

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

POLICY AND PROCEDURES ON STUDENT ABSENCE

This Policy and Procedure on Student Absence was approved by the University Senate on 12 June 2013. It applies to all undergraduate and postgraduate taught students.

The University places a high value on the health and wellbeing of its students. The University is keen to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to maximise the welfare of students but also to limit the consequences for students when genuine absences do occur.

1. Policy on Student Attendance

- 1.1 The University expects that students will normally attend all classes. Some teaching sessions (e.g. tutorials, seminars and laboratories) are compulsory. Course handbooks will make clear attendance requirements.
- 1.2 Students are required to attend all examinations that contribute to summative assessment.
- 1.3 The University Senate may terminate the studies of any student who persistently fails to attend, or perform the required work of, the course for which they are registered without medical or other good cause for doing so.
- 1.4 Students must report their absence if:-
 - (i) They are absent for any period of more than seven consecutive days¹;
 - (ii) They are absent for a period of less than seven consecutive days but during this time they:
 - a. fail to attend an examination;
 - b. do not submit a piece of in-course assessment by the required deadline;
 - c. are unable to attend a compulsory teaching session (e.g. tutorial, laboratory or seminar).
- 1.5 Students should be aware that although an absence may be considered justifiable, a student must be able to meet the learning outcomes of a course before a pass can be awarded. Students who fail to meet the learning outcomes of a course, even where evidence supporting the absence exists, will not be eligible to receive a class certificate. Details of the learning outcomes for each course can be found in the relevant course handbook.

2. Procedure for reporting an absence

A: When should an absence be reported?

- 2.1 Absence should be reported as far as possible in advance where the absence is planned (e.g. funeral or representing the University in an official event). Where advance notification is not possible (e.g. in event of illness), **it is expected that students will inform the University of on the first day of any period of**

¹ Seven consecutive days includes weekends (for example Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday)

absence. Exceptionally, where it is impossible for a student to report on the first day of absence, students may report up to three days following the first date of absence giving reasons for why they were unable to report on the first day of absence.

- 2.2 Late notification of absence without good cause will only be permissible in exceptional circumstances. Where there are good reasons why students were unable to provide notification of their absence by the timescale defined in 2.1 they must write to the Head of School as soon as practicable and provide explanation of the reasons which prevented them notifying their absence within the defined period.

B: How should an absence be reported?

- 2.3 A student should complete the relevant aspects of the Absence Form in MyAberdeen [<https://abdn.blackboard.com/>] or, where a student is unable to access to MyAberdeen, the absence should be reported directly to the School by contacting the appropriate School Office and followed up by completion of Part A as soon as possible.
- 2.4 The remaining elements of the Absence Form in MyAberdeen should be completed within 3 days of return to study and, where required (see 2.5 below) relevant supporting evidence should be provided. Absences not requiring supporting evidence will be considered to be 'self-certificates'.

C: When is supporting evidence is required?

- 2.5 Not all periods of absence will require supporting evidence. The requirements vary depending on the period of absence, the nature of the events missed and the programme year of the student. Students should however note that notification of an absence will not necessarily justify an absence and a clear explanation of the reasons for the absence should be given.
- 2.6 Supporting evidence is required where:-
- (a) A student in programme years 1 and 2 has been absent for more than seven consecutive days².
 - (b) A student in programme years 3, 4 or 5:
 - (i) has been absent for more than seven consecutive days²;
 - (ii) has been absent for less than seven consecutive days and has been unable:
 - a. to attend an examination;
 - b. to submit a piece of in-course assessment by the required deadline;
 - c. to attend a compulsory teaching session.

D: What is considered supporting evidence?

- 2.7 In the case of illness, a medical certificate³ is required. This can take the form of a pro-forma or a note on the Medical Practice's headed paper signed by a medical practitioner. Where it is impossible for a doctor to verify subsequently that students had been ill on the date of absence it is inappropriate to request a back-dated medical certificate. It is therefore important that students arrange a consultation

² Seven consecutive days includes weekends (for example Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday)

³ Students should note that, in accordance with guidance from the Scottish Executive Health Department, medical practitioners may charge a fee for the provision of medical certificates. Students should note that the University will not reimburse any costs incurred.

with their medical practitioner (in person or by telephone and/or a nurse consultation) as soon as possible following the onset of illness and which the signs of illness are still evident.

- 2.8 Where absence has occurred for good cause of a non-medical nature⁴, students should supply appropriate corroborating evidence in place of a medical certificate, where required. For the purposes of this policy, appropriate corroborating evidence includes as a police report, a letter from the Student Advice and Support Office, a letter from a counsellor, notification of a death or other evidence acknowledged by the University to be of a significant nature.
- 2.9 Where a student believes their medical condition or personal circumstance to be of a particularly sensitive nature, the information should be submitted to the School Office in a sealed envelope marked 'sensitive information'. Such information will be opened by the Head of School.

E: What happens to reports of absence?

2.10 Reports of absence may be used:

- (i) By Course Coordinators and/or Heads of School to suggest any remedial work the student should do on return to study. It is the responsibility of the student to ask the appropriate member of staff about any required remedial work. Students should note that depending on the period of absence and work missed that it may not be possible for a student to make up the missed work and as such a student may not be eligible to receive their class certificate on account of their absence (see 1.5).
- (ii) By the Examiners in deciding whether to award an 'MC' (medical absence), 'GC' (good cause) or 'SC' (Self-certificate) for the course.

F: What support is available?

2.11 The University understand that students may need support and guidance as they deal with issues leading to periods of absence. The University has a range of support services available to support students as detailed alphabetically below:

- [Chaplaincy](#)- The University Chaplaincy (25 High Street) is a place of welcome for all and serves as a spiritual and social centre for students and staff.
- [Counselling Service](#): The Counselling Service is open to all students of the University.
- [Registry Staff](#)- Registry Officers can be contacted through the Infohub and can provide a source of support to students who have concerns about their programme of study.
- [Student Advice and Support Office](#)- Base
- d in the Hub, the Student Advice and Support team offers impartial and confidential advice and support on a range of issues, including finance, disability information and more.
- [Students' Association \(AUSA\)](#)- Based in the Butchart Centre, AUSA is the organisation that represents and serves your interest, and works to make your time in Aberdeen as happy and enjoyable as possible.

⁴ Students should not request a medical certificate from their medical practitioner to cover absences of a non-medical nature.