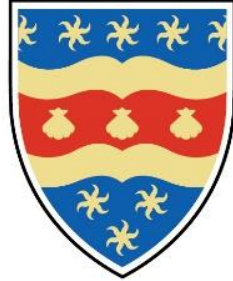


*This regulation applies to students in all UoP sites of delivery and in all UK and international partnerships, unless exceptions to regulations have been formally approved.*



**UNIVERSITY OF  
PLYMOUTH**

## **Extenuating circumstances policy and procedures**

**Effective for students commencing study on modules/stages of programmes in September 2019**

## Document Control

<b>Version number</b>	<b>Status (final)</b>	<b>Owned by</b> Academic Policy and Quality Manager
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2013-14 6.0	December 2013	Pat Wilde	5.0 above	Incorporation of guidance on religious observance and military duties.

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Replaces</b>	<b>Comment</b>
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2017-18	September 2017	Kate Ellis	2016-17 9.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amendment to para 3.3 – claiming ECs for employment commitments</li> <li>• Changes in nomenclature re: Doctoral College &amp; Academic Registry</li> <li>• Inclusion of long-term ill health form</li> </ul>
2018-19	August 2018	Ruth Weaver	2017-18 10.0	Updates as result of discussions at UTLQC July 2018. Scope and implications of self-certification extended; referral thresholds included; entire document reviewed for clarity.
2018-19	January 2019	Ruth Weaver		Clarification of outcomes for self-certification
2019-20	September 2019	Ruth Weaver		Updates to incorporate amendments to fit-to-sit policy and make minor changes to forms for submission
2019-20 v.2	February 2020	Donna Strickland		Removal of requirement for one form per assessment for self-certified claims and expectation a student will be fit-to-sit or complete assessments within 5 working days of the circumstance starting for self-certified claims.

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## 1. Introduction

The aim of this policy is to ensure you are not disadvantaged in your studies by serious, significant circumstances beyond your control.

As described in the [Plymouth Compass](#) framework, we encourage you to become a [resilient and thriving individual](#) and a [competent and confident professional](#). This means that, while studying with us, we expect you to be able to deal with the inevitable ups and downs of life, including minor illnesses or personal issues, so that they don't affect your studies and, in particular, your ability to attend or complete assessments.

Sometimes, however, you'll face a serious situation which has a significant impact on your ability to attend or complete assessments. The University calls such situations 'extenuating circumstances' (ECs). This extenuating circumstances policy describes how we can support you by taking such situations into account.

We define 'extenuating circumstances' as circumstances that:

- have a significant impact on your ability to attend or complete assessment(s), and
- are exceptional, and
- are outside your control, and
- occurred during or shortly before the assessment in question.

Section 2 of this document gives more detail on the kinds of situations that are, and are not, recognised by the University as extenuating circumstances.

If you are experiencing extenuating circumstances, the University can take these into account by allowing you to, for example,

- submit assessment slightly later than the published deadline, or
- not submit assessment now, but have an opportunity for re-assessment at the next opportunity, without penalty, or
- not attend a time specific assessment, such as an examination, test, presentation or performance, or field class, but have an opportunity for re-assessment at the next opportunity, without penalty, or
- not attend or complete an assessment, when this accounts for 25% or less of the module's overall mark and the learning outcomes are met through other assessment (this option is not available for self-certified extenuating circumstances)

The exact outcome of a valid extenuating circumstances claim depends on whether your extenuating circumstances are self-certified or supported by evidence, the nature of the assessment to which the claim applies and, in some cases, the decision of your Award Assessment Board (which will take account of your whole academic profile) or, for postgraduate research students, the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee. It is not possible, therefore, for this document to be definitive about your specific situation. Please note that opportunities for re-assessment usually occur in the summer referral period or as an opportunity to undertake modules in the following academic year. There is a limit to the amount of

re-assessment allowed in the summer referral period; a module that is not achieved because of extenuating circumstances will count towards this limit.

The University operates a 'fit-to-sit' policy for time-specific assessments, such as examinations, tests, presentations or performances. If you think that your ability to attend or complete a time-specific assessment is being affected by extenuating circumstances, you

- must not sit or complete the time-specific assessment and
- must submit an Extenuating Circumstances form.

If you attempt a time-specific assessment, this is normally taken as your declaration that you consider yourself fit to do so.

Section 3 of this document tells you how to submit an extenuating circumstances claim and section 4 tells you what will happen if your circumstances are accepted as valid. If you think that your ability to complete coursework is being affected by extenuating circumstances, please pay particular attention to the guidance in section 5.1.

## **1.1 Extenuating circumstances and groupwork**

You may need to prepare assessments as a group with students whose ability to fulfil their role in the group is affected by their own extenuating circumstances. We expect a group to have contingency plans to manage members' absence, but sometimes the impact means it is impossible for the group to attend or complete its group assessment task. In this case the member of the group affected by extenuating circumstances should submit an extenuating circumstances claim, as described in this document. Other members of the group should also each submit a claim, citing their group member's absence, through extenuating circumstances, on their own claim. Please discuss, with the module leader or appropriate member of teaching staff, whether the group may be able to carry on in this situation, to avoid unnecessary re-assessment.

## **2. Scope of extenuating circumstances**

### **2.1 What is an extenuating circumstance?**

We define 'extenuating circumstances' as circumstances that

- have a significant impact on your ability to attend or complete assessment(s), and
- are exceptional, and
- are outside your control, and
- occurred during or shortly before the assessment in question.

The University has separate guidance for students about religious observance and military duties. The guidance on religious observance is at [this link](#) and the guidance on military service is at [this link](#)

## 2.2 What might be considered valid extenuating circumstances?

People are affected differently by different circumstances, so it is difficult to provide a definitive list of valid extenuating circumstances. However, examples of serious, significant situations that the University is likely to consider valid extenuating circumstances include:

- Your own health problems, including major accident or injury, acute ailments, hospitalisation (including for operations), or those affecting a significant period of study
- Personal or psychological problems for which you are receiving counselling, or have been referred to a counsellor or similarly qualified practitioner
- Clinical depression or other significant mental health issue
- Pregnancy-related conditions and childbirth (including a partner in labour)
- Bereavement causing significant impact
- Separation or divorce of yourself or your parents
- Recent burglary, theft or serious car accident
- Jury service which cannot be deferred
- Representing the University at national level, or your country at international level, or participation in an event that is of benefit to the University's national or international reputation.
- For part-time students in full-time employment, exceptional pressure of work or permanent change of employment circumstances
- Late diagnosis of, for example, dyslexia, meaning you have not had the appropriate support for assessment, including provision in exams
- Unavailability of the DLE where the module lead confirms that this would have a significant impact on your preparation for an assessment or exam
- Disruption in an exam or assessment, such as a fire alarm going off, or excessive noise from building works
- A significant change to your financial circumstances after enrolment, such as withdrawal of Student Finance England (SFE) funding or its equivalent mid-year
- Interviews for placements, but only in cases where you have asked the employer or provider to reschedule, but this has not been possible
- Significant positive life events, such as weddings of close family members, where you can show that no alternative arrangement, such as the date or your attendance, is possible
- For research degree programme milestones (Project Approval and Confirmation of Route), methodological reasons why your research has not progressed at these stages as expected, submitted by your Director of Studies

## 2.3 What might NOT be considered valid extenuating circumstances?

People are affected differently by different circumstances, so it is difficult to provide a definitive list of extenuating circumstances that the University would **not** consider valid. The key issue is whether the claim meets the criteria at paragraph 2.1 above. We expect you to plan your work to allow for the normal ups and downs of your life, including minor illnesses or personal issues, so these are not usually considered to be extenuating circumstances.

Examples of extenuating circumstances that the University is NOT likely to consider valid include:

- You slept in or your alarm clock did not go off
- Your car broke down, or your train or bus (or equivalent) was delayed or cancelled, unless you can show that you'd made reasonable allowance for such disruption
- Child care problems, or problems with similar caring responsibilities which could have been anticipated
- Unspecified short-term anxiety from all sources, mild depression or examination stress
- Minor illness, such as a cough/cold/sore throat or minor viral infection, unless the illness is incapacitating and at its peak at the time of a time-specific assessment such as an exam or test
- Accidents or illness affecting relatives or friends, unless serious, or you are a sole carer
- Financial problems, including debt sanctions imposed by the University, but excluding cases of exceptional hardship or significant changes in financial circumstances since enrolment
- Family celebrations, holidays, house moves, or similar events, in which you have input to, or control over, the date or may choose not to participate
- Computing problems, such as corrupt data or media, poor internet connectivity, printer failure, or e-submission of an assessment file in an incorrect format, or lack of access to IT facilities because of debt sanctions imposed by the University
- Problems with postal or other third party delivery of work
- Misreading timetables of any kind, or time management problems, such as assessment deadlines close to each other
- Appointments of any kind, including legal or medical appointments, which could be rearranged
- Sporting, recreational or voluntary commitments, unless you are representing the University at national level or your country at international level, or participating in an event that is of benefit to the University's national or international reputation
- For full-time students, normal pressures of employment, because, by enrolling as a student, you have made a commitment to make time available to study.

## **2.4 Disability and long-term health conditions**

### **2.4.1 Disability**

If you have a disability, please contact [Disability Services](#) or its equivalent in partner institutions. Disability Services will normally be able to identify, provide or arrange 'reasonable adjustment' for your situation, in the form of specific teaching and learning support, which is detailed in a Student Support Document. This document is shared with Module Leaders, relevant research degree supervisors and related staff and also the Examinations Office to ensure that the appropriate adjustments are made. Because these adjustments have been made before assessment, you should not need to use the extenuating circumstance provision in relation to your disability. However, exceptional issues may arise, related to your condition, which mean you require consideration beyond the adjustments already made. In this case, the Student Support Document may be used as evidence to support a claim for



extenuating circumstances. For extenuating circumstances unrelated to your disability, this Extenuating Circumstance policy will apply in its entirety.

We will refer you to the [Study and Wellbeing Review Procedure](#) if you submit three extenuating circumstances claims in a six-month period, or if the number or pattern of your extenuating circumstances claims causes concern at any time. If your programme has a '[Fitness to Practise](#)' requirement, we will also refer you to the Fitness to Practise procedure. The [academic offences procedure](#) will be invoked if an extenuating circumstances claim is thought to be fraudulent

#### 2.4.2 Long-term health conditions

A long term health condition is a mental or physical condition that:

- is persistent, typically lasting for more than three months and is often life-long
- cannot be resolved in a short time, or which will recur regardless of action, or which needs to be managed on a long-term basis
- may require you to seek help with some activities but is not otherwise disabling
- can be managed but can 'flare-up'.

If you have a significant 'flare-up' of your condition that affects your ability to attend or complete an assessment you must submit an extenuating circumstances claim for the specific assessment(s). However, rather than asking you to provide evidence, if required, for every claim, you can tell us about your long-term health condition once a year, on a form available from Faculty Offices, the Doctoral College (or equivalent for partner institutions) and this [link](#). You should return the form to your Faculty Office, the Doctoral College (or equivalent for partner institutions) for consideration, accompanied by a statement from your GP, hospital consultant or appropriate specialist responsible for your treatment, which provides clear confirmation of the nature, severity, duration and effect of your condition. If you have a long-term health condition, please also consider contacting [Disability Services](#), or its equivalent in partner institutions, who may be able to provide further support for your learning.

Once the Long-Term Health Condition is form is authorised by the University, you will still need to submit an extenuating circumstances claim for any assessment you cannot attend or complete because of a significant flare-up of your condition, but you will not need to resubmit evidence.

You must inform your Faculty Office, partner institution or the Doctoral College of any change in your condition, whether improvement or deterioration, so that your claim can be reassessed. The Faculty, partner institution or Doctoral College may require further evidence from time to time and you will be contacted at the start of each academic year to review your case.

We will refer you to the [Study and Wellbeing Review Procedure](#) if you submit three extenuating circumstances claims in a six-month period, or if the number or pattern of your extenuating circumstances claims causes concern at any time. If your programme has a '[Fitness to Practise](#)' requirement, we will also refer you to the Fitness to Practise procedure. The [academic offences procedure](#) will be invoked if an extenuating circumstances claim is thought to be fraudulent.

### 2.4.3 Temporary, acute conditions

If you have a temporary, acute condition, such as a broken wrist, you should contact your Faculty Registrar, via your Faculty Office, the Doctoral College Manager via the Doctoral College, or equivalent in partner institutions, as soon as possible, so that they can provide additional support for study and put in place arrangements for assessments. You should not need to use the extenuating circumstance procedures, unless the support in place does not address the problem sufficiently, or other issues arise.

## 3. How to make a claim for extenuating circumstances

To make a claim for extenuating circumstances, please download a claim form from the [extenuating circumstances website](#), use the form at the end of this document, or obtain a claim form from your Faculty or School Office, or equivalent for a partner institution, or, for post-graduate research students, the Doctoral College. Submit the completed form to your Faculty Office (or equivalent for partner institutions), or the Doctoral College, in person or by email. If you want to submit your claim by email, the email addresses to use are shown at the end of this document, and on the [extenuating circumstances website](#). Figure 1 outlines the entire process.

Postgraduate research students should submit extenuating circumstances claims for both taught modules and research milestones to the Doctoral College.

### 3.1 Timing and retrospective claims

Please send us your extenuating circumstances claim as soon as possible. For all assessments other than exams, your form **must be submitted no later than ten working days after the deadline for submission of the assessment (or, for postgraduate research students, the research milestones) or the date of the time-specific assessment, such as presentation, performance or test.**

Extenuating circumstances claims for formal examinations should be submitted no later than the Monday after the end of the formal examination weeks, in the appropriate semester.

It is important that you fill in the form accurately and completely – we can take your circumstances into account only if you give us the right information, including the dates that the circumstances occurred and of the assessments (including, for postgraduate research students, research milestones) affected.

The University academic regulations state that late, or retrospective claims of extenuating circumstances will be considered only if there are the most exceptional reasons for not submitting claims on time, such as impaired judgment through mental health issues. In this situation, we will require you to evidence your inability to engage with the Extenuating Circumstances process on time. You can provide supporting evidence for any extenuating circumstances claim in a sealed envelope, marked confidential, so not wanting to disclose personal information will not normally be considered as an exceptional reason for not submitting on time.

With this in mind, please note that unless there are exceptional circumstances as detailed above, late or retrospective claims for extenuating circumstance will be deemed to be invalid. Appeals against Award Assessment Board decisions based on retrospective extenuating circumstances will normally be rejected.

## 3.2 Corroborating evidence and self-certification

### 3.2.1 Self-certification of short-lived circumstances, affecting you for five working days or fewer

You may self-certify extenuating circumstances that affect you for five working days or fewer. Self-certifying means that you must state what your extenuating circumstances are, but you do not need to provide further evidence of the circumstances themselves. As well as describing the circumstances, we will ask you to tell us, in your claim, how they have impacted your ability to attend and complete assessments.

Remember that, to be considered valid, extenuating circumstances must meet the definition that they:

- have a significant impact on your ability to attend or complete assessment(s), and
- are exceptional, and
- are outside your control, and
- occurred during or shortly before the assessment in question.

Claims that do not meet this definition (and described further in section 2 of this document) will be considered invalid.

If considered valid, your self-certified extenuating circumstances claim is likely to result in you having

- an extension of no more than **five working days** for coursework assessment in a taught module, or
- for any other type of assessment, an opportunity for re-assessment at the next opportunity, without penalty, depending on the decision of the Award Assessment Board or the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee

A **self-certified** extenuating circumstances claim will **never** let you avoid submitting any assessment, even if this accounts for a small proportion (25% or less) of a module's overall mark.

If you are not able to complete your coursework assessment in a taught module within the extended deadline of five working days, and you wish us to continue considering your extenuating circumstances claim, we will require supporting evidence – further details can be found in section 3.2.2 of this document.

Please see further details in section 5 about the outcomes of an extenuating circumstances claim. Exactly what opportunities for re-assessment you have, following a claim for extenuating circumstances, depends on the extent of their impact on your academic profile, and your performance in other modules, and is decided by the Award Assessment Board or, for postgraduate research students, the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee. Please note that opportunities for re-assessment usually occur in the summer referral period or as an opportunity to undertake modules in the following academic year. There is a limit to the amount of reassessment allowed in the summer referral period.

We will refer you to the [Study and Wellbeing Review Procedure](#) if you submit three extenuating circumstances claims in a six-month period, or if the number or pattern of your extenuating circumstances claims causes concern at any time. If your programme has a '[Fitness to Practise](#)' requirement, we will also refer you to the Fitness to Practise procedure. The [academic offences procedure](#) will be invoked if an extenuating circumstances claim is thought to be fraudulent.

### **3.2.2 Extenuating circumstances that affect you for more than five working days**

Unless a Long-Term Ill Health form has been validated (see paragraph 2.4.2 above) all claims for extenuating circumstances that affect you for more than five working days must be supported by independent, reliable documentary evidence that confirms the nature and timing of the circumstances. We will also ask you to tell us, in your claim, how the circumstances have impacted your ability to attend or complete assessments.

The University reserves the right to take any steps it considers necessary to verify any evidence submitted, without notifying you beforehand. If the University is unable to authenticate the material to its satisfaction, the claim may not be accepted. Independent evidence used to corroborate extenuating circumstances should meet the following standards. The evidence should:

- be written by appropriately qualified professionals who are independent to the student. Evidence from family and/or friends will not normally be accepted.
- be on headed paper and signed and dated by the author. Evidence presented by email is acceptable if the email has been sent by the author from the official domain name of the author's organisation
- confirm specifically that the circumstances were witnessed on the relevant date as opposed to being reported retrospectively
- be in English. It is the student's responsibility to provide supporting documentation and any translation should be undertaken by an accredited translator (eg be a member of the Association of Translation Companies <http://www.atc.org.uk/index.html>)

**and**

- be unaltered by the student. Documentation that has been amended for any reason will be deemed inadmissible by the University and may be considered under the University's Examination and Academic Offences regulations.
- be original – copies of supporting evidence will be accepted only in exceptional circumstances. Where extenuating circumstances claims are emailed to the University, documents should be scanned and attached to the email. The University reserves the right to see the original documents before validating a claim.

Exceptionally, the University may accept evidence provided by University staff, such as your personal tutor, academic staff closely involved in your pastoral care, a member of the Residence Life team, staff in Student Wellbeing Services, the Examinations Office or the Programme / Module Lead. Where such evidence is

submitted, it should be countersigned by the member of staff responsible for pastoral care in your School, to avoid any claim of bias.

The Faculty, Partner Institution or Doctoral College will consider upholding a student's claim of extenuating circumstances of five or more days when, in their opinion, all of the above conditions are fully satisfied.

Examples of corroborating evidence likely to be acceptable include:

- A medical note confirming a mental or physical health condition, provided at the time when you were suffering from that condition. During term time the University expects you, normally, to consult with and provide evidence from a registered doctor local to your place of study.
- A letter from a counsellor, such as a member of the University Counselling Service or a qualified counsellor working outside the University, confirming a personal, psychological or emotional problem for which you have been receiving counselling. The University's Counselling Service will provide a letter of support only if it knows of your circumstances, and you were a client of the Service during the relevant period. You will not be able to see a counsellor just to obtain an extenuating circumstances letter.
- A letter from the Residence Life Office confirming a particularly severe accommodation problem
- An official document such as a police report including a police reference number, court summons or other legal document
- A letter from a solicitor, social worker or other official agency
- An insurance claim document supported by a letter from the insurance company.
- For part-time students in full-time employment, wishing to make a claim based on exceptional pressures in their employment, a letter from your employer that confirms the particular circumstances, explains why they are exceptional and outside your control and formally supports your claim. If you are self-employed, you must provide independent evidence to support the claim that the pressures are exceptional and outside your control.

For an extenuating circumstances claim to be considered valid, both the nature of the circumstances and the standard of evidence supplied must meet the definition and standards described in this document. Medical certification that verifies a minor illness, or simply reports a claim that you felt unwell, for example, will not normally be deemed valid.

If considered valid, your extenuating circumstances, supported by independent corroborating evidence, claim is likely to result in you having

- an extension of no more than ten **working days** for coursework assessment in a taught module, or
- for any other type of assessment, an opportunity for re-assessment at the next opportunity, without penalty, depending on the decision of the Award Assessment Board or the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee.

Please see further details in section 5 about the outcomes of an extenuating circumstances claim. Postgraduate research students claiming extenuating circumstances for a research milestone, should refer to the [Research Degrees Handbook](#), for the outcome of a valid extenuating circumstances claim.

We will refer you to the [Study and Wellbeing Review Procedure](#) if you submit three extenuating circumstances claims in a six-month period, or if the number or pattern of your extenuating circumstances claims causes concern at any time. If your programme has a '[Fitness to Practise](#)' requirement, we will also refer you to the Fitness to Practise procedure. The [academic offences procedure](#) will be invoked if an extenuating circumstances claim is thought to be fraudulent.

#### **4. Considering Extenuating Circumstance Claims**

Each extenuating circumstance claim will be considered individually and all students will be treated fairly and equitably. The decision will take into consideration the nature, timing and severity of the problem and the impact it has had on assessment.

Forms are considered as a matter of priority, and the majority are considered soon after submission. However, occasionally some forms can take a little longer to assess. You will be informed of the outcome by email (sent to your University email address). If the claim is deemed invalid you will receive an explanation for this decision.

#### **5. What will happen if you have valid extenuating circumstances ...**

Valid extenuating circumstances do not normally change your grade, but allow you to complete or attend assessments at a time when you are not affected by the extenuating circumstances. Most often they allow you to, for example,

- submit assessment slightly later than the published deadline, or
- not submit assessment now, but have an opportunity for re-assessment at the next opportunity, without penalty, or
- not attend a time specific assessment, such as an examination, test, presentation or performance, or field class, but have an opportunity for re-assessment at the next opportunity, without penalty
- not attend or complete an assessment, when this accounts for 25% or less of the module's overall mark and the learning outcomes are met through other assessment (this option is not available for self-certified extenuating circumstances)

Exactly what opportunities for re-assessment you have, following a claim for extenuating circumstances, depends on the extent of their impact on your academic profile, and your performance in other modules, and is decided by the Award Assessment Board or, for postgraduate research students, the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee. Please note that opportunities for re-assessment usually occur in the summer referral period or as an opportunity to undertake modules in the following academic year. There is a limit to the amount of reassessment allowed in the summer referral period; a module that is not achieved because of extenuating circumstances will count towards this limit.



## 5.1 ... for submitting assessment slightly later than the published deadline.

**If you are making an extenuating circumstances claim about coursework, do not wait for a decision on your claim before submitting your work. Please submit the final version of your work within 5 working days of the original deadline (for self-certified extenuating circumstances) or 10 working days of the original deadline (for all other extenuating circumstances).**

For valid, self-certified extenuating circumstances for taught modules, you will normally be allowed a maximum of 5 days working days from the original deadline to submit your assessment. For research degree milestones, you will normally be allowed re-assessment at the next opportunity, without penalty, depending on the decision of the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee.

For valid, **evidenced** extenuating circumstances for taught modules, you will normally be allowed a maximum of 10 working days from the original deadline to submit your assessment. For research degree milestones, you will normally be allowed re-assessment at the next opportunity, without penalty, depending on the decision of the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee.

The extended deadline may vary with the period that academic staff teaching on the module allow for return of work and/or feedback to students, or because there is insufficient time to mark the work before a Subject Assessment Panel or Award Assessment Board. In particular, an extended deadline in the summer referral period will be no more than five days. You will be advised of the extended deadline by email. You can submit your coursework earlier than the date indicated by your extended submission deadline.

If you have already submitted work, a penalty for late submission may be waived, or you may submit another version of your work. The University Regulations on Late submission of Coursework are available from this [link](#) and the regulations should be read alongside with these procedures.

### **5.1.1 Working days, extended deadlines and vacation periods**

A working day is defined as a day on which the University (or Partner Institution) is open, so includes student vacation periods but excludes weekends, Bank Holidays and other times that the University or Partner Institution is closed, such as the period between Christmas and New Year. An extended deadline may, therefore, fall in the vacation period. Please check with your Faculty Office, its equivalent in a partner institution, or the Doctoral College to find out exactly which days the University or partner institution is closed this year. Postgraduate research students should refer to the [Research Degrees Handbook](#) for the revised deadlines associated with valid extenuating circumstances for research milestones

If the extended deadline is in term-time and you have been unable to meet the extended deadline due to Extenuating Circumstances, you must submit a further Extenuating Circumstances claim. As noted in section 3.2.1 above, if you have self-certified your claim for extenuating circumstances, are not able to complete your assessment within the extended deadline of five working days and you wish us to

continue considering your extenuating circumstances claim, we will require supporting evidence for your claim.

However, if the extended deadline, for taught modules, is in the vacation period and you are unable to meet the extended deadline, for any reason, you do not need to submit further extenuating circumstances claims and your claim will be made valid for re-assessment, as described in section 5.2 below. The difference in treatment of extended deadlines that fall in term-time and in vacation periods is because we do not require students to do academic work in vacations. This applies equally to claims that are self-certified and those that are supported by evidence. It is the only situation in which self-certified extenuating circumstances, for coursework submissions, will lead to a re-assessment opportunity without penalty. However, as described in section 5.2 below, deciding not to meet an extended deadline that falls in the vacation period may have implications for your progression or graduation and you should seek advice about this from your Faculty Office or partner institution.

## **5.2 ... for re-assessment of coursework at the next opportunity, without penalty**

If an extension is not possible, or if you are not able to submit work within the **extended** deadline, for valid extenuating circumstances or because the extended deadline falls in the vacation period and you are unable to meet it, your claim may be made valid for re-assessment of work. In this case, a zero mark will be included in your profile and your extenuating circumstances will be forwarded to the Award Assessment Board, which will make a decision on what action to take. Normally the Board will allow re-assessment at the next opportunity, as the same attempt as the submission for which your extenuating circumstances are valid. This may be during the summer referral period or as a repeat of the whole module in the following academic year.

Where you are given a re-assessment opportunity as a result of valid extenuating circumstances, this will include all components of an element of assessment and any previous component marks will be overwritten. Guidance on what constitutes an element or a component of an assessment is available on the regulations section of the [University's website](#), under 'definition of terms'.

In the particular situation that the assessment covered by extenuating circumstances contributes 25% or less of the overall module mark and the module's learning outcomes can be met from the remainder of the assessment, the module leader may waive a zero mark and re-calculate the module mark from the remainder of the assessment. This decision is at the discretion of the Module Leader and is **never** applied for self-certified extenuating circumstances. Due to the nature of some programmes, particularly those that involve professional practice, this option may not be allowed.

For research degree milestones, the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee will make a decision on what action to take.

## **5.3 ... for re-assessment of a time-specific assessment such as an examination, test, or performance, without penalty.**

A zero mark will be included in your profile and your extenuating circumstances will be forwarded to the Award Assessment Board, which will make a decision on what



action to take. Normally the Board will allow re-assessment as the same attempt as the assessment for which your extenuating circumstances are valid. This may be during the summer referral period or as a repeat of the whole module in the following academic year.

Where you are given a re-assessment opportunity as a result of valid extenuating circumstances, this will include all components of an element and any previous component marks will be overwritten. Guidance on what constitutes an element and a component of an assessment is available on the student portal and from this [link](#).

In the particular situation that the examination, test or other time-specific assessment covered by extenuating circumstances contributes 25% or less of the overall module mark and the module's learning outcomes can be met from the remainder of the assessment, the module leader may waive a zero mark and re-calculate the module mark from the remainder of the assessment. This decision is at the discretion of the Module Leader and is **never** applied for self-certified extenuating circumstances. Due to the nature of some programmes, particularly those that involve professional practice, this option may not be allowed.

#### **5.4 Referral to Study and Wellbeing Review policy and procedure**

We will refer you to the [Study and Wellbeing Review Procedure](#) if you submit three extenuating circumstances claims in a six-month period, or if the number or pattern of your extenuating circumstances claims causes concern at any time. If your programme has a '[Fitness to Practise](#)' requirement, we will also refer you to the Fitness to Practise procedure. The [academic offences procedure](#) will be invoked if an extenuating circumstances claim is thought to be fraudulent. The Study and Wellbeing Review Policy and Procedure may lead to considering your support needs or recommending alternative forms of assessment and may include a Student Support meeting. If your extenuating circumstances or health problems prevent you from making academic progress, the Award Assessment Board may, subject to the Study and Wellbeing Review Procedure, require you to interrupt or withdraw from the programme of study.

#### **6. Relationship to other policies and sources of support.**

The University has a range of other policies and procedures that may be relevant in a specific situation. Most are available from the University website: <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/your-studies/essential-information/regulations> . The Study and Wellbeing Review Policy and Procedure on this page is particularly important.

#### **7. Appeal against an Extenuating Circumstances decision**

You have the right to appeal against the Faculty, Partner Institution or Doctoral College decision whether or not to accept an Extenuating Circumstances claim. Such appeals must be submitted within ten working days of the outcome of the extenuating circumstances claim being communicated to you and may be made only on the following grounds:

- A material and demonstrable procedural irregularity in the Extenuating Circumstances process.

- Evidence that the Faculty, partner institution or Doctoral College did not consider all of the information available to it at the time of its consideration of the claim.

Appeals will not be considered on the following grounds:

- Dissatisfaction with the reasonable judgment of the Faculty, partner institution or Doctoral College in its consideration of the extenuating circumstances claim,
- Late submission of an application for extenuating circumstances or late submission of evidence to support an application where there are no compelling grounds why the application was late.

Appeals against the Faculty, partner institution or Doctoral College's decision on whether or not to accept an Extenuating Circumstances claim must be made within ten working days of the decision as set out above, and will not normally be accepted during the main summer or referral appeal periods.

Appeals will be considered through the University's appeals process, available at <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/your-studies/essential-information/complaints-appeals/academic-appeal> .

The outcome of any appeal against a Faculty, partner institution or Doctoral College decision in relation to Extenuating Circumstances is final and will not be considered subsequently as an appeal against the decision of the Award Assessment Board or the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee.

## 8. Frequently asked questions

### **What do I do if I feel that my performance in coursework will be affected by extenuating circumstances?**

For taught modules, the University permits students to submit improved versions of coursework up to the submission deadline. If you do not submit the final version of your work, and your extenuating circumstances are not deemed valid, the version of your work submitted most recently will be treated as the submission. If your extenuating circumstances are deemed valid, you will have an opportunity for re-submission or re-assessment, as described in paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2.

### **What do I do if I feel my performance in an exam, test or time-specific assessment will be affected by extenuating circumstances?**

The University operates a 'fit-to-sit' policy for time-specific assessments such as examinations, tests, presentations or performances. If you feel unwell or that your performance is likely to be affected because of extenuating circumstances, as described in this document, you should not attempt the time-specific assessment. If you take a time-specific assessment knowing you are unwell, you will not normally be able successfully to claim extenuating circumstances.

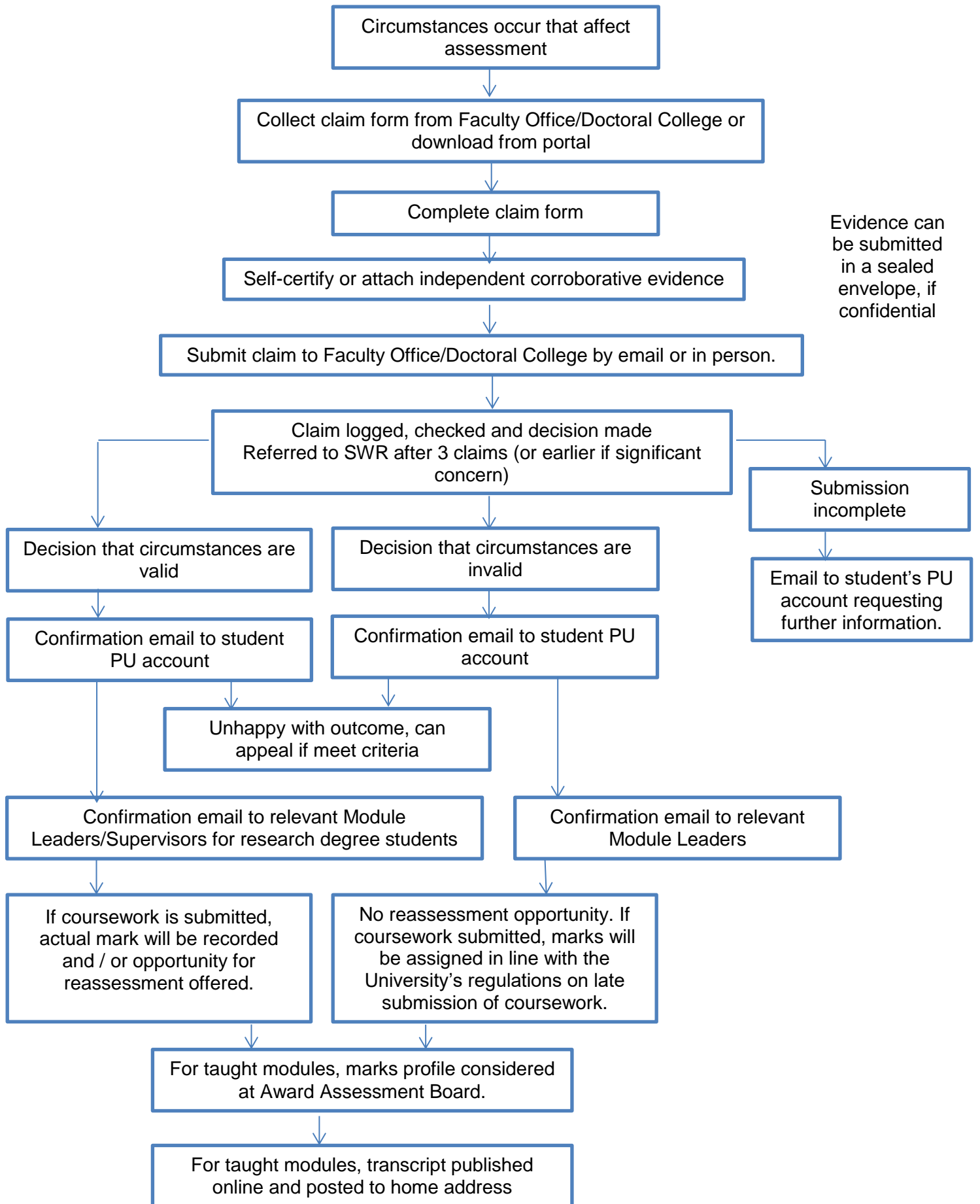
**What do I do if I become unwell during an exam, test or time-specific assessment?**

If you are well and sit a time-specific assessment but you unexpectedly become ill during it and are unable to continue, you will be able to submit an extenuating circumstance claim for non-attendance as above. You should report your illness to the invigilator in a formal exam, before leaving the exam room, so that the invigilator's report can be used to corroborate any subsequent extenuating circumstances claim.

**What do I do if I am affected by extenuating circumstances during the Referral period?**

If you are required to undertake referred assessments during the summer period and are affected by extenuating circumstances during this time, you must submit a new claim form to cover this period. In this case you should be prepared for the Referred Award Assessment Board to decide that referred modules not achieved by the end of the academic year must be retaken during the next academic year. This may mean you do not progress to the next stage of your programme or graduate until the end of the next academic year. Each case will be considered on an individual basis.

**Figure 1: Flowchart of Extenuating Circumstances process**



## Application for Extenuating Circumstances for taught modules

Please complete this form with reference to the Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedure, available [here](#).

<b>Full Name:</b>	<b>Student Number:</b>
<b>Programme:</b>	<b>Stage/Year:</b>
<b>School:</b>	

### Assessment Affected:

Module Code	Module Leader	Type of assessment affected e.g. exam, coursework, presentation	Assessment deadline	Request: * Extension (maximum 10 working days) or Non-submission/non-attendance	Is this group work?

\*possible outcomes are explained in the extenuating circumstances policy

Description of Extenuating Circumstances and their impact on your ability to attend or complete the assessment described above (please continue on a separate sheet if necessary):	
<b>Date of circumstances</b> Start:	End:
<b>Are you self-certifying your circumstances?</b> You may self-certify for circumstances that affect you for five working days or fewer. You must submit a separate claim for each assessment affected.	Yes/No
<b>Evidence (for non self-certified claims):</b> Please list the independent corroborative evidence you have attached. If you wish your evidence to remain strictly confidential please enclose in a sealed envelope marked confidential with your name and student reference number:	

**Declaration:** I confirm that all information completed on this form is honest and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I confirm that I have read and understood the [Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedures](#).

Signed:

Date:

## FACULTY PROCESS CHECKLIST

Checked by and date:	
Does student have Long Term Health Condition status?	
No. of previous claims in current year (please attach)	
Requested further information	

<b>DATE:</b>	<b>DECISION:</b>	VALID	VALID	INVALID	INVALID
	<b>INITIALS:</b>				
Reason for invalid decision:					

<b>REFERRALS</b>			
Refer to Disability Services/Mental Health			
Send Long Term Health Condition form			
Refer to Occupational Health (FoHHS, FoMD)			
Refer to Study & Wellbeing Review (If 3 claims refer to stage 1)	STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3

<b>EXTENDED SUBMISSION DEADLINES</b>					
Module Code	Element	Original Deadline	Revised Deadline	Time	Notes

Emailed Staff and Student	Date:
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# Postgraduate Research students only: Research Degree Milestones Application for Extenuating Circumstances Affecting Late or Non-Submission of Project Approval (RDC.1) or Confirmation of Route (RDC.2) Assessment

## Student form

Process and possible outcomes are explained in the [Extenuating Circumstances](#) policy and procedures document.

Please also refer to the [Academic Regulations](#) and the information provided by the [Doctoral College](#) in the [Research Degrees Handbook](#) for more information.

<b>Full Name:</b>	<b>Student Number:</b>
<b>Programme:</b>	<b>Stage/Year:</b>
<b>School:</b>	

<b>Description of Circumstances:</b>	
<b>Date of circumstances</b> Start:	End:
<b>Evidence:</b> Please list the independent corroborative evidence you have attached or state if you are applying for <b>self-certification</b> . If you wish your evidence to remain strictly confidential please enclose in a sealed envelope marked confidential with your name and student reference number and submit to the Doctoral College Office.	

**Declaration:** I confirm that all information completed on this form is honest and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I confirm that I have read and understood the extenuating circumstances policy and procedures

Signed:

Date:

## DOCTORAL COLLEGE USE ONLY

Does student have Long Term Health Condition status?	YES	NO
Previous claims	YES	NO
Is this claim self-certified?	YES	NO
If yes, is this the first SC claim of the year (nb only 1 SC claim allowed per year)?	YES	NO
Does student have DS status or SSD	YES	NO
Checked by and date:		

<b>INITIAL DECISION</b>		
Decision	VALID	INVALID
If invalid, request further information?	YES	NO
What information is required?		
Further information received (date):		

<b>CONFIRMED DECISION</b>	Date:	Initials:
Decision	VALID	INVALID
Reason for INVALID decision:		

Refer to DS	YES / NO	Date:	Initials:
Send Long Term Health Condition form	YES / NO	Date:	Initials:
Fitness to study SSM required	YES / NO	Date:	Initials:



# Long Term Health Condition Notification Form

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Please see notes on the reverse of this form **SEE NOTES ON REVERSE**

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Student Reference Number:</b>
<b>Programme:</b>	<b>Stage:</b>
<b>Long-term health condition:</b>	

**Further details:** Please give brief details of the effect of your long-term health condition on your ability to study/undertake assessments:

**Expected duration:** Please indicate how long you are expecting to experience your condition: (eg for a few months, the duration of your studies, etc)

**Long Term Health Condition Disclosure (Details will be kept as confidential as possible)**

<b>Yes</b>
I agree to relevant information about my health and/or support needs being disclosed to those teaching and administrative staff who have a need to know.  Signature:..... Date:.....

<b>No</b>
I do not agree to disclosure about my health and understand that this may limit the support I receive.  I agree to inform the Faculty Office/Doctoral College if I reconsider this decision.  Signature:..... Date:.....

**NOTES**

This form should be used in order to inform your Faculty/Doctoral College of Long Term Health Condition affecting your studies and assessments. A Long Term Health Condition is a mental or physical condition that:

- is persistent, typically lasting for more than three months, and is often life-long
- cannot be resolved in a short time, or which will recur regardless of action, or which needs to be managed on a long-term basis
- may require you to seek help with some activities but is not otherwise disabling
- can be managed but can 'flare-up'

Examples of conditions which fall into this category are: Cystic Fibrosis, Costochondritis, Fibromyalgia, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME), Psychosis, and Bipolar Disorder

This form must be accompanied by a statement from your GP, hospital consultant or appropriate specialist responsible for your treatment which provides clear confirmation of the nature, severity and duration of your condition. Once a claim is authorised, you will continue to be required to submit an extenuating circumstances claim for any missed assignment submission deadline, test, or examination which is directly attributable to a flare-up of your Long Term Health Condition, but you will not be required to resubmit evidence

You must inform your Faculty/Doctoral College of any change in your condition, whether improvement or deterioration, in order that the claim can be reassessed. The Faculty may require further evidence from time to time. You may be contacted at the start of each academic year to review your case.

**Office Use Only**

Evidence attached:            YES            NO

Claim approved:            YES            NO

Signed: .....Date.....

If not approved reason for decision: .....

.....

**ONCE COMPLETE, THIS FORM TO BE SHARED WITH PROGRAMME LEAD, RESEARCH DEGREE SUPERVISORS, SCHOOL PGR COORDINATOR AND DISABILITY SERVICES.**

**To submit your extenuating circumstances form by email, please use these email addresses**

**All Post-graduate research students** [doctoral.college@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:doctoral.college@plymouth.ac.uk)

**Students in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities:** [artshumadmin@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:artshumadmin@plymouth.ac.uk)

**Students in the Faculty of Science and Engineering:** [science.engineering@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:science.engineering@plymouth.ac.uk)

**Students in the Faculty of Business:**

School of Law, Criminology and Government: [foblcg@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:foblcg@plymouth.ac.uk)

Plymouth Business School – [fobpbs@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:fobpbs@plymouth.ac.uk)

**Students in the Faculty of Health and Human Sciences**

Students at Exeter - [ExeterSON@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:ExeterSON@plymouth.ac.uk)

Students at Truro (Knowledge Spa) [KSPAreception@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:KSPAreception@plymouth.ac.uk)

Students at the Peninsula Allied Health Centre [pahc.reception@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:pahc.reception@plymouth.ac.uk)

Students on the main Plymouth campus [rollestudentreception@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:rollestudentreception@plymouth.ac.uk)

**Students in the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry**

Post-graduate taught programmes: [meddent-pgt@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:meddent-pgt@plymouth.ac.uk)

Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery programmes:

Year 1&2 students: [psqfacultyoffice@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:psqfacultyoffice@plymouth.ac.uk)

Year 3-5 students: [jbbfacultyoffice@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:jbbfacultyoffice@plymouth.ac.uk)

Dental Surgery, Dental Therapy & Hygiene programmes: [DentalAdministration@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:DentalAdministration@plymouth.ac.uk)

Physician Associate (PA) programme: [physicianassociate@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:physicianassociate@plymouth.ac.uk)

School of Biomedical Sciences [biom.sci@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:biom.sci@plymouth.ac.uk)