

Parent endorsement

Generally, parent endorsement of illness or other valid reason for an absence from a face-to-face class session is sufficient. We do not need any additional explanation unless parents choose to add to this.

While students may advise class teachers directly in the first instance of anticipated absences, parents or carers should provide endorsement via email (not via phone, as there is no tangible record of a phone call) as soon as possible after the relevant class sessions, except in the case of an independent student.

Valid reasons for absences

Valid reasons for absences may be sickness, emergencies, or other unavoidable and unforeseeable situations preventing attendance at a CAL face-to-face session. If the absence affects attendance for an assessment task, documentation such as a pdf copy of a medical certificate should be provided.

Another valid reason is a concurrent requirement for a student to attend and participate in an activity with the student's home school such as an excursion, a drama performance, or a team sport fixture representing the school, the ACT or Australia. In these cases, students should provide a pdf copy of the notice from the school that identifies the student in the category for required participation, such as the excursion notice.

We would not normally regard family travel as occasioning an explained absence. Students participating in a family holiday during term time is a choice, not an unavoidable situation, and students should catch up the work to receive credit for the hours in those cases.

Assessment task absences

If the absence occurs when there is a scheduled assessment task, then supporting evidence such as a medical certificate is required.

As stated on each assessment task cover page, if a test is taken at any time other than the timetabled session, any results can only be used as an estimate. Normally, this does not prevent us from generating a unit score, but potential impacts on fairness arising from differences in conditions of assessment, such as extra preparation time, will be considered.

Independent student

The term "independent student" usually means that a student is over the age of 18; not living at home and earning their own living and/or being recognised by Services Australia as independent; or is 22 or older in any situation. Independent students should send notifications about their absences on their own behalf.

The concept of independent student status is not specific to the ACT. In the absence of another officially published definition, our recognition of independent student status is based on Australian government Youth Allowance support information. ACT Government doesn't appear to have any specific guidelines of its own on the question.

As of August 2021, Services Australia lists criteria for a job seeker to be considered independent at:

<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/youth-allowance-job-seekers/how-much-you-can-get/dependent-or-independent/independent>

Related policy

CAL Student Support Policy, available from the Programs page on CAL website, at <https://cal.act.edu.au/programs.htm>.