

Medical Certificates – Guidelines for Students

The University has a system of medical certification for students based, primarily, on self-certification. Most programmes of study are designed to take account of minor illnesses and occasional periods of sick leave should not affect your ability to complete your course. With this in mind the following forms of certification will be requested if you have to take time away from your studies:

During normal periods of study:

- (a) For minor/short-term illnesses totalling less than 10 days in any academic year you should complete a self certificate and forward it to your personal tutor/supervisor as soon as possible (category 1a);
- (b) If your illnesses exceed 10 days in any academic year you will be expected to produce a medical certificate from your doctor for any subsequent illness (category 1b). It will be your responsibility to keep a tally of your days of absence;
- (c) For an illness which lasts more than 5 consecutive days you should obtain a medical certificate from your doctor (category 2);
- (d) For prolonged or ongoing problems such as depression, chronic fatigue syndrome, diabetic complications or anorexia you may also need to request a medical certificate (category 3) depending on the impact on your studies.

At examinations times, at the time of other assessments requiring attendance, or during the period immediately surrounding the submission date for a significant piece of assessment (i.e. contributing to progress to the next year or to final degree classification):

You will be expected to provide a medical certificate for any form of illness and to make your School/Department aware as soon as possible, and certainly before the meeting of the relevant Board of Examiners, of the impact which you believe this illness has had on your performance in the assessment. This will generally be through a Notification of Extenuating Circumstances form to which the completed medical certificate should be attached as supporting evidence and submitted as per the arrangements in your School/Department. Medical certificates will also be required for requesting allowances such as short extensions for minor problems occurring away from the main examination periods. You should consult your Extenuating Circumstances Officer for the exact procedures within your School/Department. Students on BA Joint Honours programmes should ensure that both departments are kept informed of any absences. Copies of extenuating circumstances should similarly be sent to both departments.

Students who believe they may have Swine Flu, who have contacted the National Pandemic Flu Service by telephone or on-line and been prescribed Tamiflu and told to self isolate for 7 days may complete a self certificate. They should attach a copy of the label or the actual label on their supply of Tamiflu to the self certificate and write the unique code number they are given for the flu friend to get hold of Tamiflu on the top of the self certificate. This dispensation is provided exceptionally as most GPs are not seeing patients with suspected Swine Flu and so students are not able to gain a GP medical certificate. Swine flu self certification will not count towards the 10 days normally allowed for certification in any one academic year.

The Examination Board will consider carefully whether the illness could reasonably be expected to have affected your performance and how they should take this into account.

Blank University of Birmingham medical certificates are available from Schools/Departments or from the website at <http://www.as.bham.ac.uk/sca/extcirc/index.shtml#forms>. Tutors and Examination Boards will normally accept only University provided medical certificates.

If you are a sponsored student you should check whether or not your sponsor requires information about any periods of absence which you may have to take. If you have to withdraw temporarily from your programme of study on medical grounds (a leave of absence), you will be required to produce a medical note before resuming your studies.