

## **Accommodation for Illness - Undergrads**

### **POLICY ON ACCOMMODATION FOR ILLNESS - UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS**

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet his/her academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by physical or mental illness. Illness may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. The University further recognizes that physical or mental illness situations are deeply personal and respects the need for privacy and confidentiality in these matters. However, in order to ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic accommodation for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course shall be granted only in those cases where there is documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet his/her academic responsibilities. Students are expected to act in a timely manner when seeking and arranging accommodations.

Documentation shall be submitted as soon as possible to the Dean's Office of the student's Faculty of registration (e.g., to the Academic Counselling Office of the student's home Faculty) indicating the period of illness and when the student should be able to resume academic responsibilities. Students must submit their documentation along with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested no later than two business days after the date specified for resuming responsibilities. In cases where there might be an extended absence or serious issue, students should submit their documentation promptly and consult their Academic Counsellors for advice during their recovery period. Whenever possible, students who require academic accommodation should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, examinations, etc. These documents will be retained in the student's file, and will be held in confidence in accordance with the University's Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy. Once the petition and supporting documents have been received and assessed, appropriate academic accommodation shall be determined by the Academic Counselling/Dean's Office in consultation with the student's instructor(s).

If the Academic Counselling/Dean's Office determines that accommodation is warranted, the accommodation period will normally be the period specified on the medical documentation unless the student demonstrates an ability to resume responsibilities sooner, for instance, by taking on a significant academic commitment (such as an examination) earlier.

Academic accommodation may include extension of deadlines, waiver of attendance requirements for classes/labs/tutorials, arranging Special Exams or Incompletes, re-weighting course requirements, or granting late withdrawals without academic penalty. Academic accommodation shall be granted only where the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete his/her academic responsibilities, and only when the medical professional providing the documentation is able to make a reasonable assessment of the student's physical or mental state during the period for which accommodation is sought. Minor ailments typically treated by over-the-counter medications will not normally be accommodated. Note that there is no expectation that a student must be in optimum condition to carry out his or her academic responsibilities.

#### **Documentation from Family Physicians/Nurse Practitioners and Walk-In Clinics**

A Western Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is required where a student is seeking academic accommodation. This documentation should be obtained at the time of the initial consultation with the physician/nurse practitioner or walk-in clinic. An SMC can be downloaded at [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf).

#### **Documentation from Student Health Services**

At the time of illness, students should make an appointment with a physician/nurse practitioner at Student Health Services. During this appointment, request a Student Medical Certificate from the Physician/Nurse Practitioner.

### **Documentation from Hospital Urgent Care Centres or Emergency Departments**

Students should request that an SMC be filled out. Students may bring this form with them, or request alternative Emergency Department documentation. Documentation should be secured at the time of the initial visit to the Emergency Department. Where it is not possible for a student to have an SMC completed by the attending physician, the student must request documentation sufficient to demonstrate that his/her ability to meet his/her academic responsibilities was seriously affected.

### **Accommodation by Instructor for work worth less than 10% of the overall grade in a course**

Instructors are encouraged, in the first instance, to arrange participation requirements and multiple small assignments in such a way as to allow students some flexibility. A student seeking academic accommodation for any work worth less than 10% must contact the instructor or follow the appropriate Department or course specific instructions provided on the course outline.

In arranging accommodation, instructors will use good judgment and ensure fair treatment for all students. Instructors must indicate on the course outline how they will be dealing with work worth less than 10% of the total course grade. In particular, instructors must indicate whether medical documentation will be required for absences, late assignments or essays, missed tests, laboratory experiments or tutorials, etc. Where medical documentation is required, such documentation must be submitted by the student directly to the appropriate Faculty Academic Counselling/Dean's office, who will make the determination whether accommodation is warranted. Given the University's Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy, instructors may not collect medical documentation.

In all cases where accommodation is being sought for work totalling 10% or more of the final grade in a course, students will be directed to the appropriate Faculty Academic Counselling/Dean's office.

Students who have been denied accommodation by an instructor may appeal this decision to the appropriate Faculty Dean's office but will be required to present appropriate documentation.

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### **Related Policies and Notes:**

The Student Medical Certificate (SMC) (approved by Senate in June 2015):  
[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf).

Student Record Information Privacy Policy:  
[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/general/privacy.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/general/privacy.pdf)

Attendance Policies in the Examinations Section:  
[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/exam/attendance.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/attendance.pdf)

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