

Protocol for dealing with student absences from on-campus Teaching activity

NUI Galway is committed to maximising and optimising the on-campus experience for students for Academic Year 2021-22, while carefully balancing the public health risks against the known pedagogical, student experience and mental health benefits of in-person teaching and learning.

Students are normally expected to attend in-person where teaching is scheduled to take place on campus.

The health and wellbeing of our learning and research community remains a priority at this time. Students may find that they cannot attend classes on campus for short or longer periods for a variety of acceptable Covid-related reasons including:

- Global travel restrictions are preventing the student from arriving in Galway for the start of the semester
- The student has a certified medical condition which puts them at a higher risk from COVID-19
- The student is living with a close family contact with a certified medical condition which puts them at a higher risk from COVID-19, and the student has received medical advice indicating they should limit their movements
- The student has COVID-19 symptoms and is scheduled for a COVID-19 test, is awaiting test results, or is restricting their movements, etc.
- The student has been identified as a close contact of someone who has COVID-19 symptoms and is restricting their movements accordingly.

This list is indicative rather than exhaustive and Schools/ disciplines may identify additional acceptable reasons for non-attendance in particular cases.

Short-term Absences

- If, for any acceptable reason, a student will miss a small number (**no more than 2 weeks**) of on-campus teaching sessions, **students must inform their Programme Director/ Co-ordinator** of their absence by emailing them, and should stay up-to-

date with online lectures/resources, where online material is provided, and notes on Blackboard.

- Where a student is absent on a specified short-term basis for Covid-19 related reasons but is not sick (e.g., waiting on a test result, waiting on a test, advised to self-isolate / restrict movement etc), a medical certificate is not required. However, if a pattern of absenteeism from on-campus classes is evident, a medical certificate will be required.
- In so far as possible, and noting, that for some subjects/programmes, there are integral lab / practical / clinical placement / clinical skills components that cannot be delivered remotely, module owners will work with students to find a way of enabling the student to participate remotely for a short period of time (e.g. making recorded material available, providing lecture notes and slides, etc).
- Students who are unable to attend in person should be aware that it will not be possible to replicate the in-person classroom experience fully online, and that the learning outcomes for lab-/practical- teaching sessions are best met through on-campus attendance.

Long-term Absences

- If, for any acceptable reason, a student will need to continue their study remotely for a significant number of on-campus teaching sessions (**more than 2 weeks**), the **student must request permission by informing their Programme Director/ Co-ordinator** of their planned absence from campus by emailing them, and must provide relevant documentation (e.g. evidence of travel restrictions). The Programme Director/ Co-ordinator will refer the request to the College Dean (or nominee) for approval. The student should stay up-to-date with online lectures/resources, where available, and notes on Blackboard.
- If a student is medically vulnerable and has been advised to limit their movements for the duration of the academic year, and will therefore need to participate remotely, students must request permission by informing their Programme Director/ Co-ordinator of their planned absence from campus by emailing them, and must provide relevant documentation (e.g. medical certificate). The Programme Director/ Co-ordinator will refer the request to the College Dean (or nominee) for approval. The student should stay up-to-date with online lectures/resources and notes on Blackboard.

- Students who cannot attend in person for reasons connected with a disability should engage with Disability Support Services and may require an update to their LENS report.
- In so far as possible, and noting that for some subjects/programmes, there are integral lab / practical / clinical placement / clinical skills components that cannot be delivered remotely, module owners will work with students to find a way of enabling the student to participate remotely (e.g. making recorded material available, providing lecture notes and slides, etc)
- Students who are unable to attend in person should be aware that it will not be possible to replicate the in-person classroom experience fully online and that the learning outcomes for lab-/practical- teaching sessions are best met through on-campus attendance.

Please note that your absence from the programme may have an impact on your ability to progress/complete the programme. Your Programme Director/ Co-ordinator will advise on any such implications.

Students should also be aware that semester one exams are currently planned to take place in person on campus for the majority of programmes and for all years (except first years who will be assessed via continuous assessment in semester one), and that attendance on campus for exams will be required.

Contact details of Programme Coordinators for all programmes are available online at <https://www.nuigalway.ie/courses/> and on College webpages.