

Student Advice Service's

GUIDANCE ON MEDICAL EVIDENCE



GUIDANCE ON MEDICAL EVIDENCE FOR EXAMINATION ALLOWANCES, EXAMINATION REVIEWS OR INTERMISSION

This guide is for students who submit applications on medical grounds to the University for an Examination Allowance, Examination Review or Intermission. You can share these notes with your medical practitioner to assist them in providing your medical evidence. Depending on your circumstances, this guidance might be helpful to you in other situations.

The information in this guide has been collated from various University sources which are listed in the final section of this guide - 'Useful Resources'.

Medical evidence could be a letter from your GP, College Nurse, Counsellor, Therapist, Psychiatrist or any other relevant medical professional, preferably from a doctor based in Cambridge.

THE UNIVERSITY RECOMMENDS THAT THE SUPPORTING EVIDENCE SHOULD BE:

RELEVANT – RELATING TO THE TIME IN QUESTION

Example 1: if you were unwell the week before your exam/s, the medical evidence should refer to that period of time.

Example 2: if you have a long-term condition and your symptoms worsened, although the medical letter could provide an overview or history of your medical condition, the emphasis should be on the time in question. It should detail what those symptoms were, how they affected your day-to-day life, your ability to study and engage with your studies, and your preparation for or performance during an exam.

CONTEMPORARY – OBTAINED CLOSE IN TIME TO THE PERIOD AFFECTED

For example: if you were unwell during an exam, you are expected to seek medical support on the day or as soon as possible. You are also expected to contact your College Nurse and/or Tutor and, if possible, your GP. If you contacted your GP to arrange an appointment that was offered to you at a later date, you could ask the surgery to write a note confirming the date you first contacted your GP, details of the conversation and the date of the appointment offered to you.

Short term conditions such as the flu that might not necessarily need medical treatment, could be certified by the College Nurse or your Tutor, provided you contacted them at the time you were unwell.

SPECIFIC – WHERE POSSIBLE, IT SHOULD EXPLICITLY RELATE TO THE IMPACT THE CIRCUMSTANCES DESCRIBED HAVE HAD ON YOUR STUDIES OR ON AN ASSESSMENT

The medical evidence should confirm you were unwell and explain the impact the health issues had on your studies, attendance, examinations, etc. The medical professional should provide details of your symptoms, a diagnosis if available (which includes the nature and severity of the illness) or confirmation of further investigations and medication prescribed or recommended. If you experienced side effects from medication, you might wish to ask the doctor to confirm those side effects and the impact they had on your day-to-day life and your ability to study

PRECISE AND SELF-EXPLANATORY

Example 1: a hospital admission would need a shorter explanation compared to a condition that would need detail of your medical history and background information.

Example 2: a mental health condition that is diagnosed after you started experiencing symptoms. Depression could be a good example to illustrate instances where medical evidence would need background information, assessments, diagnosis or possible diagnosis, a treatment plan if available, and an explanation of how the condition is likely to have affected your studies and/or exams.

OTHER GOOD PRACTICE AND HELPFUL INFORMATION

The evidence should be on headed paper which includes the full address and role title of the practitioner, dated and signed by the practitioner.

If the condition is classified as a disability under the Equality Act, the University would normally expect to see reference to consultation with the Accessibility and Disability Resource Centre (ADRC).

Supporting letters from relatives or friends, irrespective of whether they are medically qualified, or other such sources of information do not constitute medical evidence and are not acceptable to the University.

COSTS

Some medical practices might require a fee to provide medical evidence. The University would not usually cover these costs.

The evidence should be in English. Where your medical evidence has been provided in a different language, a translation should be carried out by an independent third party and not yourself. You will need to cover the cost of official translations.

Your College could potentially assist you in translating your documents. For instance, a Tutor or Director of Studies who is fluent in that language could assist the student to translate the evidence. Although the University might accept this translation, it would be a good idea for you to confirm with the College and the relevant University office that this will be accepted.

If you are unable to meet the cost to obtain your medical evidence and/or the cost of translating it in English, you could speak with your College Tutor who could advise you if there is any support the College could offer.

WHO WILL HAVE ACCESS TO MY MEDICAL EVIDENCE?

Medical evidence is usually shared on a strict need to know basis with members of a Committee or your College. Most guidance notes such as Examination Allowances, Intermission or Examination Review provide information about the confidentiality of your medical evidence.

Applications from or on behalf of students that are considered by the Exam Access and Mitigation Committee require the student to sign a declaration form which gives permission for their medical evidence to be shared with the interested parties (e.g. Medical Advisers, the Secretary and the Assistant Secretary, the Chair of Examiners). Further information can be accessed below:
<https://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/exams/about-eamc/guidance-notes-and-application-forms>

If you have questions or concerns, you can discuss these with your College, the relevant University office or the Student Advice Service.

I DO NOT HAVE MEDICAL EVIDENCE. WHAT ARE MY OPTIONS?

If you did not seek medical support at the time, post-hoc evidence is better than no evidence. You could explain the situation to your health professional (how you were feeling, when and what impact this had on your studies and/or exams) and ask them to write a letter. It would be helpful if in the letter the doctor offered their professional opinion of how your experience would have impacted your studies. Additionally, a full explanation as to why the medical evidence could not be obtained at the time, or immediately after, should be included in the application. Your doctor could also comment on why you could not obtain this information earlier.

If you have receipts for any medicines you bought from a pharmacy or emails sent to your College saying you were ill at that time, you can provide these as supplementary or in the absence of acceptable medical evidence.

NOTE

The University recognises there might sometimes be challenges with obtaining medical evidence. If you are unable to provide the necessary medical evidence to support your application, you could provide any other evidence you might have available to support your case. For example, this could be:

- A statement/letter from your College Tutor or Nurse confirming the illness. You must have contacted them at the time you were ill or as soon as possible afterwards.
- Students who have a long-term illness and who are unable to provide the required medical evidence, because they might be waiting for an appointment, could provide any other evidence they might have such as a referral letter.

WHERE CAN I GO FOR MORE INFORMATION AND SUPPORT?

Consider speaking to your College Tutor, or you can access one-to-one advice from one of our Advisors at the Student Advice Service.

HOW CAN STUDENTS ACCESS ADVICE FROM THE STUDENT ADVICE SERVICE?

You can email advice@cambridgesu.co.uk or use our website contact form www.cambridgesu.co.uk/support/advice/contact/ to make an appointment to speak with an Advisor. Appointments can be conducted over the phone or via video call. We are also happy to communicate with students by email, only if that is what they prefer.

USEFUL RESOURCES

Student Advice Service Information and Resources on Exams:

www.cambridgesu.co.uk/advice/information/exams/

University of Cambridge Mitigation:

www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/examinations/mitigation

University of Cambridge Guidance Notes for Examination Allowances

www.student-registry.admin.cam.ac.uk/about-us/EAMC

University of Cambridge Guidance Notes for Disregarding Terms (Intermission)

www.student-registry.admin.cam.ac.uk/about-us/eamc/guidance-notes-and-application-forms

Office of the Independent Adjudicator Good Practice Framework for Additional Consideration:

www.oiahe.org.uk/media/2544/oia-gpf-requests-for-additional-consideration.pdf

University of Cambridge Medical Intermission for Postgraduate Students:

www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/postgraduate-study/your-student-status/medical-intermission