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26th November 2020

Dear Higher Education Student,

I hope this email finds you well and you remain safe in these difficult times. I am writing today to reaffirm our commitment to your academic success this year, in the face of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

I would like to update you on the 2020-21 Regulations which have been recently approved by the Higher Education Academic Board, and in some cases University of Plymouth Senate.

Last academic year, we took a series of steps in response to the *immediate emergency* caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, to support continued student engagement with learning and the completion of examinations, to provide reassurance to students concerning their academic outcomes and to maintain the robustness of our academic standards.

Going into this year, we have invested in our new blended model of programme delivery, designed with a clear focus on supporting your learning and enabling you to achieve wherever you are.

There are several measures available to support individual students, including changes to the requirement for evidence required for Extenuating Circumstances.

Our priority was to help students to progress to the next year of study or complete their programme and graduate. This continues to remain a high priority and therefore, I am pleased to share with you, three COVID-19 related mechanisms which have been adopted to support you and your studies this academic year, with these now superseding the changes applied in April 2020:-

1. Extenuating Circumstances

If you believe that your academic performance has or will be affected by a personal or health circumstances, you must apply to UCSD for extenuating circumstances as soon as possible, and no later than ten working days after the assessment deadline.

There is no requirement to submit independent, supporting documentation or evidence, as there has been in the past. But you must complete and submit the form.

More information and the online form can be found on our website under essential information; <https://www.ucsd.ac.uk/student-life/essential-information/extenuating-circumstances/>.

For advice and guidance on extenuating circumstances, please make contact with the HE Student Support Hub; hestudy@southdevon.ac.uk / 01803 540788.

2. Assessment

If you have failed to achieve your credits in which you are enrolled on this academic year, you may be able to be considered for referral in up to **80** credits. This regulation has changed to increase from 60 credits.

If you fail to achieve your referral/s, you may be able to be considered for an extended referral which allows students to progress to the next level of study while completing referral work in a maximum of **40** credits. You will be required to complete that extended referral work by 9 December 2021. This regulation has changed to increase from 20 credits.

In the above cases, if you have applied and been granted a valid Extenuating Circumstance this will be offered as the original attempt.

3. Awards

If you progressed from 2019-20, and are now enrolled onto the final stage of your programme, your aggregate mark awarded for 2019-20, will be honoured and used to calculate your final programme aggregate.

We continue to be committed to supporting you with your studies and I would like to remind you of our Higher Education Student Support [Hub](#) who remain available for you during these difficult times. The Study Support Hub can provide support with areas of academic development and practice, employability and your next steps, wellbeing and counselling as well as support any students with a disability. Details are linked above.

Documents detailing the above temporary amendments have been uploaded to our Academic Regulations and Procedures and Policies webpage and can be accessed using the following link; <https://www.ucsd.ac.uk/student-life/essential-information/academic-regulations-and-procedures-and-policies/>.

Best wishes,
Alastair Wilson
Head of Higher Education and Academic Registrar

