

# Impaired Performance: A Guide for Students

If you have experienced serious or acute problems or events beyond your control which have adversely affected your performance in an assessment, or have prevented you from completing an assessment, you may ask for your circumstances to be taken into account by using the University's Impaired Performance Procedure. This is known as 'making an impaired performance claim'.

This Guide gives you advice about:

- what is an eligible claim
- how to make a claim
- how your claim is processed
- the possible outcomes of a claim

## What is an eligible claim?

It is to be expected that in the normal course of life a student will experience occasional illness and perhaps other problems or events that coincide with the completion of coursework assignments or preparation for written examinations. It is essential to recognise that these are part of the everyday frustrations of life and that it is normal to have to manage these while continuing with work or study. Such circumstances do not in themselves excuse failure or a poor performance and do not automatically provide grounds for an impaired performance claim.

**You are expected to take responsibility for your own personal organisation, including managing your learning, coursework assignments and revision, in a way which anticipates that events will not always run smoothly.**

The University will, however, take account of **genuinely exceptional serious and acute problems or events** that affect your performance in your assessments, and which you draw to its attention in a claim for impaired performance.

The following types of impaired performance claim are normally eligible for consideration:

- Claims referring to a *serious* or *significant* medical condition or illness (to include both physical and mental health problems).
- Claims referring to *exceptional* personal circumstances (e.g. serious illness or death of an immediate family member or close friend, including participation in funeral and associated rites; being a victim of crime).
- Claims referring to exceptional travel circumstances *beyond your or your family's control* which prevented you from attending an examination or other scheduled assessment.

It is important that you keep your Personal Tutor fully informed of any difficulties at the time at which they occur. With early warning of a problem it may be possible for your Department to provide support which will make an impaired performance claim unnecessary.

Note that when you make an impaired performance claim you must also provide *independent supporting evidence* such as a medical certificate; a copy of a death certificate; a police report; etc. Claims without such evidence will not normally be considered. You must also include a statement from your Personal Tutor or some other member of the academic staff who is familiar with your circumstances.

Medical certificates must be validated by the University doctor before being submitted. The clinic is in Building A on the Lower Ground Floor.

The following types of impaired performance claims are **NOT** normally accepted:

- Claims without independent supporting evidence.
- Claims which do not state clearly how your performance in your assessments has been affected.
- Claims where your circumstances have already been fully catered for by the granting of a coursework extension.
- Claims where the problem is caused by English being your second language.
- Claims arising from poor time management or personal organisation (for example: failure to plan for foreseeable last-minute emergencies such as computer crashes, printing problems or travel problems resulting in late submission of coursework; misreading the examination timetable).
- Claims referring to circumstances within your control (e.g. family wedding or holiday; paid employment; getting a cheaper flight; choosing to miss an assessment or coursework deadline for something considered more important).
- Claims referring to minor ailments such as colds, headaches, stomach upsets, etc., *except* where the ailment made it impossible for you to sit an examination or other scheduled assessment.
- Claims referring to a long term illness or disability, where special arrangements have already been made for your assessments (or where such arrangements could have been made if the University had been made aware of the problem at the proper time) *except* where these arrangements prove inadequate on the day because of unforeseen circumstances.
- Claims made after the published deadline for their receipt.

It is not possible to specify all conditions which may or may not constitute a valid claim, and the above are examples only. If you have *exceptional* personal commitments such as sporting or cultural activities at the *highest* level (normally representing your country) which are likely to impact upon your assessments, you should consult your Department for advice well in advance and not wait to submit an impaired performance claim after the event. Such commitments will normally be dealt with outside the impaired performance procedure.

### **How do I make a claim?**

You claim in each Semester for any affected assessments held in that Semester.

Obtain an Impaired Performance Claim form from the Quality & Validation Office in Building E.

Complete the form *after* the due dates of the assessments about which you wish to claim, and submit it by the published deadline. The deadline is normally 2 days after the end of the final examination period for each semester.

Follow carefully the instructions for completion given on the form. If any information is missing from the form your claim may not be considered.

Return the completed form, and independent supporting evidence, by the deadline for submission to the Quality & Validation Office. Remember that it is your responsibility to ensure that your independent supporting evidence is provided on time.

If you are discovered to have made a fraudulent impaired performance claim or to have fabricated or falsified your independent supporting evidence, you may be subject to the University's disciplinary procedures.

### **How will my claim be processed?**

Your claim will be dealt with by the University in confidence as far as possible, taking into account the need for appropriate staff to consider the circumstances described. Concerns relating to confidentiality will not normally be taken to constitute good cause for not submitting a timely IP claim.

Your claim will be considered by an Impaired Performance Panel whose task is to consider all the claims received and recommend appropriate courses of action to the relevant Examination Board, all in accordance with set University guidelines. The Examination Board will make the final decision on your claim, also in accordance with the University's guidelines. This procedure is designed to ensure consistency of treatment for all students on a degree programme, irrespective of the individual modules about which they are claiming.

Examination Boards meet at the end of each semester.

### **What are the possible outcomes of my claim?**

When making its decision on each individual claim, the relevant Examination Board will take into account both the content of the claim and your performance in other assessments, both impaired and unimpaired. It is important to note therefore that a decision on a particular claim cannot be predicted in advance, and that it may be the case that two apparently similar claims result in different outcomes.

The Board will reject any claims which do not meet the criteria for eligibility.

In cases where the evidence available to the Board leads it to conclude that a student's performance has not been impaired, no further action will be taken.

In cases where the evidence available to the Board leads it to conclude that a student's performance has been impaired, the range of remedies available to it includes:

- The opportunity to take a missed assessment, or to re-take a severely impaired assessment, at a future date (normally in the September Re-sit Period, but in the following academic year if more appropriate to the student's individual circumstances).

- A minor adjustment to the mark achieved.
- The insertion of a coursework mark where a zero had been recorded in the first instance because the work was received after the published deadline.
- The calculation of an overall coursework mark based on completed components where an assessment in an individual component has been missed.
- The insertion of a mark derived from an alternative assessment where the original assessment was not completed.
- The substitution of an alternative mark for the mark achieved, having reference to the student's unimpaired marks in other assessments (including those from previous years).

**While these are the remedies which a Board will normally employ, it may decide that other appropriate remedies are in a student's best interests, given their individual circumstances.**