

Absences and Mitigating Circumstances: Evidence Guidance 2025-27

LCCA Governance

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Section 1: Introduction

Sometimes unexpected circumstances affect your ability to attend classes or complete assessments. This guide explains what evidence you need to provide and how we can support you.

What counts as a valid reason?

Circumstances that are outside your control, happen suddenly or can't be avoided, and directly affect your studies.

Your responsibility: As an adult student, you must gather and submit your own evidence. We cannot collect it for you.

Important: The circumstances listed in this document are examples, not a complete list. If you're experiencing something not covered here, contact Student Services for guidance.

What Makes Good Evidence?

Good evidence must:

- Come from an independent source: Written by a relevant expert or professional, not family members or friends
- Show clear impact: Demonstrates what happened, when it happened, and specifically how it affected your wellbeing and/or ability to engage with your studies
- Be properly dated: Covers the specific time period with exact dates
- Remain unaltered: Original documents without modification
- Be contemporaneous: Obtained at the time of the circumstances, not retrospectively

Finding Alternative Evidence

If you struggle to obtain standard evidence, consider these alternatives:

- A College staff member who witnessed your condition or circumstances
- A wellbeing advisor who supported you during the period
- Medical notes obtained after an incident if you were unable to seek help during the acute phase
- Documentation from other professional support services you accessed

Section 2: Acceptable Evidence Types

Health and Wellbeing Absences

Evidence must include appropriate documentation based on the nature and duration of the health issue.

General Medical Circumstances
<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ From a qualified healthcare professional (GP, nurse practitioner, registered medical professional)→ Must state how the condition affects your ability to attend or study→ Must include specific dates covering the full absence period→ Should be obtained during the period of illness (contemporaneous evidence). Medical certificates written retrospectively must demonstrate the practitioner saw you during the period of illness or can verify from medical records that the condition existed and affected you during the relevant timeframe.→ Must be on official headed paper or use official medical certificate formats
Mental Health Circumstances
<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Documentation from the College's counselling service confirming support provided and impact on studies→ Headed letters from qualified, registered mental health practitioners (psychiatrists, psychologists, counsellors)→ Documentation should indicate the severity of the condition and its impact on academic performance and attendance→ Evidence should cover the exact period when symptoms affected your ability to engage with studies
Hospital Treatment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Appointment letters showing dates of scheduled care and the nature of treatment→ Admission and discharge documentation with specific dates and times→ Emergency treatment records with date stamps and reason for treatment→ Correspondence from medical teams regarding ongoing treatment requirements
Ongoing Health Conditions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Evidence of chronic conditions may be submitted once and noted on your record for future reference→ Flare-ups or significant changes in condition require updated medical documentation→ Consider registering with the Wellbeing and Disability Service for long-term, ongoing support rather than repeated mitigating circumstances claims→ Documentation should clearly distinguish between your baseline condition and periods of exacerbation

All health-related evidence must clearly establish the direct link between your condition and inability to engage with academic requirements during the specified period.

Personal and Family Circumstances

Absence related to bereavement

Acceptable evidence includes one of the following:

- Death certificate (official copy)
- Funeral order of service
- Letter from funeral director
- Obituary notice
- Letter from medical professional/religious leader confirming your relationship to the deceased

Disability-related Circumstances

Students with disabilities should provide:

- Diagnostic assessment report from qualified specialist (educational psychologist, medical consultant, etc.)
- Letter or email from College or external Disability Service confirming registered status
- Medical evidence showing how your disability affects academic performance during the claimed period
- For fluctuating conditions: updated evidence showing periods of particular difficulty

Note: If you have a registered disability, establish an Individual Support Plan with the Wellbeing and Disability Service to reduce repeated evidence submissions.

Unexpected domestic disruption

Evidence showing the date of disruption and why it prevented you attending:

- Landlord/housing provider correspondence (emergency repairs, eviction, accommodation problems)
- Emergency service reports (fire, flood, gas leak)
- Insurance claims for significant property damage
- Police reports (break-ins, domestic incidents etc)
- Utility company emergency work notifications

Maternity/Paternity/Adoption Leave

Maternity leave:

- MATB1 certificate (issued after 20 weeks)
- Medical correspondence confirming due date
- Hospital appointment cards

Paternity leave:

- Baby's birth certificate
- Partner's MATB1 form
- Proof of relationship to child/other parent

Adoption leave:

- Official adoption placement notification
- Court adoption documents
- Adoption agency documentation

Similar to maternity leave, adoption leave may be requested for up to 52 weeks. Evidence must show placement dates and formal adoption process.

Jury Service

Required documentation:

- Official court summons showing dates of service
- Confirmation from court of attendance dates if different from summons

Students should provide evidence before jury service begins whenever possible. Extensions to jury service must be documented with updated court correspondence.

Victim of crime

Required documentation:

- Police crime reference number
- Police report detailing the incident
- Correspondence with victim support services
- Medical evidence if physical/psychological impact resulted

The evidence must demonstrate how the incident directly affected academic performance. Serious incidents may require additional support through wellbeing services.

Absence related to the health/wellbeing of a third party

Required documentation:

- Medical certificate/letter confirming the third party's condition
- Evidence of your relationship to the individual (birth/marriage certificate, etc.)
- Confirmation of your caring responsibilities
- Documentation showing lack of alternative care arrangements

Evidence must demonstrate why your personal presence was essential and could not be substituted by other support.

When standard evidence is unavailable

We recognise that NHS waiting times, GP appointment availability, and other practical barriers can make obtaining standard medical evidence difficult.

Where NHS delays prevent timely GP access:

- Self-certification (up to 5 working days, maximum twice per academic year)
- NHS 111 call records or online consultation documentation
- Evidence of attempts to access care (e.g., GP appointment system screenshots)
- Pharmacy receipts dated during the illness period
- University wellbeing or counselling service records

Other alternative sources:

- College staff member who witnessed your condition or to whom you disclosed at the time
- Email correspondence with tutors/staff sent during the relevant period
- Documentation from other professional support services accessed
- Retrospective GP letters only if they reference contemporaneous medical records (prescription requests, telephone consultations, or clinical notes from the time of illness)

You must explain in your absence request why standard evidence was unavailable and what steps you took to seek support.

1. Examples of evidence which is not acceptable

The following types of evidence will not be accepted:

- Self-certification beyond the two-per-year limit
- Non-independent sources such as letters from parents, partners, family members or fellow students
- Retrospective medical evidence that provides no indication of when the condition occurred or its impact during the relevant period
- Appointment letters that don't specify the condition or its severity
- Merged email extracts combined into single documents
- Untranslated documents in languages other than English (evidence must include a certified translation)
- Screenshots from mobile devices showing limited information
- Inappropriate photographic evidence: Personal photographs (e.g., of medical procedures, accidents, bereavements) cannot be accepted as they cannot be verified for authenticity, timing, or relevance. Professional documentation from relevant authorities or practitioners is required instead.
- Illegible evidence: Including faded text, cropped documents, missing information, undated papers, or poor-quality scans
- Unregulated online GP services: Documents from providers who are not regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) are not permitted

2. Evidence Standards

All evidence MUST:

1. Be contemporaneous - obtained at the time of the circumstance
2. Be relevant - directly related to the period of impact
3. Be verifiable - from an authorised source
4. Include specific dates - covering the exact period claimed
5. Demonstrate impact - clearly show effect on academic performance

Translating documents

Students must use a provider regulated by at least one of the following regulators (most are available online and can take between 2-5 working days to process):

Table A: Acceptable Medical Providers	
Association of Translation companies (ATC)	Website here
Chartered Institute of Linguists (CIOL)	Website here
Institute of Translation and Interpreting (ITI)	Website here

Acceptable medical providers

The College will accept medical documentation from:

Table B: Acceptable Medical Providers	
NHS Services	Including GPs, hospitals, specialists, and mental health practitioners
Online GP Services	Must be regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and have a minimum "Good" inspection rating. Search providers at www.cqc.org.uk
College/University Health Service	Documentation from the College's own medical professionals
International Medical Providers	Documentation must be: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Translated to English by an accepted translation provider (see Table A)• Verifiable through official channels• From a recognised medical institution or practitioner in that country• Accompanied by contact details for verification purposes

3. Submission Requirements

Format

- Digital submissions: PDF format preferred
- Non-English documents: Certified translations required

4. Deadlines

Planned absences:

- Submit your absence request and evidence in advance of the absence period, as soon as the circumstances are known

Emergency/unexpected absences:

- Submit your absence request at the earliest opportunity
- Evidence should be submitted with your request where possible
- If evidence is not available immediately (e.g., awaiting GP appointment), submit your request explaining this, and provide evidence as soon as possible thereafter

Late evidence:

- Evidence submitted significantly after the absence period will be accepted only with compelling justification explaining the delay and in accordance with any other relevant regulations

Important: At the end of semester, if promised evidence has not been provided or is later determined ineligible, authorised absence approval may be rescinded and absence recorded as unauthorised.

Confidentiality Protocols

- All absence and mitigating circumstances evidence is treated confidentially in accordance with data protection legislation
- Evidence is submitted via MyPage and/or the Mitigating Circumstances portal
- Medical details are reviewed only by authorised members of staff
- Information may be shared with relevant support services where there are concerns for student wellbeing
- Data retention period: In line with the institution's data retention policy

5. Non-Compliance Consequences

Failure to provide appropriate evidence may result in:

- Rejection of mitigating circumstances claims
- Unauthorised absence recording
- Attendance compliance proceedings
- Limitation of available academic adjustments

6. Implementation Responsibility

- Students: Submit compliant evidence within specified timeframes
- Academic Staff: Apply standards consistently, refer complex cases
- Professional Services: Verify evidence authenticity, maintain records
- Quality and Standards: Monitor compliance, review contested decisions

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