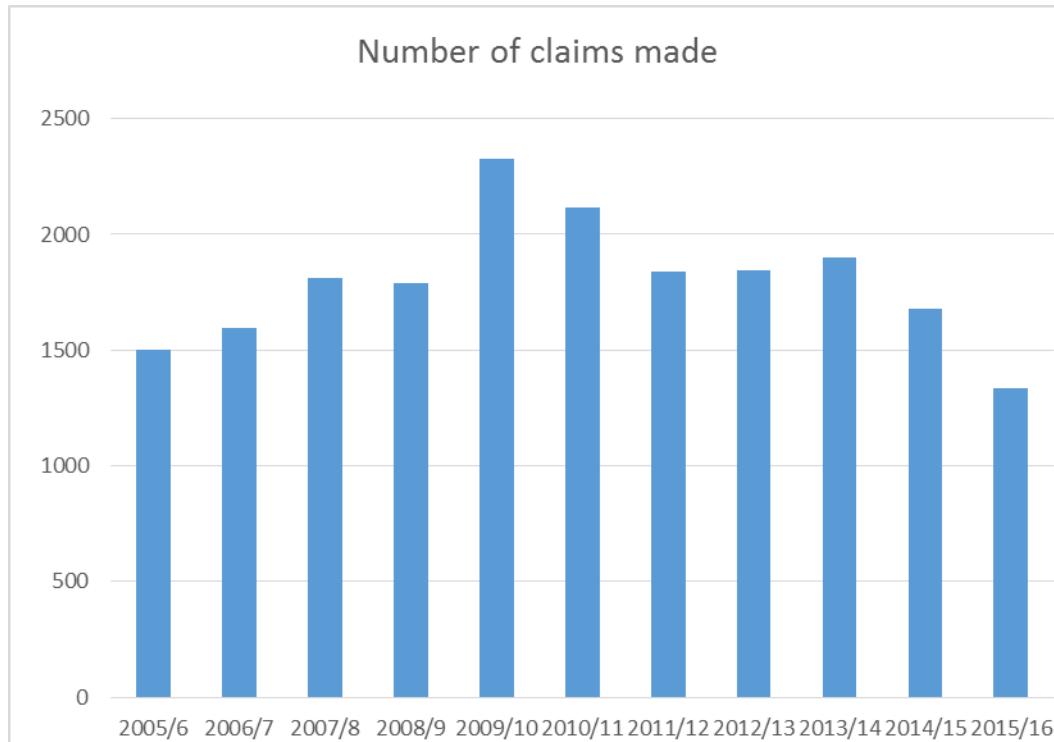


Chart 1b: Total number of extenuation claims since 2005

- 2.3 Table 2a below highlights the percentage of students from each school who made at least one component claim for extenuation in 2015-16.

| School | Number of students who applied | Enrolments | %Students who applied |
|-----------|--------------------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| ACE | 59 | 1,493 | 4% |
| ADI | 40 | 1,984 | 2% |
| CASS | 109 | 2,176 | 5% |
| HSB | 141 | 2,168 | 7% |
| Soc Sci | 62 | 752 | 8% |
| PSY | 57 | 1,588 | 4% |
| Bus & Law | 135 | 2,016 | 6% |

Table 2a: Extenuation activity by academic School

- 2.4 In 2015-16 the overall percentage of successful claims was 65.31%, which is slightly higher to success rates in recent years.

| | % Accept |
|-------|-----------------|
| Sem A | 61.09% |
| Sem B | 69.08% |
| Resit | 59.30% |
| Total | 65.31% |

Table 2b: % Accepted claims by semester/term

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

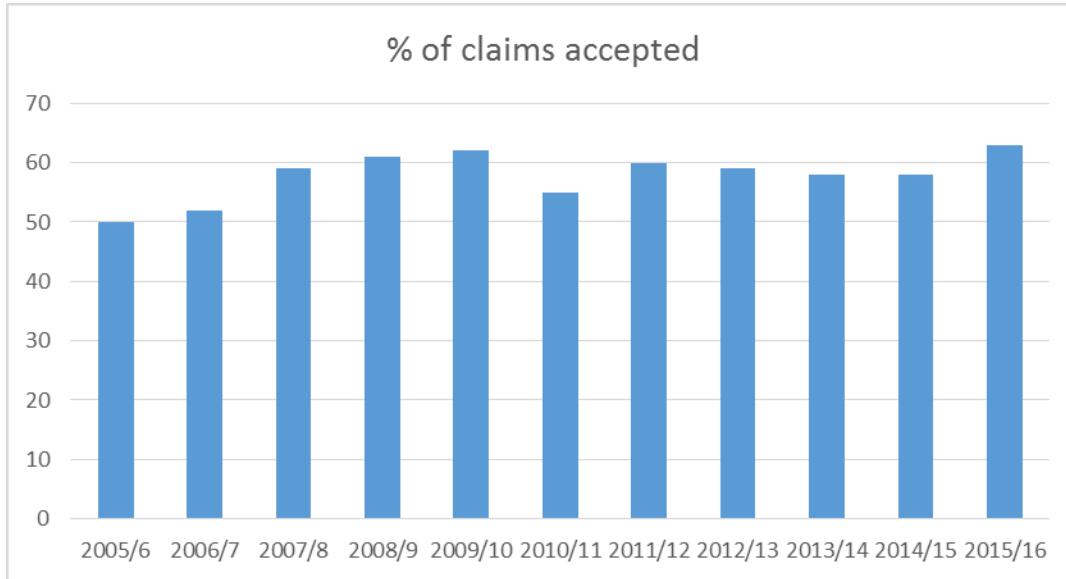


Chart 2c: % claims accepted annual comparison

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 overleaf.

| Feedback Code | Sem A | Sem B | Sem R | Total |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| R1 - module capped | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| R2 - fourth attempt | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| R3 - coursework on time | 19 | 21 | 20 | 60 |
| R4 - failed another component | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| RC - did not meet criteria | 22 | 17 | 3 | 42 |
| RE - evidence insufficient | 87 | 143 | 60 | 290 |
| RL - late without good reason | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| RM - multiple | 11 | 10 | 8 | 29 |
| RN - not extenuation | 19 | 20 | 2 | 41 |
| B - failed evidence check | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

Table 3a: Reasons for rejection

The largest category of rejected claims occurred where students had failed to supply adequate evidence for their claim/s. The number of technical rejects (codes R1 – R4), substantially reduced (most to zero) due to the changes in the UG regulations, which from September 2014 allows students to claim for components that are capped and also applies the capping to the component and not the module.

There was 1 component claim across the 2015-16 Academic Year where the evidence submitted was deemed not to be genuine.

A more detailed explanation of the feedback codes can be found on the extenuation website: <https://www.uel.ac.uk/Discover/Governance/Policies-Regulations-Corporate-documents/Student-Policies/Extenuation-Procedures>

4. Mode of Study

- 4.1 Since 2010-11 claims have been analysed by undergraduate and postgraduate status, and the number of claims from home, international and EU students have also been noted. From 2014-15 the number of claims from part time and full time students has also been included in the analysis.

| | Component claims | Accept | Reject | % Accepted | No. Students who applied | No. Enrolments | % Students who applied |
|----------------------|-------------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Home | 1143 | 749 | 394 | 65.52% | 512 | 11033 | 4.64% |
| International | 68 | 38 | 30 | 55.88% | 35 | 764 | 4.58% |
| EU | 105 | 74 | 31 | 70.47% | 48 | 356 | 13.48% |
| Unknown | 16 | 9 | 7 | 56.25% | 8 | 35 | 22.85% |
| Total | 1332 | 870 | 462 | 65.31% | 603 | 12188 | 4.94% |

Table 4a: Number of claims accepted for Home, International & EU students 2015-16

- 4.2 Table 4a above highlights the success rate between home, EU and international students.
- 4.3 Table 4b below illustrates that postgraduate students are less likely to apply for extenuation than undergraduate students. Postgraduate student claims during 2015-16 had a lower acceptance rate than undergraduate claims.

| | Component claims | Accept | Reject | % Accepted | No. Students who applied | No. Enrolments | % Students who applied |
|----------------------|-------------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Postgraduate | 115 | 61 | 54 | 53.04% | 86 | 2,307 | 3.72% |
| Undergraduate | 1217 | 808 | 408 | 66.39% | 517 | 9881 | 5.23% |
| Total | 1332 | 870 | 462 | 65.31% | 603 | 12,188 | 4.94% |

Table 4b: Number of claims accepted for UG / PG students 2015-16

- 4.3 More than ten times as many component claims were received from full time students compared to part time students. The acceptance rate for full time students was 13% higher than that of their part time counterparts. When the number of part time and full time students enrolled for 2015/16 is analysed further there is only just over 1% difference between the percentage of full time and part time students submitting a claim. In academic year 2014-15, the acceptance rate was 7% higher for part time students so this difference does not appear to represent an escalating trend.

| | Component claims | Accept | Reject | % Accept | No. Students who applied | No. Students enrolled | % Students who applied |
|------------------|-------------------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Full Time | 1156 | 776 | 380 | 67% | 496 | 9,901 | 5.01% |
| Part Time | 149 | 79 | 70 | 53.02% | 86 | 2,262 | 3.80% |
| Other | 27 | 15 | 12 | 56% | 21 | 3692 | 0.56% |
| Total | 1332 | 873 | 462 | 65.31% | 603 | 12188 | 4.94% |

Table 4c: Number of claims accepted for full time and part time students 2014-15

5. 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 circumstances than male students, and are also slightly more likely to have their claims accepted and 2015-16 follows that trend.

Table 5a below displays information about the number of assessment components applied for by gender in 2015-16 and the percentage of the UEL population that made a claim.

| | Component claims | Accepted | Rejected | %Accept | No. Students who applied | No. students enrolled | %Students who applied |
|----------------|------------------|------------|------------|---------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Female | 958 | 628 | 330 | 65.55% | 429 | 7603 | 5.64% |
| Male | 374 | 242 | 132 | 64.70% | 174 | 4583 | 3.79% |
| Unknown | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 2 | 0% |
| Total | 1332 | 870 | 462 | 65.31% | 603 | 12,188 | 4.94% |

Table 5a: Extenuation statistics for 2015-16 by gender

Female students accounted for 958 out of 1332 claims and around 65% of these claims were successful (628 out of 958). Almost three times as many females (958) submitted claims in comparison to their male counterparts (374). That equates to just around 2% more of the female than male UEL population. However female component claims were only around 1% more successful than males.

5.4 Ethnicity

Table 5b below provides a breakdown by ethnicity of the number of extenuation claims received during 2015-16, and the number of students who submitted these claims.

| | Component claims | Accepted | Rejected | % Accept | No. Students who applied | No. students enrolled | % Students who applied |
|--------------------|------------------|------------|------------|---------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Asian | 223 | 146 | 77 | 65.47% | 93 | 2,567 | 3.62% |
| Black | 633 | 401 | 231 | 63.19% | 308 | 4,111 | 7.49% |
| White | 286 | 184 | 102 | 64.33% | 119 | 3,978 | 2.99% |
| Mixed/Other | 190 | 139 | 52 | 72.63% | 83 | 1532 | 5.41% |
| Unknown | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 1332 | 870 | 462 | 65.31% | 603 | 12188 | 4.97% |

Table 5b: Extenuation claims by ethnicity 2015-16

When all ethnic groups are analysed nearly 5% of the total UEL population submitted an extenuating circumstances claim. Further analysis of the data highlights that slightly over 7% of black students made a claim compared to only around 3% of white students. The highest number of accepted claims were attributed to mixed or other non-specified ethnicity groups, but for those ethnicity group more clearly defined in terms of Asian, Black and White acceptance rates overall are within 2-3% of each other. Although 0.8% more White students had their claims accepted compared to Black students, over 1% more Asian students had their claims accepted when compared to white students.

5.4 Disability

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

| | Component claims | Accept | Reject | % Accept | No. Students who applied | No. Students enrolled | % Students who applied |
|-------------------------|------------------|------------|------------|---------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| No disability | 916 | 569 | 347 | 62.11% | 456 | 10,770 | 4.23% |
| Known disability | 416 | 301 | 115 | 72.35% | 147 | 1,417 | 10.37% |
| Unknown | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 1332 | 870 | 462 | 65.31% | 603 | 12,188 | 4.97% |

Table 5c: Extenuation claims by disability 2014-15

Just over 4% of the total UEL population that declared no disability submitted a claim, compared to over 10% of students that disclosed a disability. There is a 10% difference in acceptance rates of 62.11% and 72.35% respectively. In relation to disability data specifically, this could be attributed to claims submitted by students who had an unexpected flare up of their disability which is not representative of the long term, continuous nature of their condition and therefore accepted as unforeseeable.

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

| Disability type | Component claims | Accept | Reject | % Accept | No. Students who applied | No. Students enrolled | % Students who applied |
|---------------------------------|------------------|------------|------------|---------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Learning difficulty | 180 | 134 | 46 | 74.44% | 64 | 657 | 9.74% |
| Mental Health Condition | 58 | 39 | 19 | 67.24% | 30 | 221 | 13.57% |
| Long standing health condition | 53 | 37 | 16 | 69.81% | 18 | 143 | 12.58% |
| Multiple disabilities | 53 | 44 | 9 | 83.01% | 12 | 103 | 11.65% |
| Physical impairment or mobility | 11 | 11 | 0 | 100% | 7 | 62 | 11.29% |
| Social/communication disorders | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0 | 49 | 0 |
| Hearing impairment | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0% | 1 | 27 | 3.70% |
| Visual impairment | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0 | 25 | 0 |
| Other | 58 | 35 | 23 | 60.34% | 15 | 130 | 11.53% |
| Totals | 416 | 300 | 116 | 72.11% | 147 | 1367 | 10.75% |

Table 5d: Breakdown of claims by disability type

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 The total number of component claims has decreased by 341 compared to academic year 2014-15, which is a larger decrease in comparison to the reduction of claims by 322 in 2014-15 compared to 2013-4.
- 6.2 Although the overall number of component claims is fewer than previous years, the success rate remained steady between 59-69% throughout the academic year.
- 6.3 The number of extenuation claims as noted in Chart 1b is at the lowest on record since 2005-06. Claims for both Terms 1 and 2/Semester A and B have decreased compared to 2014-15, however component claims for the

Resit period have increased by over 100. This may be related to the earlier Resit period during 2015-16, however if the Resit period continues to move closer to Term 2, the impact of this on increased numbers of extenuation claims should be monitored, in the event that the closing gap between Term 2 and the Resit period means that the operation of the current extenuation procedure under this assessment structure is not as beneficial to students as it has previously been.

- 6.4 HSB and Social Sciences, each one of the largest and smallest schools respectively, have the highest number of students at 7% and 8% claiming extenuation. This is consistent with 2014-15; last year Psychology also had a higher percentage at 8% but this has decreased to 4% in 2015-16. It may be useful for schools to monitor the number of extenuation claims in order to identify any patterns which can be mitigated against in future.
- 6.5 A higher number of Home and EU students appear to have had their claims accepted compared to international students. This may be due to the accessibility and legitimacy of evidence both in terms of English language translation and in terms of cultural norms in relation to differing surnames, proof of relationship and etiquette. It may be helpful to monitor this in conjunction with UELSU to ensure that processes for assisting students in providing necessary evidence to have their claim accepted is as robust and supportive as possible.
- 6.6 It was noted that postgraduate claims have had a lower acceptance rate compared to undergraduate claims. Where postgraduate students have applied for their Dissertation, a review of the requirement to provide evidence of engagement in their studies up until the point of application could be helpful to ensure that students receive equitable support from their respective schools.
- 6.7 The number of extenuation claims accepted by disability type has increased following the 2014-15 academic year which is reflective of the university's increased support for students with complex circumstances including flare-ups of disabilities, however, positively, the percentage of students with a disability who have applied for extenuation has decreased overall.

7 Risk assessment

7.1 Analysis of data relating to Extenuating Circumstances is necessary to ensure that the process continues to be equitable for all students and to identify any trends which may have emerged in 2015-16. This evaluation ensures that the regulations remain fit for purpose and provides recommendations for improvement where possible, in terms of the operation of the extenuation regulations in relation to the academic framework and assessment structure, as well as support for students in liaison with UELSU.

8. Equality impact assessment

8.1 Continued annual monitoring of extenuation outcomes should impact positively on equality assessment as this enables the university to identify on an annual basis any new trends in relation to equality and diversity monitoring. More comprehensive data analysis in relation to equality and diversity monitoring is considered above in the body of the report.

9. Recommendation

9.1 Please see fuller analysis of conclusions in section 6 above, however below is a summary of recommendations to be considered:

- 9.1.1 The operation of the extenuation regulations in relation to the earlier resit period should be monitored to ensure the regulations remain fit for purpose under this revised assessment structure;
- 9.1.2 Academic schools should consider monitoring the number of extenuation claims to identify any patterns which can be mitigated against in future;
- 9.1.3 The Extenuation Team and the Chair of the Extenuation Panel should work with UELSU to monitor issues relating to the accessibility and legitimacy of evidence both in terms of English language translation and in terms of cultural norms in relation to differing surnames, proof of relationship and etiquette to ensure that processes for assisting students in providing necessary evidence to have their claim accepted is as robust and supportive as possible;
- 9.1.4 A review of the requirement to provide evidence of engagement in their studies up until the point of application for Dissertation claims could help to ensure that students receive equitable support from their respective schools.