



THE UNIVERSITY OF
BUCKINGHAM

MEDICAL SCHOOL

MB ChB

User guidance for Absence forms

This document provides guidance for students on how to fill in and submit absence forms. It is primarily a technical guide concerned with how to physically use the forms, so it should be read in conjunction with the Student Attendance and Leave Entitlements Policy, which provides further details of the Medical School's policies regarding absence. Queries related to attendance and absence should be directed to the admin office, and technical issues with the forms to the Medical School IT department.

1 Where do I find the forms?

Absence forms can be accessed from Moodle, via the 'Useful Forms' section on the left-hand side of the main dashboard (between the Tweets and Big White Wall sections), and also from the 'Personal Student Information' page (under MB ChB / Student Information on the main navigation menu).

2 Which form should I use?

If your absence is due to illness, use the self-certification form. To request leave during term time, use the exceptional absence request form. To notify mitigating circumstances relating to an assessment, use the 'student notification of mitigating circumstances' form.

3 Where can I submit the form from?

Moodle is a web-based application so it can be accessed from any device with an internet connection and you are not restricted to submitting forms from university premises. You can access the forms from university computers, your personal computer, your iPad, or any other internet-connected device.

4 What information should I put on the form?

Please provide sufficient information to justify your absence. For instance, on a self-certification form you should include a brief description of your illness or injury, and on an exceptional absence request you should explain the reasons for wanting time off from your studies. If there is a particularly sensitive or confidential reason for the absence, do not declare this on the form but discuss it privately with the Student Support team before submitting the form. Please note that if you fail to provide sufficient justification, your leave request is likely to be rejected and you will be required to discuss it with the Student Support team and/or resubmit it providing more information.

These forms are not formal letters so there is no need to write in this style. It is not necessary to address the form as 'Dear someone' and simply providing a description of your absence is sufficient. Including your name in the text is also not necessary as the system knows who you are from your ID number and the Student Support team will see your name when they receive the form. Try to avoid using specialist medical jargon as these forms will be read by administrative staff who may be unfamiliar with medical terminology, but you need to be more specific than just saying you 'felt ill' for instance.

5 What dates should I put on the form?

The absence period is inclusive of the start and end dates specified on the form. For example, if you were absent for one day on 27 January 2016, you would specify this as both the start and end date. If you were absent for that entire week, you would specify 25 January 2016 as the start date and 29 January 2016 as the end date. To ensure timely submission of forms, the input is restricted to two months before or after today; for example, if submitting the form on 26 July, the earliest date you can select is 26 May and the latest is 26 September. If you wish to notify an absence outside this four-month period, please contact the Student Support team.

Non-working days can be included in the period and will not be counted towards your absence totals. For instance, if you were absent on Friday and the following Monday, you can submit a single form with Friday as the start date and Monday as the end date, and this will record two working days of absence with the weekend excluded. It is possible to select a Saturday or Sunday as the start or end date for the absence period, as attendance at weekend shifts during Phase 2 is compulsory and a form must be submitted for any absence from a weekend shift.

You must ensure the correct dates have been entered before you submit the form, as forms cannot be edited later and submitting an absence for a day when you were actually present will result in your attendance records being incorrect.

6 How long a period of absence can I put on the form?

Under normal circumstances students are not permitted to have more than one whole week (five working days) of consecutive absence. To prevent accidental specification of an incorrectly long period but allow for those rare cases where there may genuinely be more than a week of absence (e.g. due to a long-term illness), the system will reject any absences that are over one month in duration. Should you wish to notify an absence of more than one month in an exceptional case and only after discussion with the Student Support team, please split it between two forms, each of less than one month's duration.

7 When should I submit the form?

In the case of self-certification for illness, the form should be submitted as soon as possible during or after the period of absence. In the case of an exceptional absence request, the form should be submitted at least 14 days in advance of the desired leave dates if possible. Please refer to the Student Attendance and Leave Entitlements Policy for further information.

8 In what circumstances do I need to submit a form?

In Phase 1, you will need to submit a form if you are absent from any part of the compulsory core course teaching, including lectures, group work, practical sessions and CSFC placements. You will also need to submit a form if you are absent from a compulsory taught session for your Student Selected Component, but not if you are absent during an SSC self-directed study period as attendance for these periods is not monitored. If you are unsure, please contact your SSC unit lead or the SSC curriculum administrator for more information on the taught sessions and self-directed study periods for your SSC. In Phase 2, you will need to submit a form for all absences from the hospital or surgery, including any evening or weekend shifts.

9 What happens if I don't submit a form for a period of absence?

This period of absence will be marked as unauthorised. It is your responsibility to notify the school of all absences via the correct procedure, and failure to do so is considered to be unauthorised absence from the programme.

10 What happens when I submit a form?

The form will be saved to the central medical school database (EMER), you will receive an email confirmation and the Student Support team will receive an email notification that your form has been submitted so they can view the details you entered. No further action is required for self-certification, but exceptional absence requests must be approved by the Student Support team. Once a decision has been made to approve or reject the request, this will be notified to you via an email to your Buckingham email address.

11 Who will see my form once it is submitted?

All absence forms are sent to the Student Support team and they are the only user group who are able to read what you wrote on the form. The curriculum team will be able to see that you are absent but cannot view the details of your submission, and additionally in Phase 2 the Block Administrators are also notified of your submission but do not have the ability to view the details.

12 Who else do I need to notify of my absence?

In Phase 1, you must also notify the Unit Lead(s) of the unit(s) you will be missing, and if you are absent from a CSFC placement you must notify the relevant member of staff at the hospital or surgery you are supposed to be attending. In Phase 2, you must notify your Educational Supervisor and Block Lead in all cases. These people do not have access to the absence forms so you should contact them by phone or email.

13 Do I need to submit a form if I am absent from a weekend shift in Phase 2?

Yes. Attendance at weekend shifts is compulsory and is monitored in the same way as weekday activities. You must submit a self-certification or exceptional absence request form as appropriate to cover any absence from your designated weekend shifts.

14 What happens if my exceptional absence request is rejected?

Absence requests are rejected only with good reason, which will be explained in the rejection email. If your request is rejected you will be expected to attend all compulsory classes during the period you requested, and taking this time off without approval will be classed as unauthorised absence. Please consult the Student Attendance and Leave Entitlements Policy for information on the valid circumstances in which exceptional absence is permitted.

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