

Information sheet on inability to attend an examination or complete assessments due to illness

What to do when you are ill or not feeling well on the day of the exam

You must decide **before** the start of the exam whether to cancel your exam attendance. You should therefore consider carefully whether or not you are able to sit the exam. Once you have sat your exam, you cannot cancel it retroactively on the grounds of an inability to take the examination on the day; we must reject any such requests as a matter of principle, as doing otherwise would give you an unfair advantage over the other exam candidates.

Please note the following are **not** considered an inability to attend an exam:

- You are experiencing only very minor health issues.
- You are suffering from stress brought on by the exam (i.e. “exam nerves”), which does not constitute an illness in the stricter sense.
- You have a general sense of feeling unwell.

If your illness is long-term or affects you in fundamental ways (i.e. it is not only a temporary impairment of your general performance), which can be the case with e.g. mental illnesses, chronic illnesses or diabetes, you may be entitled to academic adjustments and exam access arrangements. To find out more about this, please visit our web page on [academic adjustments/exam access arrangements](#).

In the event of an **acute** deterioration of a chronic or mental illness, you can cancel your exam registration or apply for an extension of the writing time in accordance with sections 1 to 3 below.

1. If you are unable to take part in written or oral exams due to an acute illness

- Please complete the [Inability to Attend Examinations due to Illness Form](#) to cancel your exam registration. At the same time, you must submit the medical declaration on the back of the form or a separate medical certificate immediately, i.e. without any delay caused by you, to the relevant [examinations officer](#) at the [Examinations Office](#). If you are bedridden, please send it by post.
- The medical examination must take place before or, at the very latest, on the day of the exam. This also applies to exams that fall on a Saturday. If necessary, contact the medical on-call service (“Ärztlicher Bereitschaftsdienst”).
- The medical declaration or certificate must be sufficiently detailed and conclusive to allow the Board of Examiners to determine from it that you are/were in fact unable to attend the examination on the exam date. Therefore, the medical practitioner should state, from a medical perspective, precisely in what ways your physical, mental or emotional state prevented you from attending the examination. The determination of an inability to take an examination has legal implications. The decision rests with the examining body responsible.
- The medical certificate does not have to contain a medical diagnosis, but the doctor should indicate whether he or she considers you medically unfit to take the exam.

- In the case of computer printouts of the certificate, you should ensure that the doctor's or practice stamp is included.
- A certificate of incapacity for work ("Arbeitsunfähigkeitsbescheinigung") or school ("Schulunfähigkeitsbescheinigung") is not sufficient.
- If you are hospitalised, please submit a medical certificate from the hospital.
- You have a duty to cooperate, which means you are obliged to provide all information that is relevant to a decision under examination law.

2. If you have to interrupt your exam for health reasons

- If you need to break off your exam, you must also submit the [Inability to Attend Examinations due to Illness Form](#) immediately to the Examinations Office.
- All principles and instructions mentioned in section 1 apply.
- **Please note:** In this case, too, the doctor must explicitly state on the medical declaration or certificate:
 - that you are unable to attend an examination for medical reasons and
 - that this occurred after the start of the exam.

3. If you are unable to continue working on your dissertation/thesis due to illness

- If you become so ill during the writing period of your dissertation or thesis that you are unable to continue working on it, you can apply for an extension of the submission deadline using the [Application for Extension of Dissertation/Thesis Writing Time Form](#). This must be submitted **immediately** to the Examinations Office ([list of contacts at the Examinations Office](#)).
- Together with the form, please submit the medical declaration (on the back of the form or as a separate medical certificate).
- If you receive treatment at a hospital's outpatient centre or from a general practitioner (family doctor) or medical specialist, the medical declaration or certificate must clearly and comprehensibly state the symptoms of your illness, how they affect your ability to work on the dissertation/thesis (e.g. required bed rest) and the period of the health impairment, so that the examination body responsible can assess the extent to which you are limited in your performance. The decision on this has legal implications.
- The medical certificate does not have to contain a medical diagnosis, but the doctor should determine whether he or she considers you medically unfit to complete assessments and for how long.
- In the case of computer printouts of the certificate, you should ensure that the doctor's or practice stamp is included.
- A certificate of incapacity for work ("Arbeitsunfähigkeitsbescheinigung") or school ("Schulunfähigkeitsbescheinigung") is not sufficient.
- If you are hospitalised, a certificate from the hospital must be submitted.
- You have a duty to cooperate, which means you are obliged to provide all information that is relevant to a decision under examination law.