



Student Absence Policy

May 2010; updated November 2010; updated August 2011

STUDENT ABSENCE POLICY

This policy applies to all undergraduate and postgraduate taught students.

1. Definitions

A class is any learning and teaching session. It includes such things as lectures, seminars, laboratories, work placement etc.

A working period is any teaching or revision/examination period. For undergraduate students this will often be a semester. For students engaged in project work, placements or field work, a working period is any period which is not a declared holiday.

A significant absence is:

1. an absence of **more than seven consecutive days**¹ during working periods
2. an absence of **any duration** if it prevents a student from:
 - a. attending an examination, or
 - b. fulfilling any other published minimum requirements for the award of credit (e.g. compulsory attendance at a tutorial or laboratory class or meeting a deadline for handing in an assignment).

2. Attendance Requirements

1. Students are expected to attend all timetabled classes.
2. Attendance at any examination which contributes to summative assessment is compulsory.
3. Heads of Schools are responsible for ensuring that students are given clear notification of all classes for which attendance is compulsory.

3. Procedures for Notification of Absences²

3.1 Reporting Requirements

Students must complete a MyCampus³ absence report for any significant absence. Mere completion of an absence report does not necessarily justify an absence. It is the responsibility of each student to give a clear explanation which justifies any significant absence. In particular, absence from compulsory course requirements to fulfil commitments that need not necessarily be undertaken at that time may not be regarded as an acceptable reason for absence. Where possible, the justification should be accompanied by contact details of a person who could verify the information and/or provide further details. A clear reason should be given in all cases where such contact details are not provided.

¹ The seven consecutive days include weekends, for example: Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday

² Special arrangements may be made for students who are absent from placements (e.g. work experience). Such special arrangements must be approved by the appropriate Head(s) of School.

³ Interim arrangements for submitting absence reports will apply during the resit diet in August 2011. Information on these will be available on MyCampus.

As well as entering directly into MyCampus a clear explanation for the reason for absence, further documentary evidence in the form of electronically uploaded files is required as detailed in 3.3 and summarised in Table 1. In addition to using the file upload facility to provide evidence from third parties, it may also be used to provide an extended justification, where appropriate.

Even if not formally defined as significant, students are recommended to complete an absence report for any absence for which they would like the University to take account of special circumstances regarding their ability to attend university, e.g. the cumulative effect of several (non-consecutive) days of absence.

Students with a disability related absence and who have their support co-ordinated by the Disability Service are not expected to complete multiple absence reports for absences related to their disability.

3.2 Timing

All potentially significant absences should be reported as soon as is practical, by completing part 1⁴ of the MyCampus absence report⁵. Part 2 of the MyCampus absence report should be completed on return to university. The normal submission deadline for the completed absence report is 7 days after return to university. The Board of Examiners will not necessarily take account of absences reported after this deadline when considering a case for good cause (see 4.2 below).

If at all possible, absences which will result in non-attendance at examinations should be notified **before** the examination by contacting the relevant examiner, School Absence Contact, or Head of School. This should be followed up by completion of part 1 of the MyCampus absence report.

3.3 Submission of Documentary Evidence

Documentary evidence is required for any significant absence. Table 1 shows under what circumstances medical evidence is required. Documentary evidence should be scanned electronically and linked to the MyCampus absence report⁶. It is the responsibility of the student to keep all original documentation and submit it to the Head(s) of School (s) or nominee(s) on request. If a student is unhappy about scanning sensitive information into MyCampus, he or she must submit the original information to their Adviser of Studies, Honours Convener, or Head of School or nominee, who must complete part 3 of the MyCampus report to acknowledge receipt. Some Schools may insist on submission of all original documents. In such circumstances, Heads of School are responsible for ensuring that details of additional submission requirements are published.

This policy does not attempt to provide a definitive list of all suitable documentary evidence, but types of evidence are given in 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 below.

⁴ Part 1 requests the date of first absence and estimated duration of absence.

⁵ Please note that the provisions on Incomplete Assessment resulting from Good Cause (16.45-16.53 of the *University Calendar*) require that notification of relevant absence is made within 1 week of the relevant exam date or coursework submission date, so part 1 of the MyCampus absence report should be completed within this period.

⁶ Full instructions will be provided in MyCampus.

Consecutive days absent during working periods	Qualifier	Significant?	Absence notification via MyCampus required?	Reason for Absence	Medical Documentation required?	Other Documentation required?
7 or less	No examination missed; nothing missed which would impact on the fulfilment of published minimum requirement for the award of credit	NO	NO ^{5,7}	Medical	NO	NO
				Other	NO	NO
	Examination missed; at least one event missed which would impact on the fulfilment of published minimum requirements for the award of credit	YES	YES	Medical	NO ⁸	YES
				Other	NO	YES
More than 7	-	YES	YES	Medical	YES	NO ⁹
				Other	NO	YES

Table 1

3.3.1 Medical Documentation

Suitable types of medical documentation include:

- a medical certificate¹⁰
- a medical report⁸
- a note from a hospital
- a formal notification of a hospital or clinic appointment.

⁷ In some circumstances it may be beneficial to complete the MyCampus notification. See section 3.1 regarding the cumulative effects of several absences.

⁸ A student is encouraged to provide medical documentation where it is available.

⁹ A student is encouraged to provide all documentation which might help to explain/justify a significant absence. Further documentation is particularly important if medical evidence does not include a clear explanation.

¹⁰ General Practitioners are not obliged to issue medical certificates to students and may charge a fee for providing medical reports. If payment of such a fee will cause the student financial hardship he/she should seek advice from Registry on taking out an emergency Student Loan or applying to the Student Hardship Fund.

3.3.1 Other Documentation

Suitable types of documentation include:

- a note from an independent responsible person who can vouch for the event which led to the absence
- evidence from a member of staff who was alerted to the circumstances at the time
- a letter from a student counsellor¹¹ or other professional that the student actually consulted during the period when the difficulties were occurring
- a note from the police

4. Procedures for responding to Notification of Absences

School Absence Contacts¹², will be notified by email 7 days after the start of an absence, as indicated by part 1 of the MyCampus absence report. They will also be notified on submission of the completed MyCampus absence report. School Absence Contacts, Advisers of Studies and Assessment Officers will have full access to the student absence reports. Course Coordinators will not normally have full access.¹³ School Absence Contacts should monitor the situation and liaise with the student, Adviser of Studies, Course Coordinator, Honours Conveners and Programmes Leaders as necessary.

The submitted absence report may be used:

1. By Course Coordinators and/or Heads of School to suggest any remedial work which the student should do on return to university. It is the responsibility of the student to ask the appropriate staff member about any required remedial work.
2. By the Board of Examiners and/or Heads of School to consider any case for “good cause” and apply the rules of incomplete assessment as appropriate (see Calendar sections 16.45-16.53). It is the responsibility of the Assessment Officer to ensure that relevant information from the MyCampus absence reports is presented to the Board of Examiners.

5. Retention of Records

1. Absence reports and associated documents will be retained in line with agreed University policy.
2. Heads of School are responsible for having a system in place for removing locally held student absence information (electronic and paper) in line with agreed University policy.

¹¹ The University’s Student Counselling and Advisory Service does not provide letters for students who have not previously attended appointments with a counsellor.

¹² Those assigned responsibility for receiving notification of and monitoring student absence. School Absence Contacts should also refer Advisers of Studies to absence information, and if agreed by the School, also advise Course Co-ordinators.

¹³ Access will depend on MyCampus permissions. Some course coordinators will have the required permission as a result of their other duties.

6. Summary of Responsibilities

6.1 Students should:

1. attend all timetabled classes;
2. investigate alternative arrangements to compensate for missed work or assessment
3. complete part 1 of the MyCampus absence report for significant or potentially significant absences as soon as possible;
4. complete part 2 of the MyCampus absence report within 7 days of return to university;
5. ask the appropriate member of staff about any required remedial work;
6. in cases of incomplete assessment resulting from “good cause”, follow the procedure set out at sections 16.45-16.53 in the Calendar.

6.2 School Absence Contacts should:

1. monitor significant absences and liaise with the student, Adviser of Studies, Course Coordinator, Honours Conveners and Programmes Leaders as necessary.

6.3 Course Coordinators should:

1. respond to requests from students regarding advice about remedial work to be done.

6.4 Advisers of Studies should:

1. provide general support and advice to students who seek it;
2. if necessary, receive the information which was not submitted on-line and ensure that part 3 of the MyCampus report is completed;
3. where appropriate, respond to requests from students for help in establishing a case for “good cause”.

6.5 Honours Conveners should:

1. if necessary, receive the information which was not submitted on-line and ensure that part 3 of the MyCampus report is completed.

6.6 Assessment Officers should:

1. ensure that relevant information from the MyCampus reports is presented to the Board of Examiners.

6.7 Board of Examiners should, in accordance with the rules of incomplete assessment:

1. consider the evidence presented and decide whether good cause has been established¹⁴;

¹⁴ §16.47 of the University Calendar sets out the procedures that will be followed in the event of a meeting of the Board of Examiners not being anticipated until some significant time after the examination or submission date missed by the candidate claiming good cause.

2. taking into account all the evidence, determine the appropriate outcome for the work being assessed.

6.8 Heads of School should:

1. ensure that students are given clear notification of timetabled classes for which attendance is compulsory;
2. identify and publicise School Absence Contacts and Assessment Officers;
3. ensure that centrally held course coordinator information is kept up to date;
4. ensure that any additional requirements for submission of original evidence are published;
5. if necessary, receive or nominate someone to receive the information which was not submitted on-line and ensure that part 3 of the MyCampus report is completed;
6. approve any special measures necessary to deal with students who are absent from placements;
7. in the event of a meeting of the Board of Examiners not being anticipated until some significant time after the examination or submission date missed by a candidate claiming good cause, determine the outcome of a claim of good cause in consultation with the relevant Assessment Officer and report any such decisions to the Board of Examiners at the next available meeting;
8. ensure that a system is in place for removing locally held student absence information (electronic and paper) in line with agreed University policy.