

**University of St Andrews - School of Medicine Handbook**  
**POLICY FOR ABSENCE FROM EXAMS / DEFERRED EXAMS**

1. **Purpose of document.** This document contextualises the School's UG processes relating to requests (either pre-emptively or retrospectively) for deferral of summative examinations that are either practical-based or knowledge-based. Note this policy does not apply to formative assessment (e.g. Manchester progress test). Where extenuating circumstances lead to a student's inability to submit dissertations and/or other coursework by a required deadline, please refer to the policy on granting of extensions – [https://medicine.st-andrews.ac.uk/medhandbook/wp-content/uploads/sites/27/2023/03/UG-teaching\\_assessment\\_Late-Submission-of-Coursework.pdf](https://medicine.st-andrews.ac.uk/medhandbook/wp-content/uploads/sites/27/2023/03/UG-teaching_assessment_Late-Submission-of-Coursework.pdf).
2. **Absence from Exams.** Absence from Examinations due to illness or any other unavoidable reason should be reported by submitting a Self-Certificate of Absence form (via e-vision) as soon as you are able to do so, preferably before the examination is due to take place and no later than 3 days after the examination (unless there are exceptional circumstances that mean requesting earlier was not possible). Additionally, you must notify the Medical School Assessment Officer ([medass@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:medass@st-andrews.ac.uk)) as **soon as you know you are unable to take your assessment**. You are only required to notify the University Examinations Officer if there is a problem submitting the self-certificate. Students who miss assessments on the day due to a self-limiting illness must phone the school teaching support office on 01334 463599 option 4,
3. **Application for deferred assessments.** Students may apply for a deferred assessment and are recommended to discuss their circumstances with the School Med Support Team or Student Services. The School may grant a deferred assessment based on the reasons for the request. Reasons for deferral would be expected to be significant and usually supported by appropriate evidence. An application for deferred assessment should be sent using the [defer assessment application form](#) by email to the Director of Teaching within 5 working days after the missed assessment (unless there are exceptional reasons why an application could not have been made earlier). The Director of Teaching must receive the deferral request directly from the student, and applications sent by third parties will not be accepted.
4. **Late arrival for assessments.** It is the student's responsibility to arrive in time for any assessment. A student who is late for their reporting time for a written exam (note that the reporting time may be earlier than the start time of the exam) or misses the start time for a practical exam is not automatically entitled to a deferred assessment. A student who misses or is late for an exam through extenuating circumstances beyond their control may apply for a deferred assessment. Please see the [University policy on extenuating circumstances](#)
5. **Provision of supporting evidence.** Students may provide relevant evidence as part of their application. Where a student has missed an assessment due to ill health and has been seen by a healthcare professional, the student should contact the School Med Support Team who can provide guidance on obtaining the evidence.
6. **Decisions relating to deferment requests.** Decision to approve a request for a deferred assessment will be made by the School Progress Committee and be based upon the reason for the request and any associated supporting evidence.
7. **Deferred assessments.** If an application for deferral is approved by the School Progress Committee, the assessment will be held in the next appropriate exam diet. The School Assessment Team will determine the date, time, and venue of deferred assessments and will liaise with any student taking these assessments. When these would be usually rescheduled is detailed in Appendix 1. In all cases where requests for a deferred assessment is denied, any missed assessment will contribute a mark of zero towards the overall module grade. The content of the exam will mirror the main attempt in terms of number of questions/marks according to the corresponding blueprint. Questions used will have been through the normal quality approval processes.

8. **Multiple deferrals.** In exceptional circumstances a student may be unable to sit a deferred exam on the rescheduled date. In such cases, another deferral may be applied for. However, a deferred examination must be taken no later than one year from the original scheduled exam (i.e. within the same assessment diet the following academic year). If a student is unable to attend a deferred exam and further deferral is not permitted or approved, then the student will receive a mark of zero for that assessment. If this results in the student receiving a failing grade then their options for progression will be based on whether their deferred attempt represented their first attempt (or reassessment), and any other probationary conditions upon the student or limits to their ability to repeat modules.

10. **Quick reference.** Check list for those who have missed an assessment:

- i. If exceptional circumstances prevent you from taking the assessment on the day, notify the Medical School Assessment Officer [medass@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:medass@st-andrews.ac.uk) as **soon as you know you are unable to take your assessment.**
- ii. If you have a self-limiting illness on the day of the assessment, please phone the school teaching support office on 01334 463599 option 4, if you have not had any contact with health services.
- iii. Self-certify on e-vision no later than 3 days after the examination.
- iv. E-mail the Director of Teaching [medicaldot@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:medicaldot@st-andrews.ac.uk) to formally request a deferred assessment within 5 working days of the missed assessment using the defer assessment application form.
- v. Contact the School Med Support Team [medsupport@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:medsupport@st-andrews.ac.uk) for advice on evidence to support your request.

**Appendix 1. A list of assessments and when an approved deferred attempt would usually be scheduled.**

<b>BSc course</b>	
<b>Assessment type</b>	<b>Likely assessment rescheduling</b>
Midsemester assessments (all years)	End of semester exam period
End of semester assessments (yr. 1 and yr. 2)	August resit period
End of semester assessments (yr. 3)	July resit period
MD4002 presentations	As soon as can be rescheduled*
August/July resit/deferred exams	End of semester 1 exam period**
<b>ScotGEM course</b>	
Mid-year assessments (yr. 1 and yr. 2)	End of year exam period
End of semester assessments (yr. 1 and yr. 2)	July resit period
July resit/deferred exams	End of year exam period**
<b>MBChB course</b>	
Midsemester assessment (yr.1 to yr.3, sem.1)	End of semester exam period
End of semester assessment (yr. 1 and 2)	August resit period
End of semester assessment (yr. 3, sem.1)	July resit period
Progress Test & OSCE (yr. 3, sem. 2)	June resit period
Progress Test & OSCE (yr. 4)	May resit period
May/June resit/deferred exams	Next available exam period**
Medical Licensing Assessments	Next available MLA opportunity**

\* Usually, within 1-2 weeks.

\*\* May require a period of leave of absence

<b>Author:</b>	School manager	<b>Approval Committee:</b>	
<b>Consultees:</b>			
<b>Location/s (Med Handbook):</b>	UG Teaching>Assessment>Assessment		
<b>Location of source file:</b>	<a href="http://medhandbook.st-andrews.ac.uk/blog/assessment-information-for-ug-students/">http://medhandbook.st-andrews.ac.uk/blog/assessment-information-for-ug-students/</a>		
<b>Access Level: (Public/University/School Staff)</b>	Public		
This document <b>may/may not</b> (delete as appropriate) be released under the Freedom of Information Act without prior discussion. (If <b>may not</b> is selected, please contact the Executive Administrator before release to the FOI office.)			

**Version Control Record** (expand table as required)

Date	Revision Description	Major Changes
20/07/2017	Published version	
09/05/2023	Updated with timelines	
20/11/2024	Updated with new deferred policy and timelines	
15/08/2025	New defer assessment application form	