

Medical Note Guidelines

May, 2022

Preamble:

On February 9, 2022, Senate approved a new medical note protocol. The protocol entails the use of one of two forms based on the duration of a student's illness.

The Medical Self-Declaration Form is intended to replace the need for a medical note and supporting documentation from a health-care provider when, in the case of short-term medical circumstance, a student wishes to seek an academic consideration. The request is to be made in good faith by the student requesting the academic consideration due to a short-term condition that impacts academic activities. The period of this short-term medical condition for academic consideration must fall within a 72-hour (3 day) period.

In cases where a student requests academic consideration due to a medical circumstance that exceeds 72 hours (3 days) and will impact their academic activities, or in the case of an exam deferral, a Medical Verification Form must be signed by the student and a medical health professional.

Rationale:

- New protocol advantages:
 - The self-declaration form will support students to staying at home when unwell instead of attending class and/or having to seek a physician or nurse to sign off on the short-term illness.
 - The self-declaration form will reinforce the direct communication between the student and their instructor in cases of short-term illness.
 - Will reduce the number of medical notes required from Student Health Services and thereby reduce the strain on the medical system
 - The Medical Verification Form will provide instructors and administrators with greater detail regarding conditions that have led to an academic consideration lasting more than three days

Considerations:

Good Faith

For students: Use of the medical note forms are based on the premise of a legitimate medical impairment that has adversely impacted a student's physical and/or mental health. It is the student's responsibility to follow-up with their instructor/supervisor about missed academic requirements. *The submission of any false or misleading information or using the form to delay or avoid fulfilling academic requirements constitutes a breach of academic integrity.*

For Instructors: This medical note protocol does not restrict the pedagogical autonomy of the instructor to determine essential course components, and how these components must be achieved in the event of student physical and/or mental ill health. It is the responsibility of the instructor to indicate on the syllabus if there are certain academic activities, beyond those scheduled by the Registrar, that cannot be made up later and would have to be accommodated in some other way (e.g., via an alternative assignment, reweighting, etc.)

The medical note protocol does, however, legitimize the student's request for academic consideration, and requires all instructional faculty to make academic accommodation for these requests, within the parameters of their course syllabus, and at their discretion.

Question and Answers:

- Q1. Timeframe: Does the three-day timeframe for the Medical Self-Declaration Form and the Medical Verification Form refer to "business days" or to "calendar days."

The three-day (72 hour) timeframe is defined as "calendar days."

- Q2. Discretion of the Instructor: Is there any discretion on the part of the instructor to decline or provide special consideration/accommodation if they have reasonable grounds to question the veracity of the Self-Declaration Form?

Yes. Forms should be accepted on good faith. However, if there are reasonable grounds to question either the veracity of the Self-Declaration form or the Medical Verification Form, the instructor may ask for further information and/or verification to substantiate the request. It is the instructor's responsibility to articulate to the student the reasonable ground for seeking additional information. The ultimate determination rests with the discretion of the instructor/supervisor.

- Q3. Student Appeal: What options do students have if the determination of the instructor is one that results in declining the academic accommodation request, or, in an accommodation that causes the student undue hardship.

In the event that a student wishes to appeal the decision of the instructor, they should follow the process outlined in the Faculty Handbook for appeals related to final course grade.

https://brocku.ca/university-secretariat/wp-content/uploads/sites/82/Appeals_Pre-Appeals-Procedure-Timeline_Appendix-1-approved-Senate-691.pdf

Q4. Distinction between “test” and “exam:”

The Medical Self Declaration form includes “in class” tests and quizzes as eligible for academic accommodation if missed due to short-term illness.

Any test, midterm, exam, or exam deferral **scheduled by the Office of the Registrar** will not be eligible for the Medical Self Declaration form; and will require the use of the Medical Verification Form.

Q5. What health care professional can complete the Medical Verification Form:

- A health care provider at the Student Wellness and Accessibility Center
- The Brock University Office of Human Rights and Equity (e.g., sexual violence coordinator)
- Any Primary care health professional (e.g., physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, nurse, nurse practitioner)
- Any Secondary health professional (e.g., oncologists, cardiologists, endocrinologists)