

Counselling – Support for Academic Consideration Policy

Category: Academic – Faculty, Students, Teaching

Approval: PVP

Responsibility: Associate Vice-President Students

Date: October 2009

The Trent University Counselling Centre (TCC) strives to ensure that conditions are fair and consistent for all students, and that individual students are not disadvantaged by adverse personal circumstances beyond their control.

All extenuating situations resulting in an emotional upheaval will be reviewed and a determination rendered as to the level of disruption to a student's academic progress. There is however a clear distinction between longstanding illness or difficulties which prevent a student from attending class or completing required work; and short-term or acute adjustments that may prevent a well prepared student from achieving his or her potential (e.g. environmental or situational trauma). Students with cyclical and episodic psychiatric symptoms (e.g. mood or anxiety disorders) that have persisted for over one year, may qualify for accommodations based on the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. These students are encouraged to register at the Trent Disability Services Office (DSO) as well as the TCC, although the latter will not provide a student with chronic mental health issues a letter of support for academic consideration beyond the student's first year registered at the Counselling Centre.

General Considerations

- As a first step, students are expected to consult their professor(s) to request academic leniency prior to approaching the TCC for support.
- The TCC may require up to seven days to process a request for supportive documentation. In many instances a face-to-face meeting with a therapist will be required to validate a student's concern and solicit consent to share information. Depending on the time of year, students may have to wait up to ten days for an appointment to see a therapist for this purpose.
- All supportive documentation will be provided at the discretion of the primary therapist and/or manager. The academic decisions and responsibility to ensure the essential requirements and integrity of a given course of study are met rests with the academic department
- All requests to support academic leniency (e.g. extensions) will be processed at the discretion of the primary therapist.
- All requests to support retroactive course withdrawal, incomplete standing, aegrotat standing, and academic suspension will be completed by the manager based on a file review and consultation with the primary therapist (if available). The student making this request must have had previous involvement with the Counselling Centre.

- In reviewing a file and determining the validity of the student's request for support, the Manager will take into account the acute nature of the student's situation, the overall effort the student invested to resolve his/her emotional challenges, and determine if it's in the best interest of the student to support the request.
- It is usual practice to collaborate with the student's senior tutor particularly when the documentation is needed for the Committee on Undergraduate Petitions (CUP). Student consent will be solicited for this purpose.
- The need for supporting documentation will not be considered "a crisis" that would warrant the use of one of the TCC emergency appointments.
- If a student requests and consents to the release of attendance records only, the therapists at the counselling centre will include the following statement in their letter of attendance:

"Please note that a request for attendance information only does not permit the Counselling Centre to offer an opinion as to the presence of extenuating personal circumstances which may be used to establish the validity for an appeal. In addition, limited consent does not permit the centre to offer an opinion as to what would be in the best interest of the student."

Contact Officer:

Job Title

Date for Next Review:

Month Day, Year

Related Policies, Procedures & Guidelines

- a) Policy, procedure or guideline
- b) Policy, procedure or guideline
- c) Policy, procedure or guideline

Policies Superseded by This Policy:

- a) Name of Policy