

Policy on Excuse/Absence Notes from Student Health Service/Norton Medical Center (NMC)

Introduction

In order to assist students who are truly ill/medically and unable to complete their academic responsibilities, Student Health Services can write “excuse/absence notes” in accordance with the policy below. Furthermore, this policy is intended to clarify when and how a student may/may not receive an “excuse/absence note”. This policy was developed in collaboration with the Norton Medical Center (NMC), Wheaton College Health Services, the Counseling Center, the Office of the Provost and The Dean of Advising and Academic Success.

Student Health Services Responsibilities

What Student Health Services Will Do

- Excuse/absence notes will be given when it is clinically appropriate (e.g. student has high fever upon exam) and only when requested by the student.
- When clinical appropriateness for an excuse/absence note is questionable, Cynthia Maricle, Student Health Services Coordinator, may collaborate and communicate with the NMC medical provider, student, and faculty member to make a decision re: excuse/absence note.

What Student Health Services Will Not Do

- Excuse/absence notes will not be provided when upon physical exam no current clinical evidence is present to justify a request.
- Requests for an excuse/absence note for a student’s retroactive report of medical complaint (e.g. “I missed my exam yesterday because I was sick”) when the student was not seen at NMC for an exam will be denied. However, if clinical evidence supports the claim of illness, a letter may be issued when requested.
- Excuse/absence notes are not given without the student having been clinically examined by a medical provider at NMC. Phone calls/emails/drop-in requests for notes are not granted.
- Excuse/absence notes for missed classes due to off-campus medical appointments are not granted.

Student Responsibilities

Students are expected to communicate directly with faculty members regarding an absence, missed class, missed exam, late assignment, or other academic responsibility. Additional assistance from the Dean of Students Office, Academic Advising, the Counseling Center and the Coordinator of Academic Support and Disability Services in cases involving extenuating circumstances may be available to students.

The Role of Faculty Members

Faculty/staff members should always feel free to direct students to NMC when students report illness. However, faculty/staff should be discouraged from sending students to NMC to justify after the fact an absence, missed class, missed exam, late assignment or other academic responsibility for the class.