

Health Services Queen's University Policy on Verification of Illness

Health Counselling and Disability Services (HCDS) first developed a policy on issuing Verification of Illness (VOI) documentation, commonly known as “sick notes” to students on September 1, 1998. The policy and practice surrounding the conditions for supplying this documentation have been recently updated with a view to clarifying the conditions under which such documentation will be supplied by Health Services.

Policy for Issuing Verification of Illness (“sick notes”)

1. A “Verification of Illness” should only be required in situations where a serious and/or chronic (long term) illness or injury results in a significant disruption of academic work.
2. Procedure: A VOI will be dated and signed by the issuing nurse or physician and also signed by the student. A three part form will be used: the top copy (white) will be given to the student who will take it to the instructor(s) involved; **this is the student’s responsibility**. The second copy (yellow) will be sent to the relevant faculty office. The third copy (pink) will remain in the student’s file at HCDS.
3. A Verification of Illness form **will not** be issued by Health Services for the following circumstances:
 - **Death or serious family illness**
Where a death or serious family illness interferes with academic performance and formal documentation is required by the instructor, students may seek documentation from a funeral home or the health-care professional overseeing the particular family member.
 - **Past illnesses/medical conditions for which there has been no previous treatment by HCDS**
If a student has **not** been seen for a particular problem at HCDS, a VOI will not be provided unless medical records documenting the problem are provided by the student from previous caregivers
 - **Obvious injury**
A VOI will not be provided in cases where the injury is obvious (e.g., a broken bone in a cast), the treating physician may be asked for documentation if it is required.
 - **Academic problems which are related to lifestyle choices**
Students who elect to have periods with inadequate sleep, substance misuse (alcohol, caffeine/stimulants or “recreational” drugs), and/or oversubscribing

to non-academic activities, may perform poorly academically, but are not eligible for VOI if documented illness is not a factor.

- **Minor and short-term illnesses or injuries**

If a minor illness or injury is the cause of missing classes/labs/seminars, assignments, or exams (midterms or finals) a VOI will not be issued by Health Services. Minor illnesses include common infections such as colds, influenza, mono, migraine headaches, gastroenteritis (diarrhea & vomiting), bladder infections, bronchitis, pneumonia, etc. Students should speak directly with their instructors on these matters to determine if accommodation is appropriate.

Students who do not qualify for an official Verification of Illness form based on the criteria outlined in the “Policy for Issuing Verification of Illness” may seek accommodation but should discuss the situation directly with their professor, preferably before a missed exam or late assignment. Individual professors are entitled to make decisions regarding accommodation; it is not a matter of university policy.