

POLICY ON STUDENT ABSENCES

A student's first responsibility is to attend class and learn. Hence, the University expects students to attend all classes for which they are enrolled. This APM sets the rules under which student absences may, or may not, be justified, and how faculty should act upon unplanned and planned student absences.

Instructors may establish specific attendance regulations and make-up work policies governing their classes and must provide them to their students at the beginning of the semester in their syllabi (See APM 241).

When a student can anticipate increased demands on his/her time, the student must judiciously schedule courses.

Authorizing Student Absences

Unplanned student absences

Unplanned student absences should be authorized when the student has a short-term (up to a week of classes, during a normal 15 week semester)¹ serious and compelling reason² that prevents them from attending class.^{3, 4} Faculty should make every reasonable effort to accommodate the student via suitable make up work or some mutually agreed upon arrangement. The student is responsible for contacting the instructor as soon as possible and providing documentation supporting the reason for the absence. Missed papers, tests and/or homework assignments should be completed by a date agreed upon by both the faculty member and the student.⁵ When a student is absent for an extended time period (over a week of classes), a viable make-up plan may not be feasible; in some extreme circumstances, other actions such as dropping the class or withdrawing from the University for serious and compelling reasons may be appropriate. Students should consult their academic advisors before making drastic decisions like these.

¹ For shorter semesters (e.g., summer school) logical equivalents will be determined.

² A "serious and compelling reason" is defined as an unexpected condition that is not present prior to enrollment in the course that unexpectedly arises and interferes with a student's ability to attend class meetings and/or complete course requirements. The reason for the absence must be acceptable to and verified by the instructor of record.

³ In accordance with Title IX of the Educational Amendment of 1972, absences must be authorized for pregnancy and related conditions.

⁴ In accordance with Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020, [Section 1018. \(G\). \(i\), and \(ii\)](#), absences must be authorized for military service related activities.

⁵ If an agreement cannot be reached, the Department Chair should mediate discussion.

Absences for University-sponsored activities

Faculty have the obligation to limit both class activities/assignments and official University-sponsored activities/events that require a student to miss other classes. Student absences for University-sponsored activities⁶ should be authorized⁷ only when: (1) the event is sponsored by the University; (2) the student represents the University at the event; and (3) the student provides written documentation of points one and two to the instructor at least one week prior to the event⁸. In anticipation of authorized absences due to University-sponsored activities, accommodations should be made so that the student can submit their work to the instructor prior to or immediately following the absence; this includes papers, tests, and/or homework assignments as determined by the faculty member.

Make-Up Work Policy

Faculty policies on attendance and make-up work must be clearly stated on the course syllabus and consistently applied (see APM 241). Faculty are expected to allow make-up work for authorized student absences, provided the necessary accommodations are not unreasonable.⁹ Moreover, the number of authorized absences during the semester and provided make-up work should be accomplished without substantial additional cost in time or resources to the academic department or the instructor. It must be recognized that not all learning activities and exercises during class times and laboratory periods can be replicated; in such cases, students are at risk when they are absent.

Recommended by Academic Senate

May 2004

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⁶ Examples of student absences due to University-sponsored activities include, but are not limited to, artistic performances sponsored by university performance ensembles or artistic groups in which the student performs; athletic events in which the student competes; field trips or competitions sponsored through an academic program, and attendance at regional or national conferences.

⁷ Extra-curricular activities associated with campus student organizations/clubs that are not part of an academic program do not qualify as authorized, university-sponsored event absences under this policy.

⁸ This timeline is waived for the first week of instruction in any academic term.

⁹ In accordance with Title IX of the Educational Amendment of 1972, faculty must permit students to make up coursework if students failed to complete the assignments due to pregnancy and related conditions.