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UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

POLICY ON STUDENT ABSENCE

Definition of Absence

Students are absent if:-

- they fail to attend an examination, or
- they fail to attend any element which is identified as compulsory in the Module booklet, or
- they fail to submit a compulsory assessment on time, including where a student has negotiated an extension prior to the deadline, or
- they are unable to study for more than 5 consecutive days or more than 15 non-consecutive days of a working period even if no compulsory elements are missed.

Working Periods

A working period consists of all teaching and revision/examination/reading week periods in one academic year. For undergraduate students this will often be both semesters. Working periods would not normally include weekends or University holidays, however for students engaged in project work, placements or field work, a working period is any period which is not a declared holiday.

Self-Certificates of Absence

Self-certificates of absence are online forms that must be completed in full by the student. Students must complete a self-certificate of absence for any absence (see above).

Completion of a self-certificate of absence does NOT exempt a student from fulfilling compulsory elements of a module.

After completion of a self-certificate of absence it is the responsibility of the student to contact the appropriate staff member (usually the Module Co-ordinator) as soon as possible to ascertain:-

- if any remedial work is required;
- if any documentary evidence is required (see below);
- if the student needs to be referred to the Pro Dean Undergraduate to discuss Leave of Absence because of the length or repetitive nature of the absences.

Timing

All absences should be reported as soon as is practical, by completing a self-certificate of absence. The normal submission deadline for completing a self-certificate of absence is within three days of the first day of absence.
If the absence is unavoidable and planned ahead of time, (for example: hospital appointments, representing the University in official competitions, funerals, job interviews), then the self-certificate of absence should be submitted prior to the event and section 4 also applies. It is expected that students would receive advance permission from the Module Co-ordinator for planned absences.

If submission of a self-certificate of absence is temporarily impossible then the student should make every effort to contact the Module Co-ordinator or the School Teaching Office and then complete a self-certificate of absence as soon as is practical thereafter. Self-certificates of absence submitted later than the normal deadline, for no good reason, will not normally be accepted.

Absences which will result in non-attendance at examinations should be notified before the examination by contacting the University Examinations Office on (01334 46) 4100 as soon as possible. This should then be followed up by the completion of the self-certificate of absence within three days. The Examinations Officer in the School should then be contacted to make arrangements for an alternative or deferred assessment to be completed at the earliest opportunity.

University procedures for responding to self-certificates of Absence

The submitted self-certificate of absence will be used by:-

• Module Co-ordinators, who have access to the student self-certificates of absence through e-Vision and access to registers of class attendance at the compulsory elements of a module. Module Co-ordinators record absences from compulsory elements, then note absences for which self-certificates of absence have not been submitted and issue an appropriate academic alert.

• Pro Deans, who require students who have been absent for 21 consecutive days of a semester to take Leave of Absence (University Senate Regulation) and advise students who have substantial absences of less than 21 days. In addition the University is legally bound to inform the Home Office of absences by international students and this may result in a visa being rescinded if an international student fails to meet the requirements.

• The Academic Support Adviser in Student Services who monitors self-certificate of absence and liaises with the student, Adviser of Studies, Module Co-ordinator, Directors of Teaching, Pro Deans and Registry. Any student reporting a previously undisclosed disability or long term medical condition may be contacted by Student Services.

Incomplete Module Assessment

On completion of the module the Module Board shall consider cases where the assessment of the module is incomplete due to student absences in the following way:-

• The Module Co-ordinator must declare in the Module Booklet or the School student handbook the minimum proportion (or elements) of assessment that must be completed for credit to be awarded for the module. This requirement must be
defined by the School and can constitute 100% but must be no less than 75% of the total assessment.

• Where the evidence supplied indicates a valid reason for incomplete assessment and the minimum requirement (as defined by the School, but no less than 75%) has been achieved then the Module Board can elect to award the grade calculated using the marks completed that are provided.

• Where less than the minimum requirement has been achieved and the documented evidence supplied indicates valid reason then the Module Board should advise a deferred assessment (0D) to the Registry and the School should provide alternative assessment or extensions for continuous assessment elements and/or deferred examinations.

• ‘Valid reason’ could be established by a sub-committee of at least three members (mixed gender) of academic staff prior to the Module Board. This sub-committee can request documentary evidence. This task can be performed by the existing S-code committee, if preferred.

• Where the student has not submitted a Self-Certificate of Absence or not presented satisfactory documentary evidence when requested or not given valid reason AND completed less than the minimum requirement then 0 X should be reported.

• Where the student has not submitted Self-Certificates of Absence for missing elements and the minimum requirement has been completed then the student can be awarded credit for the module but the grade must be calculated on the basis of being awarded zero for the missing elements of assessment.

**Documentary Evidence**

Verifiable documentary evidence may be required if the absence results in the inability to successfully complete the compulsory elements of the module and/or a deferred assessment is required. The School will indicate to the student (giving one week's notice) when further evidence is required in addition to existing self-certification.

Suitable types of evidence include:-

• medical evidence from a doctor who is not related to the student (this must be requested through Student Services for students registered at the local Health Centre). Other GPs may charge a fee for providing medical evidence. If payment of such a fee will cause the student financial hardship he/she should seek advice from Student Services;
• a memo from Student Services;
• a memo from the police;
• letter of invitation to interview;
• letter of confirmation of required attendance at University competitions;
• medical evidence from a hospital doctor;
• evidence from a member of staff who was alerted to the circumstances at the time.