

## **Self-certification – FAQs for Students**

Please note that these FAQs should be read in conjunction with the [Student Guide to Exceptional Circumstances](#) and the General Regulations. Where there is any doubt, the Regulations take precedence over this guidance.

### **What is self-certification?**

In the world of work, it is common-practice for employees to self-certify for absence due to short-term illness. The intention is to afford students the same opportunity and responsibility to explain absence for a short period of time, in appropriate circumstances. In addition the University recognises that it is not always possible or appropriate to seek an appointment, or consult with your GP for short-term illnesses. In such circumstances, self-certification is appropriate.

Self-certification is an option available to students under the Exceptional Circumstances Procedure. It should only be used where you have missed, or will imminently miss an examination, class test or an assignment deadline due to an unforeseen short-term illness. The onus is on you to formally declare the reason for being absent from your examination or class test or for not submitting your assignment. No additional evidence needs to be submitted, provided that the exceptional circumstances application is correctly completed and submitted by the applicable deadline, except in cases of multiple self-certified absences.

Your application for exceptional circumstances, based on self-certification, will be considered by your School in the normal way, and Schools have discretion to accept or reject the application, or to ask for supporting medical evidence. As such, it is important that you provide as much detail as possible, to allow a decision to be made.

By submitting an application for exceptional circumstances on the basis of self-certification, you will be declaring that the information provided is true and complete. Students who submit fabricated or falsified information to the University will be subject to investigation under the Conduct Regulations and the standard penalty is expulsion from the University.

### **What can I self-certify for?**

Self-certification is not for everything, and should only be used in cases of short-term illness for which you are unable, or it is not appropriate, to seek medical attention. Examples\* of short-term illnesses for which it would be acceptable to use the self-certification option are:

- Migraine
- Noro-virus
- Gastroenteritis
- Acute period pain
- Flu
- Food poisoning
- Diarrhoea

\*This list is not exhaustive.

Self-certification should only be used where absolutely necessary, and the University expects you to manage minor ailments yourself e.g. coughs or colds.

### **What is not appropriate for self-certifying?**

You should not use the self-certification option for an illness which lasts longer than a few days. Neither should you use the self-certification option for an illness for which it would be reasonable to seek medical attention. In such circumstances, medical certification must be obtained, to support any application for exceptional circumstances.

As self-certification is an option under the exceptional circumstances application, you should not self-certify for any of the reasons outlined below:

- Temporary self-induced medical conditions e.g. hangover, drug taking (except prescribed medication)
- Minor ailments e.g. coughs, colds, sprains, minor fractures (unless in the writing hand / arm – please see [Student Wellbeing website](#)).
- Hayfever
- Long-term life circumstances such as a disability or a chronic or on-going medical condition (where you have registered with Disability Services). For more information, please see [Disability Services](#).

### **What do I do if I am ill on the day of the examination or on an assignment deadline day?**

If you are using the self-certification option under the Exceptional Circumstances Procedure, you must advise your School in advance, or on the day of the examination or the assignment deadline day. You must email or telephone the School Office to inform them, and to indicate that you will be self-certifying your absence. If you are unable to notify your School, you must have someone else do so on your behalf.

If you telephone the School Office, you should ensure that you note the date and time of the call, and the name of the member of staff you reported your absence to.

Students should also ensure that they meet any School or programme requirements concerning notification of absence.

You should always consult your GP if your illness is severe, if it persists, or if you are in any doubt about your health. If you do seek medical advice, get a letter from your GP and submit it as the supporting evidence, with your exceptional circumstances application.

### **What if I have attempted the examination or assignment?**

If you have attempted the examination or assignment, then self-certification for absence is not appropriate.

If you experienced exceptional circumstances in relation to an examination or assignment which you completed, then an exceptional circumstances application (not on the basis of self-certification) should be submitted.

Please bear in mind Study Regulation 1.4.47 ('Fit to Sit'), which states: *"...the decision on whether to attempt the examination or submit the assessed work, and the consequences of that decision, shall remain the sole responsibility of the student in question."* If you decide to proceed with an examination, even though you are unwell, you are declaring yourself fit to sit the examination.

### **What if my illness means I am going to miss more examinations or assignment deadlines, do I need to contact the School each time?**

Yes. You must contact your School, and when completing the exceptional circumstances form you should clearly indicate on the form each examination, or each assignment deadline that you miss.

### **What happens in relation to the examination that I have missed, or the assignment that I did not submit by the deadline?**

If you do not complete an assessment or examination due to exceptional circumstances, then you will get another opportunity to sit the examination or submit the assignment without penalty, provided that the self-certification is accepted by your School.

### **When will I be able to resit the examination or resubmit the assessment?**

Resit examinations will take place during the designated August resit period. Please note that for final year students this will postpone graduation. Please also note that failure to pass resit examinations and assessments in August will have serious implications for your progress to the next year, your student finance and visa (if applicable).

### **Can I self-certify during the August resit period?**

Students will be permitted to submit an exceptional circumstances application, including an application based on self-certification, during any University assessment period. Provided that your exceptional circumstances application is accepted by your School, you will be permitted an opportunity to resit an examination or assignment but this will be during a repeat year, unless your School permits you to carry a failed module.

### **When do I tell my School?**

You must tell your School as soon as you realise that you will be unable to attend an examination or meet an assignment deadline. You should contact your School Office by email or telephone. If you do telephone, you should note the date and time of the call, and the name of the member of staff that you speak to. If you are unable to contact the School, you must have someone else do this for you.

In addition to advising your School by phone or email of your absence from examination, or of the fact that you will be unable to meet the assignment deadline because of short-term illness, you must submit the exceptional circumstances application in the normal way.

You must submit the fully completed form to your School Office by the following deadlines:

#### Assignments/coursework/class tests

Within **three working days of returning to study or within three working days of the deadline for submission of the assignment** (whichever is sooner).

#### Examination Period

In some Schools the exam period may differ from the University exam period, in which case the deadline for submission of exceptional circumstances will also differ from the University's published deadline. In these instances **the School deadline will apply**.

It is **your responsibility** to ascertain the correct deadline applied by your School and to submit any exceptional circumstances application to your School within the specified time. For up-to-date information about Exceptional Circumstances submission deadlines please visit your [School webpage](#).

If you have any queries about the Exceptional Circumstances Procedure, including self-certification or are in doubt about the deadline, you should contact your School immediately.

The University deadline for the submission of exceptional circumstances during the examinations periods can be found [here](#).

Applications for Exceptional Circumstances will not be considered after the publication of results.

**Where can I get the form?**

The exceptional circumstances form is available here [insert link].

**What do I need to include?**

You must give full details of the illness which caused your absence – words like ‘sick’ or ‘ill’ are not enough. The reason for the absence including details of the illness, symptoms and date(s) of the illness are required. Medical evidence is not required to support a self-certification, but please do ensure that you give as much detail as possible, as this will allow your School to fully consider your application. The self-certification must also relate to a specific examination or assignment deadline.

**Could my School ask for evidence?**

An application for exceptional circumstances on the basis of self-certification will be considered by your School, which does have discretion to ask for evidence, including medical evidence, of your illness.

**What happens next?**

Your application will be considered by your School, and you will be informed of the outcome. A record will also be kept of your absence from examination, class test, or the assignment deadline missed.

Students who submit multiple or frequent self-certifications may be required by their School to provide medical evidence. If you continually seek deferral of examinations or extensions to deadlines on the basis of self-certification, you may be called to a Student Support Meeting, and / or referred to Student Wellbeing, the Occupational Health Service or the Fitness to Continue in Study Procedure. Depending on your course or programme, the Fitness to Practise Procedure may also be invoked.