

Approval Date: October 20, 2009

Parent Policy: [Health and Safety Policy](#)

Temporary Suspension of Requirements for Medical Documentation for Student Absences Procedure

Office of Administrative Responsibility:	Provost and Vice President (Academic) and Vice – President (Finance and Administration)
Approver:	General Faculties Council (Executive Committee)
Scope:	Compliance with University procedure extends to all members of the University community.

Overview

The University of Alberta has an obligation under the Health and Safety Policy to manage risk to protect the University community. This includes protecting the health of students, staff and visitors. As much as possible, the University follows the recommendations provided by Alberta Health and Wellness in adopting processes to safeguard the health of the University community. Widespread or epidemic illness could pose a threat to the community. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that policies dealing with student absences due to illness are consistent with the University's overall obligation to protect health and prevent disruptions to the academic community.

The University of Alberta currently has a system that requires students who are absent from term work or term or final examinations for medical reasons to provide a note with a description of the illness, signed (often after the fact) by a medical practitioner. Students are expected to attend a physician even if they are still ill and have that physician attest to the illness or other medical condition. However, where there is widespread, epidemic or pandemic illness at the University of Alberta or in the broader Edmonton community, requiring students to see a physician may put the health of the student and the larger community at risk. Requiring the student to come to the University to present documentation while they are ill could increase the risk to others in the university community. Therefore, in the event of a **medical emergency**, the **Provost** will have the power to suspend the operation of the sections of the University Calendar dealing with missing term work, missing exams and cancellation of exams, for a stipulated period of time to limit the transmission of serious illness among staff and students.

Purpose

To outline the process used when temporarily suspending the requirement for medical documentation for student absences.

PROCEDURE

1. The Provost will receive advice from the Medical Officer of Health, Office of Emergency Management, University Health Centre, Alberta Health and Wellness, the Public Health Response Team (PHRT) or others as to the threat of a medical emergency.
2. If satisfied that a medical emergency exists or is imminent, the Provost may suspend the requirement for medical documentation for a stipulated period of time to support student absences from term work and examinations in the case of illness or illnesses identified in the medical emergency.
3. The decision will be communicated to the university community as quickly and widely as possible through all available media to ensure as broad dissemination of the information as possible. Particular attention will be made to communicate the decision to the Office of the Registrar, Faculty Offices, University Health Centre and External Relations.

4. Faculty Offices will be responsible for ensuring that their staff is advised of the decision so that they advise students and instructors accordingly.
5. Students suffering from symptoms consistent with the **illness identified in the medical emergency** are advised to consult the Alberta Health and Wellness site to obtain information as to how best to protect their own health.
6. When Students have recovered, they must inform their Faculty Office of their illness, but will not be required to supply medical documentation of the illness.
7. Instructors and Faculty Offices will retain the discretion to grant or not grant an excused absence for term work or examinations, but no refusal may be made on the basis of the absence of medical documentation alone. Individual Faculties may require the use of a Statutory Declaration to support the request for an excused absence. Such Statutory Declaration would be available only in the Faculty Offices.
8. Any misrepresentation concerning the illness in any oral or written statement to an instructor or Faculty Office, or any false statement on a Statutory Declaration concerning the illness is an academic offence and charges may be brought under the *Code of Student Behaviour*.
9. The Provost may, in consultation with the Faculties, set aside a day or days following the termination of the medical emergency for the purpose of writing of deferred final examinations.
10. The Provost will receive advice from the Medical Officer of Health, Office of Emergency Management, University Health Centre, Alberta Health and Wellness, the Public Health Response Team (PHRT) or others as to the end of the medical emergency.

DEFINITIONS

Any definitions listed in the following table apply to this document only with no implied or intended institution-wide use. [[▲Top](#)]

Medical Emergency	All situations of epidemic or pandemic illness at the University of Alberta or the City of Edmonton or any situation in which the Medical Officer of Health, Alberta Health and Wellness has determined that there is a pending, present or imminent medical situation that requires special provisions to protect the health, safety or welfare of people.
Provost	The Provost of the University of Alberta or a designate acting with the power of the Provost.
Illness identified in the medical emergency	The specific illness(es) identified as being widespread or epidemic or a pending epidemic by the Medical Officer of Health or Alberta Health and Wellness.

FORMS

There are no forms for this Procedure. [[▲Top](#)]

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