

Complete Policy Title

**Policy on Requests for Relief for Missed
Academic Term Work**

Policy Number (if applicable):

Approved by

Senate

Date of Most Recent Approval

March 10, 2021, effective May 1, 2021

Date of Original Approval(s)

Supersedes/Amends Policy dated

Responsible Executive

Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

Policy Specific Enquiries

[Provost and Vice-President \(Academic\)](#)

General Policy Enquiries

[Policy \(University Secretariat\)](#)

DISCLAIMER:

*If there is a Discrepancy between this electronic policy and the written copy held
by the policy owner, the written copy prevails.*

PREAMBLE

1. The University recognizes that students periodically require relief from academic work for medical or other personal situations. This Policy aims to manage these requests by taking into account the needs and obligations of students, instructors and administrators. It is the prerogative of the instructor of the course to determine the appropriate relief for missed term work in their course. Any concerns regarding the granting of relief should be directed to the respective [Faculty/Program Office](#).
2. Requests for relief should be made with a commitment to academic integrity in mind. Requests that deviate from this commitment will be handled under the [Academic Integrity Policy](#) and/or [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#), where appropriate.

Exclusions

3. This Policy **cannot** be used:
 - a) for academic work that has already been completed or work that has been attempted (which **includes** the viewing and/or partial completion of on-line assessments (quizzes, tests, etc.);
 - b) to seek an accommodation to meet religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (see the [Policy on Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances](#));
 - c) to seek an accommodation related to a permanent or temporary disability, or a retroactive accommodation (see the policy [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#)); or
 - d) to apply for relief for any final examination or its equivalent (see [Petitions for Special Consideration](#) in the Undergraduate Calendar).

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF)

4. The McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF) is a **Mosaic tool** that, for the purpose of this Policy:
 - a) is used to allow students to submit Self-Report (Type A) requests for relief; and
 - b) is used by Faculty/Program Offices for Administrative Report (Type B) requests to:
 - (i) manage requests for relief; and
 - (ii) communicate with students and instructors about these requests.
5. The MSAF is available in the [MOSAIC](#) Student Center (in the drop-down menu under OTHER ACADEMICS).

REQUESTS FOR RELIEF: SELF-REPORT (TYPE A)

6. Self Report (Type A) requests for relief are for:
 - a) missed academic work worth less than 25% of the final grade, resulting from medical or personal situations lasting up to three (3) calendar days.
7. Students are expected to use the MSAF tool to make Self Report (Type A) requests, which:
 - a) may only be submitted once per Term;
 - b) requires no supporting documentation; and
 - c) applies only to work that is due within the period for which the request applies, i.e. the 3-day period that is specified in the MSAF; however, all work due in that period can be covered by one request.
8. An email will be sent to the course instructor(s) to inform them of the request.
9. The instructor will determine the appropriate relief for the Self-Report (Type A) request.
10. Students must immediately follow up with their instructor(s) after submitting the Self-Report (Type A) request. Failure to do so may negate the opportunity for relief.

REQUESTS FOR RELIEF: ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT (TYPE B)

11. Administrative Report (Type B) requests for relief are for:
 - a) medical or personal situations lasting more than three (3) calendar days; and/or
 - b) missed academic work worth 25% or more of the final grade; and/or
 - c) any request for relief in a Term where the MSAF tool has been used previously in that Term.
12. Students must report to their [Faculty/Program Office](#) to discuss their situation and will be required to provide appropriate supporting documentation (see Documentation Requirements below).
13. If warranted, the Faculty/Program Office will process the relief request and will notify the instructor(s) and the student.
14. The instructor will determine the appropriate relief for these Administrative Report (Type B) requests.
15. Students must immediately follow up with their instructor(s) after being notified their request has been processed. Failure to do so may negate the opportunity for relief.

Documentation Requirements

16. If the reason for a request for relief is medical, the approved McMaster University Medical Form covering the relevant dates must be submitted. The student must be seen by a health care practitioner at the earliest possible date, normally on or before the date of the missed work and the health care practitioner must verify the duration of the illness.
17. If the reason is non-medical, appropriate documentation with verifiable origin covering the relevant dates must be submitted, normally within three (3) business days.
18. In some circumstances, students may be advised to submit a [Petition for Special Consideration](#).

Privacy

19. All personal information, including supporting documentation (e.g. personal health information) requested by the University to facilitate relief requests shall be handled in accordance with the [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#).