

Student Support Service and University Medical Services

Guidance for students seeking evidence for concession requests

UEA regulations require students to provide evidence to support concession requests, including requests for first sits (see *Evidence in Support of Extenuating Circumstances* <https://www.uea.ac.uk/learningandteaching/documents/concessions/AcceptableEvidenceforExtenuatingCircumstances> (taught programmes) and *Research Student Concessions* <https://portal.uea.ac.uk/postgraduate-research/concessions/research-student-concession> (research degrees)).

This information leaflet has been written to provide additional guidance in respect of the above document, and in particular, to clarify for all students how and when the **Student Support Service** and **University Medical Services** are able to help those whose ability to study effectively has been affected by adverse circumstances and as a result, they wish to apply to the Learning and Teaching Service or Postgraduate Research Service for a concession.

Student Support Service (SSS)

A key aspect of the work of the Student Support Service is to offer information, advice, guidance and/or counselling in order to help UEA students find ways of resolving any personal, practical or academic difficulties they encounter. One way that SSS staff may be able to help is by providing supporting statements for students whose difficulties have had a significant impact on their engagement with their course and/or their ability to fulfil the assessment requirements, and as a result wish to apply for a concession to, for example:

- intercalate;
- delay the timing of a taught course, examination or course test;
- extend the deadline for a piece of coursework;
- be given a further assessment opportunity within a taught course; or
- extend a period of study or registration for a research degree,

or to report to markers, examination or progress boards adverse circumstances that have affected periods of study so that these can be taken into account when judgements are being made about academic performance or progress.

SSS staff are happy to provide supporting statements for those who are known to members of the Service and have reported or discussed relevant concerns with them prior to their concession application. These concerns might relate to the impact of, for example, physical or mental health, a disability or specific learning difficulty, financial or accommodation difficulties, or other personal circumstances, including the serious illness or death of a close friend or relative, physical or sexual assault or serious bullying.

When we have no prior knowledge of a student or their difficulties, then it may well not be possible to provide robust evidence in support of a concession request. In such cases, students are advised to ask for a supporting statement from others, for example their Adviser or research supervisor, with whom they have already discussed their situation. In certain circumstances, for example for all research student concessions, obtaining such a statement is a required part of the process. SSS staff will of course be very happy to offer advice to any student in order to help them manage their difficulties and minimise any future impact on their work.

However, if a student has been badly affected by a very recent or sudden event, such as death, an accident or an assault, then SSS Advisory staff will be very pleased to offer all help and advice that they can, and, whenever appropriate, support a request for a concession.

We are also aware that for some students, the nature of their difficulties can be very sensitive and difficult to talk about. Students may have been reluctant to reveal them to anyone, and only when they find themselves in a crisis do they feel able to seek help. If this is the case, we may be able to help with a supporting statement, even if we have no existing knowledge of a student's situation. If this applies to you, please make an appointment to meet with a SSS advisor as soon as possible.

When a student's circumstances are particularly sensitive or confidential, key staff in SSS are able to write statements that provide strong support for concessions by confirming the impact of the difficulties that a student is facing without revealing any details of the cause or circumstances, thus preserving confidentiality.

With permission from a student, SSS staff are also able to, whenever appropriate, confirm that he or she has sought help from the Office should this be required by their School, the Learning and Teaching Service and/or the Postgraduate Research Service.

If you are in any doubt about whether or not SSS can provide supporting evidence for you, please send an email outlining your situation to studentsupport@uea.ac.uk. The information you provide will not be revealed to others outside the Student Support Service without your knowledge or permission.

University Medical Services (UMS)

University Medical Services are able to provide medical certificates for their student patients requesting a concession if:

- they are currently unwell or visibly distressed for good reason;
- they consulted a doctor during the relevant period of ill-health;
- they have a longstanding medical condition with an ongoing impact on your study.

In general, the UMS is not able to provide a medical certificate for those who were previously ill but have now recovered and did not consult or inform a doctor at the time.

All students (irrespective of whether or not they are registered with the UMS) can request a medical certificate if they need to miss an event assessment (examinations, course tests, OSCEs and OSPEs) because of illness) as long as they come to the UMS or make phone contact with them on the day of the exam or test.