

MEDICAL CERTIFICATES and the FYCSO

If you are sick for a test, exam or deadline

Contact your instructor immediately (required by Policy 134). Let him/her know your situation before the evaluation takes place, as soon as you know you will be unable to meet the requirement of the course. Your instructor will probably require you to submit a completed Ryerson Medical Certificate (<http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/forms/medical.pdf>). You should get an appointment with a doctor or visit a walk-in clinic in your neighbourhood immediately.

Your Ryerson Medical Certificate will be checked by the FYCSO for authenticity only. The First Year and Common Science Office files the documentation and notifies professors that documentation has been received and the dates that are covered by the note. Your instructor will determine whether your circumstances meet his/her standard for academic consideration. If your absence affects more than one course, your program director will be informed and a meeting may be required.

Academic consideration is not automatically granted just for submitting a Medical Certificate

Consideration is granted on the principle of “balance of probabilities.” In the case of illness, a professor will ask him or herself whether it is more likely than not that you were unable to fulfill your academic obligation. It is your responsibility to convince your professor that an exception is warranted.

How to be convincing

- Visit a clinic in the immediate vicinity of your home. Professors become suspicious when a student claims to have been laid-up in bed in Mississauga with a burning fever, although their medical documentation states that they visited a clinic that same day in downtown Toronto.
- See a doctor on the day of the missed evaluation and discuss the evidentiary portion of the certificate with him/her. The doctor should ideally report symptoms as evidence of illness. If you see your doctor days after the missed evaluation, the evidentiary portion of the certificate will have statements like “patient history”; i.e., the patient saw the doctor and stated that he/she was sick three days before. Such documentation is not convincing.
- Use the system as infrequently as possible. Only a small percentage of students submits a medical certificate each semester. Students who submit more than one certificate are rare, and those who submit certificates on a regular basis are even rarer. Your professor has discretion, and may deny accommodation if he/she suspects you are abusing the system. Only seek accommodation when you are truly too sick to perform an evaluation.

If your illness is chronic (i.e. recurring)

If your illness is chronic, contact the Access Centre about registering as a student with a disability requiring regular accommodation (<http://www.ryerson.ca/student-services/accesscentre/index.html>).

If you are denied accommodation when you really were sick

You have a right to appeal a decision that you believe is unfair. However, the appeal process is time consuming and the decision of your professor will be upheld if subsequent decision makers believe that the balance of probability is not in your favour.

Please keep these ideas in mind as you continue your studies at Ryerson University. The First Year Office is committed to helping students be successful in their studies.