

## Accommodation for Medical Illness - Undergraduate Students

*See also the Attendance Policies in the Examinations Section.*

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

**(S.08-#)** *This policy replaces the Policy on Medical Excuse Slips (see below), effective September 1, 2008.*

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet his/her academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Illness may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. The University further recognizes that medical 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.

Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the appropriate Dean's office (the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration/home Faculty) together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. 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 [<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/general/privacy.pdf>]. Once the petition and supporting documents have been received and assessed, appropriate academic accommodation shall be determined by the Dean's Office in consultation with the student's instructor(s). 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. (Note – it will not be sufficient to provide documentation indicating simply that the student “was seen for a medical reason” or “was ill.”)

Whenever possible, students who require academic accommodation should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, examinations, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and their Academic Counselling office in a timely manner.

#### **Documentation from Family Physicians and Walk-In Clinics**

A UWO 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 or walk-in clinic. An SMC can be downloaded at: *website to be determined*. Hard copies are available from Academic Counselling in the Faculties.

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

Students obtaining documentation from Student Health Services should sign a “release of information.” This form authorizes Student Health Services to provide information to the student's home Faculty. Release of information forms are available from, and can be arranged through, the student's home Faculty Academic Counselling service.

### **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 Dean's office, and it will be the Dean's office that 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 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.

### ***MEDICAL EXCUSE SLIPS - Student Absences due to Illness*** *(S.2506, S.07-242)*

*Students who are unable to meet a course requirement through any form of illness (whether temporary, serious, or long-term) should advise their instructors of such an absence at the earliest possible opportunity (preferably in advance of the course requirement).*

*Medical excuse slips normally are not required. Instructors may, at their discretion, require medical certificates for verification of absence for reasons of illness, especially in the event that such absence includes a significant assessment period or evaluation. (Instructors are asked to use good judgement in requesting the use of UWO Student Health Services to verify absence for reasons of minor illness or in instances where a student had not consulted a physician at the time of illness.) Such verification shall be submitted by the student to the office of the appropriate Dean. The Dean's Office will evaluate the original certificate and will retain it according to the University's records retention guidelines. The Dean's Office will then make arrangements with the appropriate instructor and Department Chair regarding accommodations to be made.*

*In the case of absence from final examinations, such verification is mandatory and normally is contingent upon the student being assessed medically before the final examination.*

*UWO Student Health Services normally will issue verification of illness only in the case of serious or long-term illness or in cases involving absence from final examinations or other significant periods.*

*Student absences for reasons other than illness shall continue to be verified according to current practices.*

This web file is <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medical.pdf>