



## University Senate TRANSMITTAL FORM

<b>Senate Document #:</b>	14-15-21
<b>PCC ID #:</b>	N/A
<b>Title:</b>	Proposed Policy on Excused Absence
<b>Presenter:</b>	Charles Delwiche, Chair of the Academic Procedures & Standards (APAS) Committee
<b>Date of SEC Review:</b>	April 19, 2016
<b>Date of Senate Review:</b>	April 28, 2016
<b>Voting (highlight one):</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. On resolutions or recommendations one by one, or</li> <li>2. In a single vote</li> <li>3. To endorse entire report</li> <li>4. For information only</li> </ol>
<b>Statement of Issue:</b>	<p>In January 2015, Undergraduate Studies submitted a proposal to the Senate pertaining to excused absences for undergraduate students. The proposal called for the creation of a new excused absence policy that would apply to all types of excused absences and would replace the current III-5.10(A) University of Maryland, College Park Policies and Procedures Concerning Academic Assignments on Dates of Religious Observances and V-1.00(G) University of Maryland Policy for a Student's Medically Necessitated Absence from Class, as well as cover information contained in the Undergraduate Catalog. In addition, the Senate Office received a proposal from the Provost's Student Advisory Council regarding a proposed bereavement procedure for students.</p> <p>The Senate Executive Committee (SEC) charged the Academic Procedures and Standards (APAS) Committee with consideration of a new umbrella policy on excused absences. The SEC also requested that the Student Affairs Committee review the proposals and submit feedback and recommendations directly to APAS.</p> <p>During summer 2015, the Senate Office also received a proposal for an extension of the excused absence policy to cover military service. The proposal was submitted on behalf of the University of Maryland's Veteran's Steering Committee. The SEC charged both APAS and the Student Affairs Committee with review of the</p>

	additional proposal, and sent an amended version of the committees' charges asking them to consider whether military services should be included in an excused absence policy.
<b>Relevant Policy # &amp; URL:</b>	<p>III-5.10(A) University of Maryland, College Park Policies and Procedures Concerning Academic Assignments on Dates of Religious Observances <a href="http://umd.edu/policies/2014-iii-510a.html">http://umd.edu/policies/2014-iii-510a.html</a></p> <p>V-1.00(G) University of Maryland Policy for a Student's Medically Necessitated Absence from Class <a href="http://umd.edu/policies/2014-V-100g.html">http://umd.edu/policies/2014-V-100g.html</a></p>
<b>Recommendation:</b>	APAS recommends that the Senate approve its recommended University of Maryland Policy on Excused Absence, which immediately follows its report, as a replacement for III-5.10(A) University of Maryland, College Park Policies and Procedures Concerning Academic Assignments on Dates of Religious Observances and V-1.00(G) University of Maryland Policy for a Student's Medically Necessitated Absence from Class. If approved by the Senate and the President, all reference documents, including the Undergraduate Catalog and Faculty Handbook, should likewise be updated to reflect the new policy.
<b>Committee Work:</b>	APAS reviewed this topic during the 2015-2016 academic year. APAS reviewed similar policies and procedures at peer institutions and discussed the possibility of the creation of an online, centralized reporting/request mechanism at the University. APAS reviewed the text of the current relevant policies, as well as the information in the Undergraduate Catalog. APAS also discussed various aspects of excuse absence procedures and practices on campus and nationwide. APAS identified two elements as particularly important for the implementation phase of its final recommendations, which are further discussed in the report: 1) centralized reporting, and 2) updates and supplementary guidance in both the Undergraduate Catalog and the Faculty Handbook on best practices in implementation. APAS reviewed the text of the proposed policy as submitted by Undergraduate Studies and decided to craft its own umbrella policy. After numerous iterations of a draft policy, on April 9, 2016, the APAS Committee voted in favor of forwarding its recommended policy on excused absence to the Senate for consideration.
<b>Alternatives:</b>	To not approve the APAS Committee's recommended University of Maryland Policy on Excused Absence.
<b>Risks:</b>	There are no associated risks.
<b>Financial Implications:</b>	There are no financial implications at this time.
<b>Further Approvals Required:</b>	Senate approval, Presidential approval.

# **Senate Academic Procedures and Standards (APAS) Committee**

## **Report on Senate Document # 14-15-21**

### **Proposed Policy on Excused Absence**

**April 2016**

#### **2015-2016 APAS Committee Members**

Charles Delwiche, Chair  
Britt Reynolds, Ex-Officio, Undergraduate Admissions Rep  
Mark Shayman, Ex-Officio, Graduate School Rep  
William Cohen, Ex-Officio, Provost's Rep  
Ann Smith, Ex-Officio, Undergraduate Studies Rep  
Adrian Cornelius, Ex-Officio, University Registrar Rep  
Robin Pike, Faculty  
Marilee Lindemann, Faculty  
Charles Mitter, Faculty  
Eric McKenzie, Faculty  
Richard Klank, Faculty  
Douglas Roberts, Faculty  
Linda Moghadam, Faculty  
Brian Barker, Faculty  
Daniela Wagner-Loera, Faculty  
Lelyn Saner, Faculty  
Emily Heavin, Exempt Staff  
Mark Rivera, Graduate Student  
Stephanie Gill, Undergraduate Student  
Kevin Adams, Undergraduate Student  
Lindsay Strehle, Undergraduate Student

## **BACKGROUND**

In January 2015, the Office of Undergraduate Studies submitted a proposal to the University Senate pertaining to excused absences for undergraduate students. The proposal called for the creation of a new excused absence policy that would apply to all types of excused absences and would replace the current III-5.10(A) University of Maryland, College Park Policies and Procedures Concerning Academic Assignments on Dates of Religious Observances and the V-1.00(G) University of Maryland Policy for a Student's Medically Necessitated Absence from Class. The proposal included a single proposed excused absence policy, which had language drawing from the Religious Observances policy, the Medically Necessitated Absence policy, and the Undergraduate Catalog. The goal of the proposal was to present a single policy with a common approach to informing an instructor of absence, when documentation is needed, and the types of documentation required. The proposed policy attempted to reflect current policies and practices at the University in a single document. In addition, around the same time, the Senate Office received a proposal from the Provost's Student Advisory Council regarding a proposed bereavement procedure for students.

The Senate Executive Committee (SEC) met in spring 2015 and reviewed the proposals from Undergraduate Studies and the Provost's Student Advisory Council. The SEC decided to charge the Academic Procedures and Standards (APAS) Committee with consideration of a new umbrella policy on excused absences (Appendix 1). The SEC also requested that the Student Affairs Committee review the proposals and submit feedback and recommendations to APAS, in order to fully consider the impact of the proposed policy and to provide for an understanding of the perspectives of both faculty and students.

During the summer of 2015, the Senate Office also received a proposal for an extension of the excused absence policy to cover military service. The proposal was submitted on behalf of the University of Maryland's Veteran's Steering Committee. The SEC decided to charge both APAS and the Student Affairs Committee with review of the additional proposal, and sent an amended version of the committees' charges asking the committees to consider whether military services should be included in an excused absence policy as part of the current review of the Proposed Policy on Excused Absence (Appendix 2). The Student Affairs Committee was again asked to submit a memorandum to APAS regarding the committee's stance on the proposal.

## **COMMITTEE WORK**

The APAS Committee began reviewing the charge in during the fall 2015 semester. It began by reviewing the text of the two relevant current University policies: 1) III-5.10(A) University of Maryland, College Park Policies and Procedures Concerning Academic Assignments on Dates of Religious Observances (Appendix 3), and 2) V-1.00(G) University of Maryland Policy for a Student's Medically Necessitated Absence from Class (Appendix 4). The committee also read the section of the Undergraduate Catalog that discusses excuse absence procedures (Appendix 5). The committee found that "excused absence" is not defined in current policy. In addition, the committee received and reviewed memos from the Student Affairs Committee regarding its recommendations on the practicality of an umbrella policy (Appendix 6) and on coverage for military service (Appendix 7).

The committee also reviewed similar policies and procedures for excused absences at peer institutions, including the University of Illinois - Urbana-Champaign, the University of Wisconsin - Madison, Indiana University - Bloomington, the University of California - Berkeley, the University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill, the University of Minnesota, Michigan State University, Ohio State University, Rutgers University, Pennsylvania State University, the University of Iowa, the University of Nebraska - Lincoln, Purdue University, Northwestern University, the University of Michigan, and the University of California - Los Angeles (see Appendix 8). The committee reviewed whether these institutions had policies, and if so, whether the policies discussed coverage for religious observances, medical/illnesses, bereavement leave, military service, academic/university-sponsored activities, and any other categories. The committee found that policies at institutions across the nation vary greatly in terms of coverage offered, outside of coverage for religious observances. Some of the policies appeared to leave substantial interpretation and individual judgment to each college/school or instructor. Only a few policies or procedures specifically covered military service.

The committee talked about how “excused absence” is currently defined in the Undergraduate Catalog, which indicates that it is practice at the University to “excuse the absences of students that result from the following causes: illness of the student, or illness of a dependent as defined by Board of Regents policy on family and medical leave; religious observance (where the nature of the observance prevents the student from being present during the class period); participation in university activities at the request of university authorities; and compelling circumstance beyond the students control.” The committee reviewed input and feedback from the Director of the University Health Center regarding policies for granting and administering medical notes at universities across the nation and found that the vast majority of universities in the United States do not require medical excuses. Committee members also gathered departmental practices and attendance procedures to share with the committee, in an effort to compare how different units on campus handle excused absence requests from students.

The committee also talked at length about the nature of make-up work and current procedures for make-up arrangements; for instance, the Religious Absence policy notes that it is the “student’s responsibility to contact the instructor for each course in which work is missed, provide appropriate written notification and make arrangements for make-up work or examinations.” It was also noted that the Medically Necessitated Absence policy indicates that the frequency of the absence and whether or not the absence coincides with a major scheduled graded event determine the type of excuse necessary.

Throughout the course of its discussion, the committee talked about the taxonomy of absences, including predictable absences (e.g., religious observances, University-sponsored activities like attendance at a conference, some personal events like a wedding), unpredictable absences (e.g., illness, bereavement), and somewhat predictable absences (e.g., military service, family leave). The committee talked about the duration of excuses absences (e.g., a single class/one event, multiple classes/one event, and multiple classes/more than one event). Timeliness of requests was also discussed (e.g., that predictable absences could be requested within the first two weeks of the semester, whereas unpredictable absences should be requested as soon as is practical). The committee also talked about what types of documentation is appropriate to require for excused

absence requests (e.g., using “verifiable” documentation for major graded events, self-signed notes for minor graded events).

The committee also discussed related ideas, including the importance of attending class and how classes with a significant amount of in-class participation manage excused absences. The committee talked about courses that use “Drop-N” practices, and how excused absences should not provide a reduced course load of work for students in most cases.

During the committee’s deliberations there were two elements that the committee identified as particularly important for the implementation phase of its final recommendations: 1) centralized reporting, and 2) updates and supplementary guidance in both the Undergraduate Catalog and the Faculty Handbook on best practices in implementation:

#### *Centralized Reporting*

Some institutions (notably the University of Michigan and Rutgers University) use an online, centralized reporting/request mechanism, by which a student can request excused absence by submitting a single request online (and uploading documentation as appropriate to the request), with the system then sending the request to all courses in which the student is registered, as well as maintaining a record of such requests for advising and administrative purposes. Such an online system would simplify the process of requesting excused absences, would help identify students facing unusual circumstances, and would help ensure consistent application of the excused absence policy. To establish such a system would require resources for its development and implementation, but the benefits would potentially be large, and the APAS Committee strongly recommends that the University work towards establishing such a system.

#### *Updates & Supplementary Guidance*

The Undergraduate Catalog and the Faculty Handbook are intended to provide information regarding the implementation and practice of University policies, and as such are more frequently referred to by members of the University community than University policies *per se*.

The Undergraduate Catalog currently has a section on “Attendance and Assessment/Examinations,” which discusses the importance of attendance and the University’s expectation that students will take full responsibility for their academic work and academic progress. This section of the Undergraduate Catalog also notes that attendance and in-class participation may be ongoing requirements and an integral part of the work in some courses. It discusses the responsibilities of students and instructors in regard to in-class participation and the effect of absences on the evaluation of the student’s work in a course. This section of the Undergraduate Catalog references the current policies on Religious Observances and Medically Necessitated Absences from Class. Similarly, the Faculty Handbook has a section on “Student Attendance,” which discusses the need for course syllabi to specify the nature of in-class participation expected and the effects of absences on students’ grades; it also has references to current University policy. The Faculty Handbook mentions excused absences in other sections, as well, including the sections on “Course Assessment Guidelines” and “Syllabus Guidelines.”

The committee felt strongly that both reference documents should continue to provide supplementary guidance to students and faculty regarding best practices in implementation of the new policy, and noted that it would be helpful to have some examples in the Faculty Handbook of syllabus language and grading policies that reflect these best practices. Consequently, the successful implementation of the proposed revisions to the policy on excused absences will require careful revision of these documents to reflect the changes in the policy, as well as to provide updated guidance and examples of best practices for both faculty and students.

During its review, APAS carefully reviewed the text of the proposed policy as submitted by Undergraduate Studies and ultimately decided to craft its own umbrella policy for discussion. After numerous iterations of a draft policy, on April 9, 2016, the APAS Committee voted in favor of forwarding its recommended policy on excused absence to the Senate for consideration. The committee's recommended policy defines excused absence as "an absence for which the student has the right to receive, and the instructor has the responsibility to provide, reasonable accommodations." The committee's recommended policy is organized into four sections: 1) Policy, 2) Notification and Documentation, 3) Academic Accommodations, and 4) Appeals.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The APAS Committee recommends that the Senate approve its recommended University of Maryland Policy on Excused Absence, which immediately follows this report, as a replacement for current policies III-5.10(A) University of Maryland, College Park Policies and Procedures Concerning Academic Assignments on Dates of Religious Observances and V-1.00(G) University of Maryland Policy for a Student's Medically Necessitated Absence from Class.

If approved by the Senate and President, all reference documents, including the Undergraduate Catalog and Faculty Handbook as noted above, should likewise be updated and revised to reflect the new policy.

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Charge from the Senate Executive Committee (SEC), dated February 23, 2015

Appendix 2 – Amendment to the Proposed Policy on Excused Absence Charge from the SEC

Appendix 3 – III-5.10(A) University of Maryland, College Park Policies and Procedures Concerning Academic Assignments on Dates of Religious Observances

Appendix 4 – V-1.00(G) University of Maryland Policy for a Student's Medically Necessitated Absence from Class

Appendix 5 – Excerpt from the Undergraduate Catalog 2015-2016 section on Attendance and Assessment/Examinations

Appendix 6 – Memo from the Student Affairs Committee, dated July 21, 2015

Appendix 7 – Memo from the Student Affairs Committee, dated October 6, 2015

Appendix 8 – Peer Institution Research, conducted during AY 2015-2016



## UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND POLICY ON EXCUSED ABSENCE

### I. Policy

An excused absence is an absence for which the student has the right to receive, and the instructor has the responsibility to provide, academic accommodation.

Students are expected to take full responsibility for their own academic work and progress. Students, to progress satisfactorily, must meet all of the requirements of each course for which they are registered. Students are expected to attend classes regularly. Consistent attendance offers students the most effective opportunity to gain command of course concepts and materials. Excused absences must be requested promptly and must be supported by appropriate documentation.

Excused absences do not alter the academic requirements for the course. Students are responsible for information and material missed on the day of absence. Students are within reason entitled to receive any materials provided to the class during the absence. Students are responsible for making provision to determine what course material they have missed and for completing required exercises in a timely manner.

Events that justify an excused absence include religious observances; mandatory military obligation; illness of the student or illness of an immediate family member; participation in university activities at the request of university authorities; and compelling circumstances beyond the student's control (e.g., death in the family, required court appearance). Absences stemming from work duties other than military obligation (e.g., unexpected changes in shift assignments) and traffic/transit problems do not typically qualify for excused absence.

### II. Notification and Documentation

To receive accommodation for an excused absence:

1. The student must notify the instructor in a timely manner. The notification should be provided either prior to the absence or as soon afterwards as possible. In the case of religious observances, athletic events, and planned absences known at the beginning of the semester, the student must inform the instructor during the schedule adjustment period. All other absences must be reported as soon as is practical.
2. The student must provide appropriate documentation of the absence. The documentation must be provided in writing to the instructor by the means specified in the syllabus.
  - a. For medically necessitated absences: Students may, one time per course per semester, provide a self-signed excuse as documentation of an absence from a single class (e.g., lecture, recitation, or laboratory session) that does

not coincide with a major assessment or assignment due date. For all other medically necessitated absences, students must provide documentation from a physician or the University Health Center, upon request of the course instructor.

- b. For all other absences students must provide verifiable documentation upon request (e.g., religious calendar, court summons, death announcement, etc.).
3. Providing false information to University officials is prohibited under Part 9(h) of the Code of Student Conduct (V-1.00(B) University of Maryland Code of Student Conduct) and may result in disciplinary action.

### **III. Academic Accommodations**

In keeping with the USM III-5.10 Policy Concerning the Scheduling of Academic Assignments on Dates of Religious Observance, “Students shall not be penalized because of observances of their religious holidays and shall be given an opportunity, whenever feasible, to make up within a reasonable time any academic assignment that is missed due to individual participation in religious observances.” For all other excused absences, the student must be provided academic accommodation. The accommodation provided should, within reason, neither advantage nor disadvantage either the student or the rest of the class.

If the accommodation is a makeup assessment, it must be timely, at a time and place agreed upon by the instructor and student, cover the same material, and be at the same level of difficulty as the original assessment. In the event that a group of students requires the same makeup assessment, one time and place may be scheduled. The makeup assessment must not interfere with the student's regularly scheduled classes, and must be consistent with the V-1.00(A) University of Maryland Policy on the Conduct of Undergraduate Classes and Student Grievance Procedure.

If makeup work is not feasible, an alternate accommodation for excused absences will be provided. Alternate accommodations will be according to the principles established by the unit offering the course.

Students who miss a substantial number of class sessions or course assignments should seek guidance from an academic advisor with respect to academic options.

Extended absences stemming from active military duty are addressed in the USM V-7.00 Policy on Students who are called to Active Military Duty during a National or International Crisis or Conflict.

Absences related to a student’s disability are addressed in the VI-1.00(D) University of Maryland Disability & Accessibility Policy and Procedures.

#### **IV. Appeals**


Students who feel that they have unfairly been denied either excused absence or appropriate accommodation for an excused absence should first seek to resolve the disagreement with the course instructor. If the student and instructor are unable to find a mutually agreeable resolution, the student may file an appeal with the head of the administrative unit offering the class. In most cases this will be the Chair of the Department. In the case of non-departmentalized units and interdepartmental programs, this role will be taken by the Dean (or the Dean's designee).

The unit head should use procedures similar to those specified in the III-1.20(B) University of Maryland Procedures for Review of Alleged Arbitrary and Capricious Grading – Undergraduate Students – but with clear indication that the appeal is with regard to excused absence, not arbitrary and capricious grading.

## Appendix 1 - Charge from the SEC



### University Senate CHARGE

<b>Date:</b>	February 23, 2015
<b>To:</b>	Charles Delwiche Chair, Academic Procedures & Standards (APAS) Committee Ian Chambers Chair, Student Affairs Committee
<b>From:</b>	Donald Webster Chair, University Senate 
<b>Subject:</b>	Proposed Policy on Excused Absence
<b>Senate Document #:</b>	14-15-21
<b>Deadline:</b>	November 6, 2015

The Senate Executive Committee (SEC) requests that the Academic Procedures & Standards (APAS) and Student Affairs Committees review the proposal entitled, “Proposed Policy on Excused Absence” and consider whether a new umbrella policy on excused absences is necessary. In order to understand the perspectives of both faculty and students, the SEC has assigned elements of the charge for each committee as follows:

We ask both committees to:

1. Review the University of Maryland, College Park Policies and Procedures Concerning Academic Assignments on Dates of Religious Observances (III-5.10 [A]).
2. Review the University of Maryland Policy for a Student Medically Necessitated Absence From Class (V-1.00 [G]).
3. Review the Attendance and Assessment/Examinations section of the University of Maryland Undergraduate Catalog (<http://www.umd.edu/catalog/index.cfm/show/content.section/c/27/ss/1584/s/1540>).
4. Review the proposed umbrella Policy on Excused Absence.
5. Review the proposed Student Bereavement Policy from the Provost’s Student Advisory Council as a potential addition to the proposed umbrella policy on excused absence.
6. Consider the impact of the proposed policy on student performance and success.

We ask the Student Affairs Committee to:

1. Consider the impact of the proposed policy on undergraduate students at the University of Maryland.
2. Submit a recommendation to the Academic Procedures & Standards Committee regarding the proposed language.

We ask the Academic Procedures & Standards Committee to:

1. Consult with the proposer regarding her specific concerns.
2. Consult with the University Registrar.
3. Consult with a representative of the Office of Undergraduate Studies.
4. Consult with a representative of the Provost's Student Advisory Council.
5. Review similar policies for excused absences at peer and Big 10 institutions.
6. Consider the recommendation from the Student Affairs Committee regarding the proposed policy.
7. Consider whether the policy should include a maximum number of excused absences allowed for each course in a semester.
8. Consider the impact of the proposed policy on faculty at the University of Maryland.
9. Consult with the University's Office of General Counsel on any recommended policy revisions.
10. If appropriate, make recommendations as to whether a policy on excused absence should be developed.

We ask that the Academic Procedures & Standards Committee submit its final report and recommendations to the Senate Office no later than November 6, 2015. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact Reka Montfort in the Senate Office, extension 5-5804.

Attachments



## University Senate PROPOSAL FORM

<b>Name:</b>	Ann C. Smith
<b>Date:</b>	1/13/15
<b>Title of Proposal:</b>	Proposed Policy on Excused Absence
<b>Phone Number:</b>	X59165
<b>Email Address:</b>	asmith@umd.edu
<b>Campus Address:</b>	2100 Marie Mount Hall
<b>Unit/Department/College:</b>	Office of Undergraduate Studies
<b>Constituency (faculty, staff, undergraduate, graduate):</b>	faculty
<b>Description of issue/concern/policy in question:</b>	<p>The policies and practices related to excused absences are described in three places:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Religious Observance Policy  <a href="http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/iii510a.html">http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/iii510a.html</a></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Student Medically Necessitated Absence from Class  <a href="http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/docs/V-100G.pdf">http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/docs/V-100G.pdf</a></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Undergraduate Catalog  <a href="http://www.umd.edu/catalog/index.cfm/show/content.section/c/27/ss/1584/s/1540">http://www.umd.edu/catalog/index.cfm/show/content.section/c/27/ss/1584/s/1540</a></p>
<b>Description of action/changes you would like to see implemented and why:</b>	<p>Create a new Excused Absence policy that applies to all types of excused absences (see the Undergraduate Catalog) and replaces the Religious Observance Policy and the Student Medically Necessitated Absence from Class policy.</p>
<b>Suggestions for how your proposal could be put into practice:</b>	<p>Proposed new Excused Absence policy is attached. The language from the policy draws from the Religious Observance Policy and the Student Medically Necessitated Absence from Class policy and the UMD Undergraduate Catalog.</p>

**Additional Information:**

Please see attached a draft of the proposed policy on Excused Absence.

The draft is color coded. The draft draws heavily from the language of present policies. Please refer to this key:

- Policy III-5.10(A) on religious observances (Green)
- Policy V-1.00(G) on medically necessitated absence (Black)
- Undergraduate Catalog (Purple)
- Revisions (Red)

Comments in the draft draw attention to particular terms and suggestions for discussion.

Note

- **Definition of an excused absence** is from the Undergraduate catalog. The intention of “that students will not be penalized for an absence” is taken from the religious observance policy and is applied to all excused absences. The verification of absence language is taken primarily from the medically necessitated absence from class policy.
  - See Verifiable source in the document, is this the best term?
- **Time line of notification of excused absence** is defined in context of absences known at the start of the semester and those that are not known at the start of the semester
  - Is “first two weeks” the appropriate deadline (vs end of schedule adjustment?)
- **Format for notification of excused absence** is defined as written notification. In the proposed policy the procedure for submitting written notification is not defined. It is assumed that faculty would like to define how students will communicate the notification of an absence – this may be by presenting a note to the faculty member in person or perhaps sending an email. Thus the proposed policy indicates that the communication process must be defined for each course. The expectations of the written notification are defined in the policy and are drawn from the Medically Necessitated Absence Policy.
- **Special consideration must be given to the section on multiple excused absences that are isolated and unrelated.** In the proposed policy multiple excused absences that are non-consecutive and cause students to miss isolated single course meetings are considered in the same manner as a single

excused absence. In the Medically Necessitated Absence policy “Non-consecutive medically necessitated absences from more than a single lecture, recitation or lab” require each instructor to establish their own course policy. The proposed policy removes the requirement that each course establish a “written absence policy” (see Catalog and Syllabus Guidelines in the Faculty Handbook).

- **The opportunity for make up work** is defined in the proposed policy according to that outlined in the Religious Observance Policy
  - “Students shall be allowed, whenever **practicable**, to make up academic assignments that are missed due to such absence” (Religious Policy). Is “practicable” the best term to use? Is the intention clear? Does this term support the policy statement that “Students should not be **penalized** in any way for excused absences” (Religious Policy)
  - Is clarification of the phrase **reasonable time** necessary? Current practice includes delaying make up work until the end of the semester and the use of reading day for make up exams.
- **Syllabus Guidelines in the Faculty Handbook** (<http://faculty.umd.edu/teach/syllabus.html>) encourage faculty to discuss excused absences and make up policies in the syllabus.



### Proposed Policy on Excused Absence

This draft is color coded to indicate that the text draws primarily from the language of existing policy:

- Policy III-5.10(A) on religious observances (Green)
- Policy V-1.00(G) on medically necessitated absence (Black)
- Undergraduate Catalog (Purple)
- Revisions (Red)

Highlighted terms are discussed in the attached comment document.

#### Policy

It is the policy of UMD to excuse the absences of students that result from the following causes: illness of the student, or illness of a dependent as defined by Board of Regents policy on family and medical leave; religious observance (where the nature of the observance prevents the student from being present during the class period); participation in university activities at the request of university authorities; and compelling circumstance beyond the students control. Students shall not be penalized in any way for excused absences. Students shall be allowed, whenever practicable, to make up academic assignments that are missed due to such absences. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor for each course in which work is missed, provide appropriate written notification and make arrangements for make-up work or examinations.

As explained below, the procedures and the documentation a student is required to provide to the class instructor for the purpose of obtaining an excused absence differ depending on the frequency of the absence, and whether the absence occurs during a Major Scheduled Grading Event

#### 1. Procedures

##### A. Excused absence timeline for notification

1. If the date to be missed is known at the start of the semester the student is responsible for providing written notification to the professor within the first two weeks of the semester.
2. If the date to be missed is not known at the start of the semester the student should make a reasonable attempt to inform the instructor in advance of the absence and upon returning to class present written notification.

##### B. Excused absence format for notification

1. Students must present written notification using the communication process indicated by the course

asmith 1/12/2015 4:56 PM

**Comment [1]:** See discussion in proposal

asmith 1/12/2015 4:57 PM

**Comment [2]:** See discussion in proposal

asmith 12/1/2014 2:18 PM

**Deleted:** .

asmith 1/13/2015 4:52 PM

**Comment [3]:** Is the first two weeks the appropriate deadline? An alternate would be "by the end of the Schedule Adjustment period."

asmith 1/12/2015 4:58 PM

**Comment [4]:** See discussion in proposal

instructor to be found in the course syllabus. The process for notification should be confidential

2. Written notification will be a self-signed note from the student. The note must identify the reason for the absence and the date. Each note must also contain an acknowledgment by the student that the information provided is true and correct. Providing false information to University officials is prohibited under Part 9 (h) of the Code of Student Conduct (V-1.00(B) UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT) and may result in disciplinary action. Such documentation shall be honored as sufficient documentation unless the absence results in a prolonged absence from classes and/or coincides with a Major Scheduled Grading Event. No written excuses or documentation from the Health Center shall be provided for absences from single lecture, recitation, or lab.
- ~~3. Written notification for Non-consecutive absences from more than a single lecture, recitation or lab will be:~~
4. A prolonged absence from classes is defined as multiple consecutive absences from a course during a semester due to the same reason.
5. "Major Scheduled Grading Events" shall be identified by the instructor in the course syllabus at the beginning of each semester.
6. Students who experience a prolonged absence(s) as defined above or an absence during a Major Scheduled Grading Event are required to supplement the written notification with supporting documentation from a verifiable source. The source (Health Center, Physician, Court Summons, Death Notice, etc) shall verify dates of absence and indicate the time frame that the student was unable to meet academic responsibilities. No diagnostic information shall be provided.

## 2. Examinations and Assignments

The make-up examination or substitute assignment must be at a time and place mutually agreeable to the instructor and student, cover only the material for which the student was originally responsible, and be at a comparable level of difficulty with the original examination. In the event that a group of students requires the same make-up examination or substitute assignment, one time and place may be scheduled. The make-up assessment or substitute assignment must not interfere with the student's regularly scheduled classes or in-class final examination.

asmith 1/13/2015 4:51 PM

**Comment [5]:** . See the Syllabus guidelines from Faculty Affairs  
<http://faculty.umd.edu/teach/syllabus.html>

asmith 1/12/2015 5:00 PM

**Comment [6]:** Is this the appropriate term?

### 3. Class work

Students are responsible for information and material missed on the day(s) of absence. Students absent for an excused absence may request any materials given out during the absence. Students shall be given a reasonable time to make up class assignments.

asmith 1/12/2015 4:59 PM

**Comment [7]:** See discussion in proposal

### 4. Resolution of Problems

A student who wishes to contest a decision not to grant an excused absence should first try to resolve the issue with the class instructor. If the issue is not resolved with the instructor, the student should seek the advice of the instructor's Department Chair; the Dean's Office of the Department's College; the Health Center Director; or the Department of Disability Support Services (DSS) Director, if the student is registered with the DSS, in order to identify the proper procedure for resolution.

asmith 1/8/2015 1:32 PM

**Deleted:** a medically necessitated

If the student believes his or her final grade was affected by the filing of a complaint, recourse is available under UMCP Policy III-1.20(A), Procedures For Review of Alleged Arbitrary and Capricious Grading.

### 5. Religious Observance and the Academic Schedule

The President may specify certain dates within the academic calendar which, for reasons of religious observance by a large number of student and faculty, may not be used to administer examinations or tests, and may not be set as due dates for assignments. To avoid the likelihood of religious observances scheduling conflicts, it is recommended that professors avoid scheduling exams or field trips on major religious holidays. During orientation period, advisors and students should work together to avoid religious observances scheduling conflicts. When planning their classes, students should consider the likelihood that they might be absent multiple times from a given course. Students should choose lab and discussion sections accordingly.

# **UMD Policy**

## **Student Bereavement Procedure**

### **Purpose:**

To preserve mental health and academic standing of students by allowing them sufficient time and accommodations to grieve the loss of loved ones.

### **Excused Academic Days:**

All students who opt to use the Bereavement Procedure should be given **five (5)** academic days off to mourn the loss of an individual with a significant relationship. Unexcused absences already prescribed in the course syllabus should not be used in congruence with the Bereavement Procedure. Significant relationship can include, but is not limited to, individuals with the following legal titles:

- Uncle(s) or Aunt(s)
- Cousin(s)
- Niece(s) or Nephew(s)
- Legal In-Law(s)
- Grandparent(s)
- Step-Relation Individual(s)
- Child(ren) or Individual(s) in which the Mourner has Legal Guardianship Over
- Parent(s) or Legal Guardian(s)
- Sibling(s)
- Spouse or Legal Civil Union Partner

### **Traveling Day(s) System:**

- Students should be allotted two days, in addition to the five mourning days, to travel to and from their respective locations. These locations include the home of the deceased, the home of the student grieving or the location of the funeral/services.
  
- Travel days will be calendar days, not academic days. Students opting to use the Bereavement Procedure can appeal to the professor and/or Provost's Office if more travel days are needed. These requests will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

### **Missed Academic Work:**

Students who are mourning will be given a reasonable amount of days to make up any academic work that will not be completed as they mourn and/or travel.

- The allowance of days given for missed academic work should be equal to the number of days excused from class.

- The assignments missed should not be subject to deduction in scoring, as long as they are completed in the reasonable extended period of allotted time. The student is responsible for working with the professor to make up these assignments.
- If compelling verifiable circumstances are beyond the control of the student, and the nature of the assignment makes it impossible for missed work to be completed, faculty members should attempt to make a reasonable adjustment of the assignment.

**Proof of Death:**

Any students who wish to use the Bereavement Procedure should have proof of the death of the individual(s) who is/are being mourned. Proof of the individual(s) death(s) should be submitted to a faculty/staff member designated by the University Provost by the end of the allotted days. Documentation of the death or funeral service attended should suffice as evidence of the death.

- This could include, but is not limited to: an obituary, copy of death certificate, program from the funeral service, or a signed letter of funeral service from the funeral home.



**University Senate**  
**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Charles Delwiche  
Chair, Academic Procedures & Standards (APAS) Committee  
Adam Berger  
Chair, Student Affairs Committee

**FROM:** Willie Brown *Willie Brown*  
Chair, University Senate

**SUBJECT:** Amendment to the Proposed Policy on Excused Absence (14-15-21)  
Charge

The Senate Executive Committee (SEC) requests that the Academic Procedures & Standards (APAS) and Student Affairs Committees review the proposal entitled, “Request for Extension of the Excused Absence Policy for Military Service (15-16-03)” and consider whether military services should be included in an excused absence policy. This review should be a component of the current review of the Proposed Policy on Excused Absence (14-15-21). In order to understand the perspectives of both faculty and students, the SEC has assigned specific tasks for each committee as follows:

We ask the Student Affairs Committee to:

1. Consider the impact of the attached proposal on undergraduate students at the University of Maryland.
2. Submit a brief memorandum regarding the committee’s stance on the proposal to the Academic Procedures & Standards Committee by October 6, 2015.

We ask the Academic Procedures & Standards Committee to:

1. Consult with the proposer regarding her specific concerns.
2. Review similar language for military service in peer and Big 10 institutions policies.
3. Consider the memorandum from the Student Affairs Committee regarding the proposal.
4. Consider whether the excused absence policy should include military service.

In light of this additional request, we ask that the Academic Procedures & Standards Committee submit its final report and recommendations to the Senate Office no later than February 15, 2016. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact Reka Montfort in the Senate Office, extension 5-5804.

Attachment



## University Senate PROPOSAL FORM

<b>Name:</b>	Marsha Guenzler-Stevens, PhD
<b>Date:</b>	July 21, 2015
<b>Title of Proposal:</b>	Request for extension of the Excused Absence Policy for Military Service
<b>Phone Number:</b>	301-314-8505
<b>Email Address:</b>	<a href="mailto:mguenzle@umd.edu">mguenzle@umd.edu</a>
<b>Campus Address:</b>	3100 Stamp Student Union
<b>Unit/Department/College:</b>	Adele H. Stamp Student Union – Center for Camus Life
<b>Constituency (faculty, staff, undergraduate, graduate):</b>	Staff
<b>Description of issue/concern/policy in question:</b>	<p>On behalf of the University of Maryland’s Veterans Steering Committee, I would like to propose a change to the Excused Absence Policy for Assessment/Examinations. Current students who are members of the National Guard, Reserves, or Active Duty military may be called up for emergency situations, such as the recent Baltimore Riots. When these situations occur, students who are members of the military may be called up at a moment’s notice in order to respond.</p> <p>Depending on the discretion of the individual professors/instructors, students who are military members may not be afforded an excused absence during these trying times. Military service is not listed under the current excused absence policy. The discretion falls under “<i>and compelling circumstance beyond the students control.</i>”</p> <p>The Veteran Steering Committee requests that the institution add military obligations as an additional item within the policy. Proper documentation must be provided with a point of contact for verification purposes as stated at the end of the third bullet point. This may include, but is not limited to a memorandum from the commanding officer of the unit or official military orders.</p>



**Description of action/changes you would like to see implemented and why:**

The Veteran Steering Committee requests that the institution add military obligations as an additional item within the policy. Proper documentation must be provided with a point of contact for verification purposes as stated at the end of the third bullet point. This may include, but is not limited to a memorandum from the commanding officer of the unit or official military orders.

The current [policy](#) with proposed changes may read as follows:

**Attendance and Assessment/Examinations**

**Attendance**

The University expects each student to take full responsibility for his or her academic work and academic progress. The student, to progress satisfactorily, must meet all of the requirements of each course for which he or she is registered. Students are expected to attend classes regularly, for consistent attendance offers the most effective opportunity open to all students to gain command of the concepts and materials of their courses of study. Except as provided below, absences will not be used in the computation of grades, and the recording of student absences will not be required of the faculty.

- In some courses, attendance and in-class participation are ongoing requirements and an integral part of the work of the course. In other courses, occasional in-class assessments may occur, sometimes without advance notice. It is the responsibility of the instructor to inform each class at the beginning of the semester of the nature of in-class participation expected and the effect of absences on the evaluation of the student's work in the course.
- It is the policy of the university to excuse the absences of students that result from the following causes: illness of the student, or illness of a dependent as defined by Board of Regents policy on family and medical leave; religious observance (where the nature of the observance prevents the student from being present during the class period); **military obligations**; participation in university activities at the request of university authorities; and compelling circumstance beyond the students control. Students claiming excused absence must apply in writing and furnish documentary support for their assertion that absence resulted from one of these causes.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absences in courses where in-class participation is a significant part of the work of the course shall be handled by the instructor in the course in accordance with the general policy of his or her academic unit.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Suggestions for how your proposal could be put into practice:</b></p>	<p>This policy would be put into practice for students engaged in the military and would be disseminated to all veteran and active duty military service members, Reserve and Guard members via the Veterans Student Life unit to help them understand their opportunities within the confines of this policy.</p>
<p><b>Additional Information:</b></p>	<p>I take this action on behalf of the committee listed, as the Chair of the Veterans Services Steering Committee.</p>

***Please send your completed form and any supporting documents to [senate-admin@umd.edu](mailto:senate-admin@umd.edu) or University of Maryland Senate Office, 1100 Marie Mount Hall, College Park, MD 20742-7541. Thank you!***

## Appendix 3 - UMD Policy on Religious Observances

### III-5.10 (A) UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND POLICIES AND PROCEDURES CONCERNING ACADEMIC ASSIGNMENTS ON DATES OF RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

APPROVED BY THE PRESIDENT 1 AUGUST 1991; amended  
March 28, 2006

#### A. Policy

It is the policy of UMP that students not be penalized in any way for participation in religious observances. Students shall be allowed, whenever practicable, to make up academic assignments that are missed due to such absences. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor for each course in which work is missed, and make arrangements for make-up work or examinations.

##### 1. Procedure

The student is responsible for providing written notification to the professor within the first two weeks of the semester. The notification must identify the religious holiday(s) and the date(s).

The student shall hand the written notification to the instructor personally to avoid problems with collecting mail from mailboxes or e-mail. The process should be confidential.

##### 2. Examinations and Assignments

The make-up examination or substitute assignment must be at a time and place mutually agreeable to the instructor and student, cover only the material for which the student was originally responsible, and be at a comparable level of difficulty with the original examination. In the event that a group of students requires the same make-up examination or substitute assignment, one time and place may be scheduled. The make-up assessment or substitute assignment must not interfere with the student's regularly scheduled classes or in-class final examination.

##### 3. Classwork

Students are responsible for information and material missed on the day(s) of absence. Students absent for religious observance may request any materials given out during the absence. Students shall be given a reasonable time to make up class assignments.

B. Complaints

1. A student may file a complaint about an instructor who he or she believes has not complied with this policy. Such complaints should be:
  - a. in writing;
  - b. to the Department Chairperson;
  - c. state the specifics of the complaint.
2. The Department Chairperson shall review the complaint and meet with the instructor and the student to resolve the complaint.
3. A copy of the complaint is to be maintained by the Department Chairperson.
4. A student is not to be penalized in any way for filing a complaint.
5. If the student believes his or her final grade was affected by the filing of a complaint, recourse is available under UMCP Policy III-1.20(A), Procedures For Review of Alleged Arbitrary and Capricious Grading.

C. Academic Schedule

The President may specify certain dates within the academic calendar which, for reasons of religious observance by a large number of student and faculty, may not be used to administer examinations or tests, and may not be set as due dates for assignments.

To avoid the likelihood of religious observances scheduling conflicts, it is recommended that professors avoid scheduling exams or field trips on major religious holidays.

During orientation period, advisors and students should work together to avoid religious observances scheduling conflicts. When planning their classes, students should consider the likelihood that they might be absent multiple times from a given course. Students should choose lab and discussion sections accordingly.

D. Implementation

During the registration period, students will be informed of the policy and procedures through *Testudo*.

Instructors are encouraged to include a paragraph in their course syllabi describing the policy on religious observations. TAs should be informed of the above policy.

## Appendix 4 - UMD Policy on a Student's Medically Necessitated Absence

### V-1.00(G) UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND POLICY FOR A STUDENT'S MEDICALLY NECESSITATED ABSENCE FROM CLASS

APPROVED BY THE PRESIDENT 1 AUGUST 1991; AMENDED May 10, 2011

#### I. Policy

The University shall excuse class absences that result from a student's own illness. As explained below, the procedures and the documentation a student is required to provide to the class instructor for the purpose of obtaining an excused absence differ depending on the frequency of the absence.

#### II. Procedures

##### A. Medically necessitated excused absence from a single lecture, recitation, or lab per semester.

1. No written excuses or documentation from the Health Center shall be provided for absences from single lecture, recitation, or lab.
2. For a medically necessitated absence from a single lecture, recitation, or lab, students may submit a self-signed note to their instructor. Such documentation shall be honored as an excused absence unless the absence coincides with a Major Scheduled Grading Event. The procedure for a medically necessitated excused absence for a Major Scheduled Grading event is set forth below.
3. Any student who wishes to be excused for an absence from a single lecture, recitation, or lab due to a medically necessitated absence shall:
  - a. Make a reasonable attempt to inform the instructor of his/her illness prior to the class; and,
  - b. Upon returning to class, present their instructor with a self-signed note attesting to the date of their illness. Each note must also contain an acknowledgment by the student that the information provided is true and correct. Providing false information to University officials is prohibited under Part 9 (h) of the *Code of Student Conduct* (V-1.00(B) UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT) and may result in disciplinary action.

##### B. Non-consecutive medically necessitated absences from more than a single lecture, recitation, or lab.

1. At the beginning of each semester, the instructor shall establish a written policy for non-consecutive medically necessitated absences beyond a

single lecture, recitation, or lab.

C. Prolonged Absence from Classes and/or Absence from a Major Scheduled Grading Event

1. A prolonged absence is defined as multiple consecutive absences from a course during a semester due to the same illness.
2. "Major Scheduled Grading Events" shall be identified by the instructor in writing at the beginning of each semester.
3. Students who experience a prolonged absence(s), as defined above or an illness during a Major Scheduled Grading Event as identified in writing by the class instructor shall be required to provide written documentation of the illness from the Health Center or from an outside health care provider. In cases where written verification is provided, the Health Center or outside health care provider shall verify dates of treatment and indicate the time frame that the student was unable to meet academic responsibilities. No diagnostic information shall be given.

D. Resolution of Problems

A student who wishes to contest a decision not to grant a medically necessitated excused absence should first try to resolve the issue with the class instructor. If the issue is not resolved with the instructor, the student should seek the advice of the instructor's Department Chair; the Dean's Office of the Department's College; the Health Center Director; or the Department of Disability Support Services (DSS) Director, if the student is registered with the DSS, in order to identify the proper procedure for resolution.

## Undergraduate Catalog 2015-2016

### Attendance and Assessment/Examinations

#### Attendance

The University expects each student to take full responsibility for his or her academic work and academic progress. The student, to progress satisfactorily, must meet all of the requirements of each course for which he or she is registered. Students are expected to attend classes regularly, for consistent attendance offers the most effective opportunity open to all students to gain command of the concepts and materials of their courses of study. Except as provided below, absences will not be used in the computation of grades, and the recording of student absences will not be required of the faculty.

- In some courses, attendance and in-class participation are ongoing requirements and an integral part of the work of the course. In other courses, occasional in-class assessments may occur, sometimes without advance notice. It is the responsibility of the instructor to inform each class at the beginning of the semester of the nature of in-class participation expected and the effect of absences on the evaluation of the student's work in the course.
- It is the policy of the university to excuse the absences of students that result from the following causes: illness of the student, or illness of a dependent as defined by Board of Regents policy on family and medical leave; religious observance (where the nature of the observance prevents the student from being present during the class period); participation in university activities at the request of university authorities; and compelling circumstance beyond the student's control. Students claiming excused absence must apply in writing and furnish documentary support for their assertion that absence resulted from one of these causes.
- Absences in courses where in-class participation is a significant part of the work of the course shall be handled by the instructor in the course in accordance with the general policy of his or her academic unit.

#### Medically Necessitated Absences from Class

The University shall excuse class absences that result from a student's illness, provided the student complies with the procedures below. Procedures vary depending on the length and frequency of the absence and whether the absence occurs during a Major Scheduled Grading Event.

- **Major Scheduled Grading Events and Prolonged Absences.** Instructors shall identify in writing all Major Scheduled Grading Events pertaining to each course at the beginning of the semester. Students who miss a Major Scheduled Grading Event due to illness or who have a prolonged absence due to illness (multiple consecutive absences due to the same illness) shall be required to provide his or her instructor with written documentation of the illness from the University Health Center or from his or her own health care provider. The University Health



Center or health care provider shall verify dates of treatment and indicate the dates the student was unable to meet academic responsibilities.

- **Absences from Class.** Except during a Major Scheduled Grading Event, students may be excused from a single lecture, recitation or laboratory session one time per course per semester for a medically necessitated reason. The student should make a reasonable attempt to inform the instructor of his/her illness prior to the class, and present his or her instructor with a self-signed note attesting to the date of his or her illness. This note must include an acknowledgement: (a) that the information provided is true and correct, and (b) that the student understands that providing false information to University officials is a violation of Part 9(h) of the Code of Student Conduct.

- **Written Absence Policies.** Students who have more than one non-consecutive medically necessitated absence should comply with the requirements of the written absence policy applicable to each class. Instructors shall adopt a written policy addressing non-consecutive student absences for medically necessitated reasons at the beginning of each semester. Instructors should specify the nature of information and the documentation they require from students.

- **Resolution of Problems.** A student who wishes to contest a decision by the instructor should consult with the instructor's Department Chair and the Dean's Office of the college as necessary. [www.president.umd.edu/policies/docs/V-100G.pdf](http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/docs/V-100G.pdf) .

## **Assessment**

The chair, the director or the dean of the department, non-departmentalized school or college, as appropriate, is responsible for the adequate administration of assessments in courses under his or her jurisdiction.

No in-class assessment shall exceed the allotted time for a regularly scheduled class period. In the case of in-class final examinations, the time allotted shall not exceed the scheduled final examination period.

Each student shall be given the instructions and performance requirements for all assessments intended to require more than one-half class period in a form translatable to hard copy, unless the chair, the director or the dean of the department, non-departmentalized school or college, as appropriate, has authorized another procedure. The instructions and requirements of the assessment shall be archived in an appropriate medium in a suitable place.

Ordinarily, assessments are given during class hours in accordance with the regularly scheduled (or officially arranged) time and place of each course. No less than seven calendar days notice shall be given for assessments scheduled at other times and places. It shall be the instructor's responsibility to ensure that the change in schedule does not interfere with any students regularly scheduled classes or in-class final examinations. It is the responsibility of the student to be informed concerning the dates of announced quizzes, tests, and examinations. Performance assessments may take a variety of forms and need not be classroom-based written examinations.

The following rules shall govern all in-class examinations, unless the instructor for a specific course stipulates alternate rules for that course. A breach of any of the rules shall constitute disruption of class, a disciplinary offense (Code of Student Conduct, section 9.m.), or may serve as the basis of an allegation of academic dishonesty.

- a. Students arriving late for an examination may not unreasonably disrupt the examination room.
- b. Students must leave all unauthorized materials (e.g., books, notes, calculators) with the proctor before being seated.
- c. Where seating arrangements are established by proctors, student must conform to these arrangements.
- d. Students may not return to an examination room after leaving, unless permission to do so has been granted by the proctor prior to the student's departure.
- e. Students must cease conversation prior to the passing out of examination papers and maintain silence during the entire examination period.
- f. Students must place examination papers face down on the writing desk until the examination is officially begun by the proctor.
- g. Students must keep examination papers flat on the writing desk at all times.
- h. Students at an examination must be prepared to show current university identification.

**Final Examination:** A final examination shall be given in every undergraduate course. Exceptions may be made with the written approval of the chair, the director or the dean of the department, non-departmentalized school or college, as appropriate. However, a student's final course grade shall be based on a combination assessments that is at least the equivalent of a comprehensive final examination. No final examination or equivalent may be given or due during the last week of classes. All in-class final examinations must be held on the date and at the time listed in the official final examination schedule. Out-of-class final examination or equivalent assessments shall be due on the date and at a time listed in the official final examination schedule.

A student may seek to reschedule final examinations so that he or she has no more than three (3) examinations on any given day. It is the responsibility of the student to initiate the rescheduling or be responsible for taking the examination as originally scheduled. When rescheduling is desired, the student should first contact his or her class instructor(s). A student who encounters difficulty rescheduling examinations with his or her instructors is advised to contact his or her respective Dean's Office. Faculty members are expected to accommodate students with legitimate rescheduling requests.

Each faculty member is to retain, for one full semester after a course is ended, the students' final assessments in the appropriate medium. If a faculty member goes on leave for a semester or

longer, or leaves the university, the final assessments and grade records for the course must be left with the chair, the director or the dean of the department, non-departmentalized school or college, as appropriate.

**In the event of an excused absence:** The university provides students with excused absences the opportunity to reschedule significant assessments, except in cases where the nature of the assessment precluded the possibility of rescheduling, OR to perform a substitute assignment without penalty. An instructor is not under obligation to offer a substitute assignment or to give a student a make-up assessment unless the failure to perform was due to an excused absence (see Attendance). Students claiming excused absence must apply in writing and furnish documentary support for their assertion that absence resulted from one of these causes.

The student must notify his or her instructor of the reason for absence as soon as possible. Where the reason for absence from a scheduled assessment is known well in advance (for example, in cases of religious observance or participation in university activities at the request of university authorities), the student must inform the instructor by the end of the schedule adjustment period. Prior notification is especially important in connection with final examinations, since failure to reschedule a final examination before conclusion of the final examination period may result in loss of credits during the semester. Where the reason is not known well in advance (for example, in cases of illness or compelling circumstances beyond the students control), the student must inform the instructor as soon as the reason develops, or as soon as possible after its development.

Students who have a concern regarding religious observances should see their instructors at the start of the semester. Although the university attempts to accommodate the religious beliefs of all of its members, it functions within a secular environment and is limited in the extent to which it can interrupt its normal operations. The president shall determine when it is appropriate for the campus community to restrict rescheduling examinations or other significant assessments on the dates of religious observance. At this time, examinations or other significant assessments may not be scheduled on Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Good Friday, or the first two days of Passover.

The make-up assessment or substitute assignment must be at a time and place mutually agreeable to the instructor and student, cover only the material for which the student was originally responsible, and be at a comparable level of difficulty with the original assessment. In the event that a group of students requires the same make-up assessment or substitute assignment, one time and place may be scheduled. The make-up assessment or substitute assignment must not interfere with the student's regularly scheduled classes or in-class final examination.

In cases of dispute, the student may appeal to the chair, the director or the dean of the department, non-departmentalized school or college offering the course within one week from the date of the refusal to schedule a make-up assessment. In those instances where the instructor is the chair, director or dean, the appeal shall be made to the next higher administrative officer, whose decision shall be final.



1100 Marie Mount Hall  
College Park, Maryland 20742-7541  
301.405.5805 TEL 301.405.5749 FAX  
<http://www.senate.umd.edu>

MEMORANDUM

To: Charles Delwiche, Chair, Senate Academic Procedures and Standards (APAS) Committee

From: Ian Chambers, Past Chair, Senate Student Affairs Committee

Date: July 21, 2015

Re: Proposed Policy on Excused Absence (Senate Document #14-15-21)

---

I am writing on behalf of the Senate Student Affairs Committee (SAC) regarding its consideration of the Proposed Policy on Excused Absences charged to the Senate Academic Procedures and Standards (APAS) Committee and to the SAC on February 23, 2015.

The Student Affairs Committee was asked to review current policies and procedures related to various types of excused absences, consider a proposed Student Bereavement Policy, and discuss the impact of the proposal on student success, before submitting recommendations to the APAS Committee regarding the proposed language. The SAC reviewed the relevant documents and met with the proposer in March to gain a better understanding of the issues behind the proposal. After due consideration, the SAC completed its review on April 29, 2015. I have enclosed a few specific revisions to the proposed policy language with this memo, and I have outlined the committee's discussions and findings below.

***Suggestions on Specific Language Highlighted in the Proposal***

In its review, the SAC considered each of the highlighted language concerns presented in the proposal, but felt that in many cases, it would be difficult to find more specific language that would still be flexible enough to cover all courses at UMD. For that reason, the SAC would generally be comfortable using language such as "whenever practicable" and "reasonable time" in the final proposed policy.

The SAC considered the appropriate timelines for students to notify an instructor of absences that are expected at the start of a semester. The proposal suggested considering revising the deadline of "within the first two weeks of the semester" to instead reference the schedule adjustment period. As we discussed this issue, students on the SAC pointed out that undergraduates do not always keep track of when the end of the schedule adjustment period is, especially if they do not frequently add or drop courses during the start of the semester. Therefore, the SAC agreed that "within the first two weeks of the semester" is more appropriate for the policy language.

The SAC discussed at length the section on written notifications in the case of a prolonged absence or an absence occurring during a Major Scheduled Grading Event. The proposal suggested reconsidering the wording that states that the notification must come from a "verifiable source." The SAC could not find terminology that would be more appropriate, and as such has no suggestions for revising this language. However, the SAC did have general concerns related to this section, since it feels that non-comprehensive lists within policy documents can often cause conflicts for students. Members considered scenarios in which a prolonged absence could not be verified by the sources listed in the policy ("Health Center, Physician, Court Summons, Death Notice, etc"), and raised concerns that students could be disadvantaged by the language if faculty are not willing to consider other types of sources. The SAC recommends that

APAS consider removing the list entirely, stating instead that an appropriate source shall be required and shall be able to verify the dates of the absence. If APAS were to decide to retain the list, the SAC would recommend adding “including, but not limited to” in order to indicate that other sources are acceptable.

### ***Language Related to the Health Center***

The SAC briefly reviewed the history of the University of Maryland Policy for a Student’s Medically Necessitated Absence From Class (V-1.00[G]), since this policy language was used in large part as the basis of the new proposed Policy on Excused Absences. The SAC recognizes that many phrases within that policy referring to the Health Center were necessary in 2011 when the policy was revised to move from requiring medical excuse notes from the Health Center to the current practice of using “self-signed notes.” However, the SAC felt that these explanations and references are no longer necessary in the policy language, since the current practice has been established for four years and the Health Center is no longer involved in granting excuses for isolated absences. Therefore, in the enclosed policy revisions, the SAC has removed language in multiple sections related to self-signed notes and the Health Center. In addition, the SAC combined some language under 1.B. to streamline information about the process for notification.

### ***Academic Reasons for Excused Absences***

As it reviewed the policy language, members of the SAC raised concerns related to the list of causes for which a student can request an excused absence. The SAC noted that the list includes “participation in university activities at the request of university authorities,” which is often used for participation in athletic events. However, members pointed out that none of the reasons explicitly allow for participation in academic activities, such as attending a conference or participating in a company site visit that is related to a class but is not held during class time. Members of the SAC strongly agreed that activities such as these enhance a student’s knowledge and academic success, and should be valued by the University. While many faculty would likely be accommodating of requests for absences for these reasons, students are not currently ensured these opportunities by the policy. After much discussion, the SAC revised the language in the beginning of the policy to state that absences for “participation in academic or university activities” would be acceptable causes for an excused absence.

### ***Impact of Absences on Student Performance***

The SAC considered at length the impact of multiple excused absences on student success. Even in cases where all absences are excused for reasons provided for by the policy, the SAC recognizes that there may come a point where a faculty member would be unable to issue a final grade because the student cannot have successfully met the goals of the course. The SAC agreed that in these cases, students likely should be advised to withdraw from the course. The SAC felt that it would be impossible for the policy to set a threshold for absences after which withdrawal would be necessary; each course should have different expectations, and only faculty would be able to make the determination of where that threshold should be for a particular course. In the enclosed revisions, the SAC added language in 1.B.2. to give students and faculty some guidance towards this idea, stating that “If prolonged absences cause a student to be unable to achieve the goals and outcomes of the course, withdrawal may be necessary.” The SAC recommends that the APAS Committee address this idea further in its final recommendations.

### ***Absences Related to Bereavement***

In addition to reviewing the suggestions in the proposed policy, the SAC also discussed a proposed Student Bereavement Policy. Bereavement is certainly a valid reason to request an excused absence, and the SAC recognized that students can currently request an excused absence within the current guidelines, since such absences can be considered under the provision for “compelling circumstance beyond the

students' control." However, the SAC also recognized that faculty may not always be accommodating, since the policy language is not explicit. After discussion, the SAC agreed that University policy should make it clear that excused absences should be granted for bereavement purposes.

In reviewed the proposed Student Bereavement Policy, the SAC considered how to best address the issue of bereavement while staying true to the intent of the original proposal on excused absences. University policies and practices related to excused absences are currently described in different places depending on the type of absence, and the proposal under review was originally intended to create one umbrella policy to apply to all types of absences, to assist students in finding and understanding all policies and procedures. The SAC is very much in support of this goal, and as such, determined that language to include bereavement should be included in the proposed Policy on Excused Absences, rather than in a separate policy on bereavement leave for students.

The proposed Student Bereavement Policy specifically delineates how many days should be excused and what types of relationships should apply in these cases. The SAC discussed these details and felt that any such specific language should likely align as best as possible with current policies and procedures related to staff or faculty. However, after much discussion, the SAC agreed that within the structure of the proposed Policy on Excused Absences, it would be best to simply add language noting that the "death of an immediate family member" would be a cause for an excused absence and allow students to follow the same procedures as for other excused absences. This simplifies and streamlines the process, so the SAC agreed to include this language in the enclosed policy. However, the SAC also considered whether "immediate family member" is appropriate; for instance, students may have individuals very close to them who may not fit this definition, such as in cases where students were raised by neighbors or previously resided with cousins. The SAC could not agree on appropriate language to address this concern, and recommends that the APAS Committee consider this issue carefully in its review.

After concluding its consideration of this charge, the Student Affairs Committee was in agreement with the above suggestions and enclosed revisions to the proposed policy language. In the enclosed document, any changes agreed to by the SAC are highlighted and commented in blue. The enclosed still shows the original proposed edits in the colors used by the proposal.

The Student Affairs Committee respectfully submits this report for consideration by the APAS Committee, and looks forward to learning more about the APAS Committee's consideration of this issue during the 2015-2016 academic year. Please contact me with any questions or concerns that you or the committee may have. Thank you for your consideration of this report.

Enclosures:

- Student Affairs Committee Revisions to Proposed Policy on Excused Absences
- Student Affairs Committee Minutes from March 11, 2015 Meeting with Proposer

IC/seh

# Student Affairs Committee Revisions to Proposed Policy on Excused Absences

## Proposed Policy on Excused Absence

This draft is color coded to indicate that the text draws primarily from the language of existing policy:

- Policy III-5.10(A) on religious observances (Green)
- Policy V-1.00(G) on medically necessitated absence (Black)
- Undergraduate Catalog (Purple)
- Revisions (Red)

Highlighted terms are discussed in the attached comment document.

### Policy

It is the policy of UMD to excuse the absences of students that result from the following causes: illness of the student, or illness of a dependent as defined by Board of Regents policy on family and medical leave; religious observance (where the nature of the observance prevents the student from being present during the class period); participation in academic or university activities at the request of university authorities; death of an immediate family member; and compelling circumstance beyond the students control. Students shall not be penalized in any way for excused absences. Students shall be allowed, whenever practicable, to make up academic assignments that are missed due to such absences. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor for each course in which work is missed, provide appropriate written notification and make arrangements for make-up work or examinations.

As explained below, the procedures and the documentation a student is required to provide to the class instructor for the purpose of obtaining an excused absence differ depending on the frequency of the absence- and whether the absence occurs during a Major Scheduled Grading Event

### 1. Procedures

#### A. Excused absence timeline for notification

1. If the date to be missed is known at the start of the semester the student is responsible for providing written notification to the professor within the first two weeks of the semester.
2. If the date to be missed is not known at the start of the semester the student should make a reasonable attempt to inform the instructor in advance of the absence and upon returning to class present written notification.

#### B. Excused absence format for notification

**Comment [seh1]:** To include absences for attending/presenting at conferences, for example.

**Comment [seh2]:** To incorporate bereavement into the policy more explicitly, without going into too much detail.

1. Students must present written notification using the communication process indicated by the course instructor to be found in the course syllabus. The process for notification should be confidential
2. Written notification will be a self-signed note from the student. The notification must identify the reason for the absence and the date. Each notification must also contain an acknowledgment by the student that the information provided is true and correct. Providing false information to University officials is prohibited under Part 9 (h) of the Code of Student Conduct (V-1.00(B) UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT) and may result in disciplinary action. Such documentation shall be honored as sufficient documentation unless the absence results in a prolonged absence from classes and/or coincides with a Major Scheduled Grading Event. No written excuses or documentation from the Health Center shall be provided for absences from single lecture, recitation, or lab.
3. ~~Written notification for Non-consecutive absences from more than a single lecture, recitation or lab will be:~~
- 4.2. A prolonged absence from classes is defined as multiple consecutive absences from a course during a semester due to the same reason. If prolonged absences cause a student to be unable to achieve the goals and outcomes of the course, withdrawal may be necessary.
- 5.3. "Major Scheduled Grading Events" shall be identified by the instructor in the course syllabus at the beginning of each semester.
- 6.4. Students who experience a prolonged absence(s) as defined above or an absence during a Major Scheduled Grading Event are required to supplement the written notification with supporting documentation from a verifiable source. The source (including, but not limited to: Health Center, Physician, Court Summons, Police Report, Death Notice, etc) shall verify dates of absence and indicate the time frame that the student was unable to meet academic responsibilities. No diagnostic information shall be provided.

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**Comment [seh3]:** Combined 1 and 2 and streamlined language.

**Comment [seh4]:** Unnecessary because of shift away from requiring Health Center notes.

**Comment [seh5]:** The committee recognizes that if students miss a large portion of a course for an excused reason, faculty may need to advise that a student take a leave of absence or withdraw.

**Comment [seh6]:** The SAC recommends considering removing this list from the policy, as incomplete lists can cause confusion in policy documents.

## 2. Examinations and Assignments

The make-up examination or substitute assignment must be at a time and place mutually agreeable to the instructor and student, cover only the material for which the student was originally responsible, and be at a comparable level of



difficulty with the original examination. In the event that a group of students requires the same make-up examination or substitute assignment, one time and place may be scheduled. The make-up assessment or substitute assignment must not interfere with the student's regularly scheduled classes or in-class final examination.

### 3. Class work

Students are responsible for information and material missed on the day(s) of absence. Students absent for an excused absence may request any materials given out during the absence. Students shall be given a reasonable time to make up class assignments.

### 4. Resolution of Problems

A student who wishes to contest a decision not to grant a medically necessitated an excused absence should first try to resolve the issue with the class instructor. If the issue is not resolved with the instructor, the student should seek the advice of the instructor's Department Chair; the Dean's Office of the Department's College; ~~the Health Center Director;~~ or the Department of Disability Support Services (DSS) Director, if the student is registered with the DSS, in order to identify the proper procedure for resolution.

**Comment [seh7]:** The SAC agrees that this language is unnecessary.

**Comment [seh8]:** The SAC also feels this is no longer necessary.

If the student believes his or her final grade was affected by the filing of a complaint, recourse is available under UMCP Policy III-1.20(A), Procedures For Review of Alleged Arbitrary and Capricious Grading.

### 5. Religious Observance and the Academic Schedule

The President may specify certain dates within the academic calendar which, for reasons of religious observance by a large number of student and faculty, may not be used to administer examinations or tests, and may not be set as due dates for assignments. To avoid the likelihood of religious observances scheduling conflicts, it is recommended that professors avoid scheduling exams or field trips on major religious holidays. During orientation period, advisors and students should work together to avoid religious observances scheduling conflicts. When planning their classes, students should consider the likelihood that they might be absent multiple times from a given course. Students should choose lab and discussion sections accordingly.



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MEMORANDUM

To: Charles Delwiche, Chair, Senate Academic Procedures and Standards (APAS) Committee  
From: Adam Berger, Chair, Senate Student Affairs Committee  
Date: October 6, 2015  
Re: Charge Amendment to Proposed Policy on Excused Absence (Senate Document #14-15-21)

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I am writing on behalf of the Senate Student Affairs Committee (SAC) regarding its consideration of the amendment to the charge on Proposed Policy on Excused Absences that was sent to the Senate Academic Procedures and Standards (APAS) Committee and to the SAC in September 2015.

The Student Affairs Committee was asked to review a new proposal to include military obligations in the Proposed Policy on Excused Absences and to consider the impact of the proposal on undergraduate students. The SAC reviewed the proposal at its meetings in September and early October 2015. After consideration, the SAC recommends that the APAS Committee include military obligations in its final Proposed Policy on Excused Absences. This recommendation was unanimously agreed upon by the SAC members.

During its consideration, a few issues were raised that the Student Affairs Committee would suggest APAS take into consideration as it finalizes its work on this policy:

**Appropriate Language:** The SAC discussed how best to incorporate this into the proposed policy and felt that simply adding “military obligations” to the policy could be appropriate. However, the committee would recommend consulting with the Office of Veteran Student Life and the Office of General Counsel to ensure that the language is broad enough to encompass any type of responsibility that could be required of a student involved in national defense or military service.

**Application to International Students:** The SAC noted that the language as currently written would likely apply to international students who are called for military obligations in other countries. The SAC has no objection to this, but suggests that the APAS Committee may want to be aware of this during its review and consider whether consultation with the Office of International Student & Scholar Services would be necessary to understand the implications of this proposal for international undergraduate students.

AB/seh

## Appendix 8 - Peer Institution Research

Peer Institution Research – Excused Absence Policies (compiled by the Senate Office, 2015-2016)

### UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Policy/Guiding Document, Hyperlink: [2014-2015 Student Code](#) (governed by the Urbana-Champaign Senate and Chancellor)

Religious Observance Coverage: Excused absences include those resulting from "a student's religious beliefs, observances, and practices. (University policy and state law require that all instructors reasonably accommodate conflicts with class attendance and work requirements resulting from a student's religious beliefs, observances, and practices. Instructors shall hold all students who miss class for religious or University sponsored activities to the same standard. Accommodating absences for some groups but not others amounts to invidious discrimination and is against University policy."

Medical/Illness Coverage: Excused absences include those resulting from "illness." Because the Health Center does not provide medical excuses, instructors should be aware that a student may not be able to provide formal documentation for minor illnesses. For more serious or extended medical absences, the student should advise the instructor at the earliest possible opportunity. The student should provide supporting evidence for serious or extended medical absences as appropriate. The Dean of Students should serve as a resource when medical confidentiality might limit what can be shared with the instructor. Students who will be absent from classes due to an extended illness or hospitalization, or who are required to recover at home or other extended care facility, also should contact the Emergency Dean, Office of the Dean of Students, as soon as possible with this information.

Bereavement Coverage: Excused absences include those resulting from "death in the family."

Military Service Coverage: Absence due to active military service is only discussed in the section regarding extension allowances for removing course grades of "incomplete".

Academic/University-Sponsored Activities Coverage: Instructors must reasonably accommodate students whose class absence resulted from formal participation in scheduled activities of officially recognized groups such as athletic teams, performing groups, and the Urbana-Champaign Senate.

Other Coverage: Excused absences include those resulting from "other emergency, or other reasons beyond the student's control" are Covered. Also, University policy and state law require that all instructors reasonably accommodate conflicts with class attendance and work requirements resulting from a student's serving as an emergency worker.

Procedural Notes: The student must provide an explanation to the instructor and supply supporting evidence as required by the instructor. The student must make arrangements with the instructor to make up missed work expeditiously. The student may appeal in writing an instructor's decision for absence to the dean of the academic unit offering the course. Before taking action, the dean or director should request that the instructor explain his or her denial in writing. The instructor decides when a student's attendance becomes irregular. In this case, the instructor may send oral, written, or electronic notice of the student's irregular attendance to the dean of the student's college. The dean shall then notify the student by electronic, campus, or US mail. The notification may be in the following form: "[Faculty] has notified this office that your attendance in [course] has become irregular. Please contact the instructor immediately. The instructor may refuse to grade, return, or record any assignment, quiz, or examination until you have met with the instructor to discuss your attendance problem." If, after receiving such a notice, a student's attendance continues to be irregular, the instructor may

report this fact to the student's college dean. The dean of the student's college, in consultation with the instructor, may determine that the student's attendance has become so irregular that the student's scholarship is likely to be severely impaired. The dean may require the student to withdraw from the course with a grade of Withdrawal or Failure. A student may notify the Emergency Dean, Office of the Dean of Students, if the student will be unavoidably absent from class because of illness, death in the family, or other emergency. The emergency dean will pass this information along as is appropriate. The student's college may forward this information to instructors. This communication is meant for information and does not certify the validity of the student's reason for absence. Class absences before and after vacations are treated like any other absences during the semester. Regularly scheduled classroom or laboratory work shall have precedence over instructional field trips except on the second Saturday of each month.

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## **UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN, MADISON**

Policy/Guiding Document, Hyperlink: [Faculty Legislation, Academic Matters](#) (governed by the Secretary of the Faculty)

Religious Observance Coverage: Not discussed.

Medical/Illness Coverage: Not discussed.

Bereavement Coverage: Not discussed.

Military Service Coverage: Not discussed.

Academic/University-Sponsored Activities Coverage: Faculty and instructors are encouraged to extend reasonable consideration to accommodate students should their university-endorsed extracurricular activities, not including practice activities for performances or athletic events, conflict with class attendance requirements.

Other Coverage: Not discussed.

Procedural Notes: It is expected that students provide adequate and reasonable advance notice to faculty and instructors in order that they can ensure that an accommodation, if granted, not jeopardize or compromise the pedagogical goals and requirements of the course and students' learning.

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## **INDIANA UNIVERSITY, BLOOMINGTON**

Policy/Guiding Document, Hyperlink: [Indiana University Academic Guide](#) (repository for academic policies, governed by the Bloomington Faculty Council)

## Peer Institution Research – Excused Absence Policies (compiled by the Senate Office, 2015-2016)

Religious Observance Coverage: Indiana University respects the right of all students to observe their religious holidays and will make reasonable accommodation, upon request, for such observances. It is the policy of Indiana University that instructors must reasonably accommodate students who want to observe their religious holidays at times when academic requirements conflict with those observances. This policy is intended to ensure that both faculty and students are fully aware of their rights and responsibilities in the accommodation of students' religious observances. Students must make a request to the instructor for a reasonable accommodation for that observance by the end of the second week of the course. All instructors are encouraged to include on the syllabus and to announce at the beginning of the semester the policy and procedure as it applies to religious holidays. The Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs will prepare, for guidance, a list of dates of the major religious holidays. This list, policy, and a note to the effect that students wanting accommodations for observance of religious holidays must contact their instructors, will be brought to the attention of both students and faculty. The Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs will write regularly to the various deans and chairs, indicating that they, in turn, are to inform the faculty (including associate instructors under their supervision) concerning this policy and of the importance of observing it. If a conflict with a religious observance exists, a student must make a request to the instructor for a reasonable accommodation for that observance by the end of the second week of the course. Any relevant change to the course calendar affords a new opportunity to make such a request in a timely manner. The request is to be made in writing on a standardized form to be used for this purpose, and copies of that form will be made widely available. The instructor and the student should discuss what a reasonable accommodation should include in a given case. Generally, it is insufficient to require a student to forgo taking an exam or doing some other major assignment even if the instructor agrees to average the remaining exams or other assignments. The student must be given the opportunity to do appropriate make-up work that is intrinsically no more difficult than the original exam or assignment. If the instructor and student agree on the accommodation, the plan should be carried out. If after discussion there is no consensus on the accommodation, either party or both may ask the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs to mediate. The VPFAA will confer with both the instructor and the student, and may seek advice from anyone else who could provide helpful information. If the instructor and student still cannot reach consensus over the accommodation, the VPFAA will then make a determination about the appropriate accommodation. Either the instructor or the student may appeal the VPFAA's decision to the Office of Affirmative Action. Final authority for determining the outcome rests with the Provost.

Medical/Illness Coverage: Not discussed.

Bereavement Coverage: Not discussed.

Military Service Coverage: Veterans Support Services assists Indiana University students who are veterans, service members, or children or spouses of disabled veterans with University issues or concerns related to their military service, inability to attend orientation due to military orders, deployment during a semester, and delays in VA benefit payment and resulting financial hardship, among other issues.

Academic/University-Sponsored Activities Coverage: Not discussed.

Other Coverage: Not discussed.

Procedural Notes: Students who fail to attend the final exam of a class and who have a passing grade up to that point should be given an Incomplete only if the instructor has reason to believe the absence was beyond the student's control. If not, the grade of "F" must be awarded.

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## UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

Policy/Guiding Document, Hyperlink: [Senate Guidelines Concerning Scheduling Conflicts with Academic Requirements](#)

Religious Observance Coverage: When occasional conflicts arise, for instance, because of job-seeking, or athletic team-related activities, or religious observance, for instance, and the student has notified the instructor at the outset of the semester, including a statement concerning his/her proposed handling of the situation (e.g. attending an alternative section one week) and discussed the matter with the instructor or designated GSI, faculty should try to accommodate the student.

Medical/Illness Coverage: Not discussed.

Bereavement Coverage: Not discussed.

Military Service Coverage: Not discussed.

Academic/University-Sponsored Activities Coverage: Many extra-curricular activities in which students are the central participants arrange their performances, matches, debates, practices, and rehearsals to occur outside the hours students are regularly expected to be in class or to be taking final exams This is the preferred arrangement. When such activities are scheduled at times that classes and exams are regularly scheduled, students should be notified of that schedule (and of potential additional late-scheduled obligations such as tournaments and special performances) before they enroll in their courses for the term in question. Those music directors, coaches and others scheduling activities that require student absence from regularly-scheduled classes and exams should seek to minimize the number and the impact of these conflicts. The NCAA Bylaw 17.1.5.6.1, provides a useful template for all – Declaration of Playing Season: 2005-2006 Missed Class Guidelines: 1) No away competition should be scheduled during the first week of each semester unless the game is a Pac-12 conference scheduled game. 2) No home or away competition should be scheduled during Final Exam Week. 3) No away competition should be scheduled during Dead Days. 4) No departure for away competition may occur prior to the evening of the last day of Final Exam Week. However, if all team members have completed their final exams early, travel may occur after the last final is complete. 5) No travel (return trip from an away competition) scheduled during Dead Days. 6) No departure for an away competition earlier than 48 hours prior to the start of the actual competition and no return more than 36 hours following the conclusion of the actual competition. 7) In the sports of men's and women's basketball, a team may not leave campus before 3:00 p.m. the day before all away Pac-12 competitions. 8) No home competition starting times prior to 1:00 p.m. 9) When at all possible (depending on destination of trip and availability of flights) departure for all away competition will occur after noon. 10) No missed class time will be allowed for any practice activity.

Other Coverage: When occasional conflicts arise, for instance, because of job-seeking, or athletic team-related activities, or religious observance, for instance, and the student has notified the instructor at the outset of the semester, including a statement concerning his/her proposed handling of the

situation (e.g. attending an alternative section one week) and discussed the matter with the instructor or designated GSI, faculty should try to accommodate the student.

Procedural Notes: All major exams, papers, and project due dates, and field trips should be on the course syllabus and available to students the first day of class (or earlier if practicable). Faculty teaching courses that are structured so that this early notice is impossible or undesirable should accept the burden of accommodating students who have conflicts and who have notified their teacher of those conflicts in a timely manner. When circumstances change unexpectedly, resulting in event schedules changing during the semester, the music director, coach or other person scheduling the changed activity should consult the students involved to determine whether there will be any classroom conflicts and whether they can be resolved. The organizers should accept that students with unresolvable conflicts may not be able to participate in the rescheduled event. It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor (or designated GSI), in writing, before the end of the second week of term of all foreseeable conflicts between the syllabus (classes, exams, project due dates, field trips) and scheduled practices, matches, games, potential tournaments, interview weeks, performances, and other activities in which the student will be participating (or may be participating) that would require absence from academic activities during the semester, as well as to provide a proposal for resolving these conflicts. If unforeseen conflicts arise during the course of the semester students must promptly notify the instructor and arrange to discuss the situation as soon as these conflicts (or the possibility of these conflicts) are known. Similarly, if the music directors, coaches, and others who arrange these activities have stated policies concerning mandatory attendance punctuality, and participation, students involved in these activities must notify these individuals by the second week of term concerning academic conflicts or potential conflicts. If a mutually-satisfactory arrangement is not possible, the student may be dropped from the roster of that activity. If systematic conflicts occur that might, for instance, require a student to leave lecture or section early or arrive late on a consistent basis, and if, in the opinion of the instructor there is no mutually-workable solution, the student may be dropped from the class. Students are responsible for material covered during missed classes whether or not they have been formally excused; therefore it is the student's responsibility to inform him/herself about the material missed.

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## **UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, CHAPEL HILL (UNC)**

Policy/Guiding Document, Hyperlink: [2015-2016 Undergraduate Bulletin](#)

Religious Observance Coverage: Students are authorized up to two excused absences each academic year for religious observances required by their faith. Students who wish to request more than two excused absences in an academic year for religious observances required by their faith will need to contact their course instructors and request the additional absence, which will only be granted with the course instructor's permission. Primary holy days for religious observance are noted on a Web-based interfaith calendar site at [www.interfaithcalendar.org](http://www.interfaithcalendar.org). Students are responsible for providing a written notice for an excused absence for a religious observance two weeks in advance of the date requested or as soon as possible if the date occurs within the first two weeks of the semester. This policy also applies to students who have an excused absence for a religious observance during the summer. Students must be given the opportunity to make up tests and other work missed due to an excused absence for a religious observance. Make-up tests may entail an alternative examination, or other accommodation which allows the student not to be penalized for an excused absence for a religious observance.

Medical/Illness Coverage: Course instructors may excuse absences from class for illness (a student should present his or her explanation for any absences in writing to the course instructor in advance if the reason for the absence could be foreseen, or as soon as possible thereafter if the reason for the absence could not be foreseen).

Bereavement Coverage: Course instructors may excuse absences from class for family emergency (a student should present his or her explanation for any absences in writing to the course instructor in advance if the reason for the absence could be foreseen, or as soon as possible thereafter if the reason for the absence could not be foreseen).

Military Service Coverage: Not discussed.

Academic/University-Sponsored Activities Coverage: No right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings *except* for excused absences for authorized University activities or religious observances required by the student's faith.

Other Coverage: Not discussed.

Procedural Notes: Regular class attendance is a student obligation, and a student is responsible for all the work, including tests and written work, of all class meetings. No right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings except for excused absences for authorized University activities or religious observances required by the student's faith. If a student misses three consecutive class meetings, or misses more classes than the course instructor deems advisable, the course instructor may report the facts to the student's academic dean. Only course instructors excuse absences from class for valid reasons (illness or family emergency, religious observance, etc.). A student should present his or her explanation for any absences in writing to the course instructor in advance if the reason for the absence could be foreseen, or as soon as possible thereafter if the reason for the absence could not be foreseen. A student may appeal a course instructor's denial of a request that an absence be excused if the request to be excused from class and the reasons for the request are presented to the course instructor in writing within the time limits above. The appeal is to be made to the course instructor's immediate academic supervisor. Students who are members of regularly organized and authorized University activities and who may be out of town taking part in some scheduled event are to be excused during the approved period of absence. Notification of such an absence must be sent by the responsible University official to the course instructor before the date(s) of the scheduled absence.

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## UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Policy/Guiding Document, Hyperlink: [Makeup Work for Legitimate Absences: Twin Cities, Crookston, Morris, Rochester](#) (owned by Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education and Vice Provost and Dean for Graduate Education) “Students will not be penalized for absence during the semester due to unavoidable or legitimate circumstances. Such circumstances include illness of the student or his or her dependent, medical conditions related to pregnancy, participation in intercollegiate athletic events, subpoenas, jury duty, military service, bereavement, and religious observances. Such circumstances also include activities sponsored by the University if identified by the senior academic officer for the campus or his or her designee as the basis for excused absences. Such circumstances do not include voting in local, state, or national elections.”



Religious Observance Coverage: Yes (see above paragraph)

Medical/Illness Coverage: Illness, in general, is covered under the policy (see above). In the event that the University declares a pandemic emergency (e.g., flu), the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost or designee may waive the requirement that students are required to have documentation from a health care provider for illness.

Bereavement Coverage: Bereavement is covered (see above paragraph). However, relationships covered under this policy are at the discretion of the instructor. The death of a close family member is usually included in the absences related to bereavement circumstances. In addition, there may be other circumstances when a student is affected by the death of a person who was close to the student, and was not a relative (for example, the death of a roommate or friend). The student is responsible for explaining the circumstances and requesting to be able to make up the work.

Military Service Coverage: Yes (see above paragraph)

Academic/University-Sponsored Activities Coverage: Above policy states intercollegiate athletic events are covered. However, “Teams that wish to be officially excused from class can seek permission from the Provost. Students who have not been officially excused from class must get permission, in advance, from the instructor to miss class and make up the work. Instructors are not compelled to accommodate students who miss class for participation in athletic events or other university-sponsored events that are not intercollegiate events.”

Other Coverage: Instructors are expected to accommodate students who wish to participate in party caucuses, pursuant to Board of Regents resolution ([see December 2005 Board of Regents Minutes, p 147.](#))

Procedural Notes: The instructor has the right to request verification for absences. If a student believes he or she has been wrongly denied the opportunity to make up work due to disagreement with the instructor about the legitimacy or unavoidability of an absence, the student should pursue his or her complaint using the usual process for appeals of student grievances. A student must notify instructors of circumstances identified in (1) as soon as possible and provide documentation if requested by the instructor. This policy applies to all course requirements, including any final examination. Colleges and academic units may establish specific criteria for notice and completion of work to implement this policy.

Related Policies: [Mandatory Attendance at First Class Session and Consequences for Absence: Twin Cities, Crookston, Morris, Rochester](#); [Teaching and Learning: Student Responsibilities \(Twin Cities, Crookston, Morris, Rochester\)](#)

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## MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Policy/Guiding Document, Hyperlink: No official policy on excused absences. The [Attendance Policy](#) states that there is no university-wide requirement to attend class. This document is part of the [Academic Programs Catalog](#). The [Code of Teaching Responsibility](#) states that instructors must provide information to students in the course syllabi if a course attendance policy differs from the all-university policy.

Religious Observance Coverage: The [Policy on Religious Observance](#) states “It has always been the policy of the University to permit students and faculty to observe those holidays set aside by their chosen religious faith. The faculty and staff should be sensitive to the observance of these holidays so that students who absent themselves from classes on these days are not seriously disadvantaged. It is the responsibility of those students who wish to be absent to make arrangements in advance with their instructors. It is also the responsibility of those faculty who wish to be absent to make arrangements in advance with their chairpersons, who shall assume the responsibility for covering their classes.” Guidelines for planning can be found at <http://www.interfaithcalendar.org>. This policy is found in both the Faculty Handbook and the [Academic Programs Catalog](#).

Medical/Illness Coverage: Not discussed.

Bereavement Coverage: The [Grief Absence Policy](#) adopted by the University Council on [April 28, 2015](#) notes that “the faculty and staff should be sensitive to and accommodate the bereavement process of a student who has lost a family member or who is experiencing emotional distress from a similar tragedy so that the student is not academically disadvantaged in his/her classes.”

Military Service Coverage: Not discussed.

Academic/University-Sponsored Activities Coverage: Not discussed.

Other Coverage: None.

Procedural Notes: None.

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## **OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

Policy/Guiding Document, Hyperlink: Not found.

Religious Observance Coverage: Not found.

Medical/Illness Coverage: [Student Health Services](#) provides documentation of absences. The [Medical Excuse Absence Form](#) can be provided to instructors upon request.

Bereavement Coverage: Not found.

Military Service Coverage: Not found.

Academic/University-Sponsored Activities Coverage: Not found.

Other Coverage: Not found.

Procedural Notes: Class Absence Excuse form (non-medical) exists, but need OSU credentials to access it.

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## **RUTGERS UNIVERSITY, NEW BRUNSWICK**

Policy/Guiding Document, Hyperlink: The main [Course Attendance](#) policy is managed by the Office of Academic Affairs.

Religious Observance Coverage: The Course Attendance policy states that “recognized religious holidays” are grounds for absence, but does not specify what those holidays are. The policy states that the university will “excuse without penalty” students who are absent for religious holidays and will allow them to make up missed work. It also states that examinations should not be scheduled on religious holidays with the exception of clinical work.

Medical/Illness Coverage: Listed as number 1 under the grounds for absence section of the Course Attendance policy is an “illness requiring medical attention”

Bereavement Coverage: Not discussed.

Military Service Coverage: Not discussed.

Academic/University-Sponsored Activities Coverage: Listed as number 2 under the grounds for absence section of the Course Attendance policy is “curricular or extra-curricular activities approved by the faculty”

Other Coverage: The Course Attendance policy allows for absence for “personal obligations claimed by the student and recognized as valid” and “severe inclement weather causing dangerous traveling conditions”

Procedural Notes: The policy states that each college or school is responsible for designating someone to authenticate the reason for absence.

Rutgers maintains an online tool called the [Self-Reporting Absence Application](#) that students are encouraged to use to inform their instructor of a class absence. Use of this system does not guarantee the absence is excused. It is simply a notification system and students must work with instructors to make up work.

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## PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

Policy/Guiding Document, Hyperlink: [42-27 Class Attendance](#) and [44-35 Conflict of Non-Final Examinations](#) (Senate policies)

Religious Observance Coverage: [R-4: Religious Observances](#) notes that missing a class for religious reasons should be dealt with in accordance with the procedures outlined in E-11: Class Attendance.

Penn State University recognizes in its Framework to Foster Diversity that “the multiplicity of characteristics possessed by persons are not simply tolerated but valued” and that it is each individual’s obligation to cultivate a positive and inclusive environment.” This tenet is echoed in the University Strategic Plan goal to “create a more inclusive, civil, and diverse learning community.” Recognizing that the right of students to participate in religious observance is a fundamental element of diversity and a characteristic to be valued, Faculty Senate Policy 42-27 and AAPP E-11 state that “on occasion, students may opt to miss a class meeting in order to participate in . . . religious observance.”

In accord with these policies and core values, a student’s decision to miss a class to participate in religious observance shall be treated within the procedures of AAPP E-11.

Medical/Illness Coverage: This is classified as a legitimate, unavoidable absence in Senate policy 42-27. However, in E-11: Class Attendance, it says “Note: As of Fall 2002, University Health Services (UHS) no longer provides verification of illness forms for minor illnesses or injuries. Verification will be provided only for serious illnesses for which UHS clinicians provided services, or when UHS has received such documentation from outside providers.”

Bereavement Coverage: Not specifically mentioned, but it could fall under the “family emergency” category

Military Service Coverage: Not discussed.

Academic/University-Sponsored Activities Coverage: Instructors should provide, within reason, opportunity to make up work for students who miss class for regularly scheduled, University-approved curricular and extracurricular activities (such as Martin Luther King Day of Service, field trips, debate trips, choir trips, and athletic contests). However, if such scheduled trips are considered by the instructor to be hurting the student’s scholastic performance, the instructor should present such evidence for necessary action to the head of the department in which the course is offered and to the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled or to the Division of Undergraduate Studies if the student is enrolled in that division.

Other Coverage: Family emergencies are allowed

Procedural Notes: [E-11: Class Attendance](#) of the Academic Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual details the procedures for missing a class in accordance with Senate policy 42-27. [F-4: Conflict Non-Final Examinations](#) details the policies for missing an exam. In general, the student must fill out a [Class Absence Form](#) and obtain the approval of the person in charge in the sponsoring department.

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Students who will miss a class in accordance with Senate Policy 42-27, should, where appropriate, present a class absence form to the faculty member as soon as possible and, except in unavoidable situations, at least one week in advance of a planned absence. In the case of illness, students are not required to secure the signature of medical personnel.

Students should be provided with a reasonable opportunity to make up missed work. Ordinarily, it is inappropriate to substitute for the missed assignment the weighting of a semester's work that does not include the missed assignment. Completion of all assignments assures the greatest chance for students to develop heightened understanding and content mastery that is unavailable through the weighting process. The opportunity to complete all assignments supports the university's desire to enable students to make responsible situational decisions without endangering their academic work.

If an instructor believes a requested absence for such events will harm a student scholastically, the instructor should present evidence for necessary action to the head of the department in which the course is offered and inform the assistant/associate dean of the college in which the student is enrolled, or to the Division of Undergraduate Studies if the student is so enrolled. (E-11: Class Attendance)

When presented with the Class Absence form (or other appropriate documentation), faculty should provide the student with a make-up opportunity that ensures the promotion of learning. By providing evaluation similar to that given in the scheduled class or evening exam, faculty do not penalize the student who has a legitimate reason for being absent.

Faculty who may have difficulty scheduling an evening and/or non-evening conflict examination or quiz should contact their own department for assistance in locating an appropriate facility and/or proctor. (F-4: Conflict Non-Final Examinations)

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## UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

Policy/Guiding Document, Hyperlink: The University of Iowa Operations Manual [Chapter 8- Absences from Class](#). Examples from college-level policy: [College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Student Handbook Section on Attendances and Absences](#) and the [Tippie College of Business Attendance Policy and Excused Absences](#)

### Religious Observance Coverage:

University-wide policy: University regulations require that students be allowed to make up examinations which have been missed due to illness, mandatory religious obligations, or other unavoidable circumstances or University activities.

College-level policy: A student with a mandatory religious obligation that interferes with examination times must provide documentation to verify this obligation before it occurs in order to be permitted to make up the examination.

Medical/Illness Coverage: University-wide policy: University regulations require that students be allowed to make up examinations which have been missed due to illness, mandatory religious obligations, or other unavoidable circumstances or University activities.

College-level policy: CLAS instructors generally have the right to ask for documentation for most student absences caused by illness.

## Peer Institution Research – Excused Absence Policies (compiled by the Senate Office, 2015-2016)

- A student with a long-term illness (or generally those who miss more than five days of classes) should be able to provide a record of appointments or documentation from a health care provider, such as a note stating the student has been under the doctor's care.
- Students who do visit Student Health have access to their electronic medical records through MyChart. If they have activated this service, they are able to print off a summary of their appointment dates and times from MyChart. Faculty wishing for documentation for a long-term illness should accept a student's summary of visits as adequate documentation. Student Health is encouraging all students to activate their MyChart account during office visits and summer orientation. UIHC also provides this tool. Students are not required to share specific medical records since they are covered by privacy laws.
- A student who is absent for more than five days due to an emergency or an illness may request the Registrar's Service Center, 17 Calvin Hall, [registrar@uiowa.edu](mailto:registrar@uiowa.edu), to notify each instructor of the reason for the absence.

[2015 Memo from the Provost on Medical Absences from Class](#): Instructors cannot require a medical note for an absence due to illness. Students are encouraged to self-report using the registrar's website.

### Bereavement Coverage:

University- wide policy: University regulations require that students be allowed to make up examinations which have been missed due to illness, mandatory religious obligations, or other unavoidable circumstances or University activities. May fall under the category of "family tragedy" in the college-level policy: "Students with unavoidable circumstances such as a family tragedy or involvement in an automobile accident should contact their instructors as soon as possible or ask a family member to do so. The Registrar's Service Center, 17 Calvin Hall, 319-384-4300, will notify the student's instructors of the emergency. The student, if able, can also email instructors to notify them of the incident."

Military Service Coverage: Not discussed in University-wide policy. National Guard service is mentioned in the college-level policy, but there is no specific policy on military service.

### Academic/University-Sponsored Activities Coverage:

University-wide policy: University regulations require that students be allowed to make up examinations which have been missed due to illness, mandatory religious obligations, or other unavoidable circumstances or University activities.

College-level policy: Students participating in authorized University activities are expected to give each instructor a statement before the absence signed by a responsible official that specifies the dates and times the student will miss class. Authorized activities include participation in intercollegiate athletic teams, in the marching band and pep band, and attendance at events scheduled by recognized University groups (such as mock trial competitions).

Other Coverage: General. The desirability of wholesome interest in and enthusiasm for activities sponsored by the University is fully recognized. If this interest and enthusiasm should find expression in group activities, arrangements for such programs should be made through the proper administrative channels, should reflect the wishes of the entire student body, and should not interfere with regularly scheduled University classes.

Procedural Notes: Each College can establish its own rules for absences as long as they comply with the general university policy.

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The University of Iowa's Registrar's Office maintains an [Absence from Class](#) form that can be presented to an instructor should the student miss class.

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## UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA, LINCOLN

Policy/Guiding Document, Hyperlink: [Class Attendance Policy](#) (approved by the Faculty Senate)

Religious Observance Coverage: In recognition of the diversity of the student body, the University provides that a student may request an excused absence from class for participation in religious observances. In all such instances, it is the student's responsibility to request, preferably in writing, that the instructor excuse the absence and to discuss how the absence will affect the student's ability to meet the course requirements. A student should make any such requests by the end of the second week of classes.

Medical/Illness Coverage: In cases where a student is unable to contact his or her instructors due to major illness, serious injury, or hospitalization or when given military orders which are effective immediately, a notice may be sent to the student's instructors by a family physician or the Student Affairs Office, 106 Canfield Administration Building, (402) 472-3755. This notice is for the instructor's information only and does not relieve the student of contacting instructors as soon as possible.

Bereavement Coverage: Students grieving from a personal tragedy, such as the loss of a loved one, may need to be excused from a class, lab, studio meeting, or required class activity to attend a funeral or manage grief. It is the student's responsibility to contact the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs to request that a notice of his or her leave be sent to instructors. This notice is for the instructor's information only and does not relieve the student of contacting instructors as soon as possible. Upon his/her return, the student will provide documentation of the loss to each instructor and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. Consistent with course requirements, instructors should seek to make reasonable accommodations for the grieving student, and should attempt to provide the opportunity to earn similar or equivalent credit for missed assignments or assessments. However, students should recognize that not every course can accommodate absences and neither the absence (nor the notification of the absence) relieves them from meeting the course requirements. If the student is not satisfied by the execution of this policy by a faculty member, he or she is encouraged to contact the department head/chair, and if necessary, the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. Upon his/her return, the student will also be encouraged to visit the [Counseling and Psychological Services Office](#) in the UNL Health Center on City Campus or the [Family Resource Center](#) on East Campus to discuss the best methods of returning to normality and integrating once again into the classroom and college life.

Military Service Coverage: In cases where a student is unable to contact his or her instructors due to major illness, serious injury, or hospitalization or when given military orders which are effective immediately, a notice may be sent to the student's instructors by a family physician or the Student Affairs Office, 106 Canfield Administration Building, (402) 472-3755. This notice is for the instructor's information only and does not relieve the student of contacting instructors as soon as possible.

Academic/University-Sponsored Activities Coverage: Students involved in University-sponsored activities, including intercollegiate athletics, may need to be excused from a class, lab, or studio meeting. In all instances it is the student's responsibility to request permission for the absence (preferably in writing) from the instructor and to discuss how the absence will affect their ability to meet the course requirements. Students should do this as soon in the semester as possible. While instructors should seek to the greatest extent possible, consistent with course requirements, to make reasonable accommodation for a student involved in University-sponsored activities, students should recognize that not every course can accommodate absences and neither the absence (nor the notification of an absence) relieves them from meeting the course requirements.

Other Coverage: None.

Procedural Notes: Students are expected to attend all lectures, recitations, quizzes, and laboratories regularly. The University has no regulation which permits cutting class. You are responsible for the attendance policy set by your instructor and should clear absences directly with that instructor. [A Student Absence Form](#) is available for use.

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## **PURDUE UNIVERSITY**

Policy/Guiding Document, Hyperlink: [Classes](#) section of Purdue University Regulations (compilation of a number of University Senate Documents)

### Religious Observance Coverage:

#### Conflicts with Religious Observances

The University values a community with diverse backgrounds and traditions and recognizes that conflicts between regularly scheduled curricular activities and religious observances of some members of our community can arise. Instructors are encouraged to cooperate with students in dealing with work missed due to absences resulting from participation in religious observances.

Students requesting special consideration in scheduling are encouraged to make this known to instructors well in advance, minimize the length of the absence, and be flexible in arranging alternative times to complete any assignments they might miss. Students holding the opinion that they have wrongly been denied an excused absence or the opportunity to make up missed work due to an absence for a religious observance should contact the head of the department offering the course to attempt to resolve the conflict.

Medical/Illness Coverage: It is recognized that occasionally it may be necessary for a student to be absent from a scheduled course activity for personal reasons beyond his/her control (e.g., illness, family emergency, bereavement, etc.). The University expects each student to be responsible for class-related work missed as a result of an unavoidable absence; this work may be made up at the discretion of the instructor.

### Bereavement Coverage: Grief Absence Policy for Students (University Senate Document 10-6, March 21, 2011)

Policy Statement: Purdue University recognizes that a time of bereavement is very difficult for a student. The University therefore provides the following rights to students facing the loss of a family member through the Grief Absence Policy for Students (GAPS).



## Peer Institution Research – Excused Absence Policies (compiled by the Senate Office, 2015-2016)

**GAPS Policy:** Students will be excused for funeral leave and given the opportunity to earn equivalent credit and to demonstrate evidence of meeting the learning outcomes for missed assignments or assessments in the event of the death of a member of the student's family.

**Scope:** This policy applies to all full-time and part-time students currently enrolled in the Purdue University System.

**Immediate Family:** Students are eligible for up to three (3) days of excused absence over five (5) consecutive calendar days for the death of a spouse, parent, child, grandparent, grandchild or sibling, or a corresponding in-law or step-relative.

**Relative living in the student's home:** Students are eligible for up to three (3) days of excused absence over five (5) consecutive calendar days for the death of an uncle, aunt, niece, nephew or first cousin living in the student's home.

**Relative:** Students are eligible for one (1) day of excused absence for the death of an uncle, aunt, niece, nephew or first cousin.

In the event of the death of another family member or friend not explicitly included within this policy, a bereaved student should petition for grief absence through the Office of the Dean of Students (ODOS) by meeting individually with an ODOS staff member for case evaluation.

In addition, students may be granted additional absences to account for travel considerations, to be determined by the distance of the verified funeral services from West Lafayette, IN, as follows:

Within 150 mile radius of West Lafayette - no additional excused absence days; between 150-300 mile radius of West Lafayette - one additional excused absence days; beyond 300 mile radius of West Lafayette - two additional excused absence days; outside the 48 contiguous United States - four additional excused absence days.

A student should contact the ODOS to request that a notice of his or her leave be sent to instructors. The student will provide documentation of the death or funeral service attended to the ODOS. Given proper documentation, the instructor will excuse the student from class and provide the opportunity to earn equivalent credit and to demonstrate evidence of meeting the learning outcomes for missed assignments or assessments. If the student is not satisfied with the implementation of this policy by a faculty member, he or she is encouraged to contact the Department Head and if necessary, the ODOS, for further review of his or her case. In a case where grades are negatively affected, the student may follow the established grade appeals process.

### Military Service Coverage:

Military Absence Policy for Students (University Senate Document 13-4, March 24, 2014)

Purdue University recognizes that those who are actively serving in the Reserves or National Guard of the United States are required by their military contract to attend mandatory training through the Military Absence Policy for Students (MAPS).

Students will not be penalized for mandatory military training and will be given the opportunity to earn equivalent credit and to demonstrate evidence of meeting the learning outcomes for missed assignments or assessments in the event of a schedule or class conflict due to mandatory military training. It is

## Peer Institution Research – Excused Absence Policies (compiled by the Senate Office, 2015-2016)

the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester of the potential for mandatory military training conflicts. Students should expect that absences from heavier course loads will be more difficult to recover from than absences from lighter course loads.

Students are eligible for up to fifteen (15) days for military-required absences per academic year with no more than ten (10) academic calendar days taken consecutively, for their mandatory military training. Total absences, including travel, may not exceed 1/3 of the course meetings for any course. Students may be granted additional absences to account for travel considerations, to be determined by the distance of the verified military training from the Purdue campus, as follows:

Within 150 mile radius of the Purdue campus, no additional excused absence days.

Between 150 - 300 mile radius of the Purdue campus, one additional excused absence days.

Beyond 300 mile radius of the Purdue campus, two additional excused absence days.

Outside the 48 contiguous United States, four additional excused absence days.

A student should contact the Office of the Dean of Students (ODOS) to request that a notice of the leave be sent to instructors as soon as he or she is informed of the dates of mandatory military training. The student will provide documentation of the mandatory military training in the form of orders or equivalent documents as proof of legitimate absence to the ODOS as soon as these documents are available. If necessary, the ODOS may consult with the Veterans Success Center about the nature of the documentation. When documentation is presented to the Office of the Dean of Students, a verified absence notification will be sent to the student's instructors.

The student may provide verbal information about the leave to the ODOS and an unverified preliminary (non-MAPS) notice will be sent to instructors for planning purposes only. MAPS will be applicable only when the student has returned to the ODOS with substantiating documentation and ODOS has sent a verified absence notification to the instructors.

With a verified absence notification from the ODOS, the instructor will not penalize the student for missing class and will provide the opportunity to earn equivalent credit and to demonstrate evidence of meeting the learning outcomes for missed assignments or assessments. If the student begins to make up the work and is not satisfied with the implementation of this policy, he or she shall provide, within 10 days, a written statement to the professor clearly explaining their objection and suggesting an alternative accommodation. If the professor and student cannot expediently resolve this written objection, then the student may appeal for further review or consultation of his or her case to the Department Head, whereupon ODOS or the Veterans Success Center may become involved. In a case where grades are negatively affected, the student may follow the established grade appeals process.

Unique or variant exceptions should be dealt with in a negotiated manner between the student and professor, which may include involving the Department Head, ODOS, or the Veterans Success Center to review and consult on his or her situation.

In certain laboratory-based or intensive short-term courses, a student can jeopardize his/her academic status with an unreasonable number of absences, particularly in lab courses that cannot be made up later. In courses with extensive laboratory exercises, group projects, group performances, or participation requirements, equivalent exercises or assessments may not be possible as determined by the instructor and subject to review by the Dean of the school offering the course, or their designee. In such a case the student may be eligible for retroactive withdrawal. The student should always consult with the instructor to determine the potential impact of any absence.

Academic/University-Sponsored Activities Coverage: Not discussed.

Other Coverage: Not discussed.

Procedural Notes: Only the instructor can excuse a student from a course requirement or responsibility. When conflicts or absences can be anticipated, such as for many University sponsored activities and religious observances, the student should inform the instructor of the situation as far in advance as possible and the instructor should strive to accommodate the student. Individual course policies may state expected notification periods. For unanticipated or emergency absences where advance notification to an instructor is not possible, the student should contact the instructor as soon as possible by e-mail, phone, or by contacting the main office of the department that offers the course. When the student is unable to make direct contact with the instructor and is unable to leave word with the instructor's department because of circumstances beyond the student's control, and in cases of bereavement, the student or the student's representative should contact the Office of the Dean of Students. A member of the Dean of Students staff will notify the student's instructor(s) of the circumstances. The student should be aware that this intervention does not change in any way the outcome of the instructor's decision regarding the students' academic work and performance in any given course.

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## **NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY**

Policy/Guiding Document, Hyperlink: No university-wide policy was found.

Religious Observance Coverage: [Statement on Academic Accommodations for Religious Holidays](#) (Office of the Provost)

Although Northwestern University does not as an institution observe religious holidays, the academic calendar is designed to avoid conflicts with observed holidays, such as July 4, Memorial Day, Thanksgiving, New Year's Day, and Christmas. As the diversity of our community has increased, additional religious holidays now affect a significant number of students and faculty. Consistent with our commitment of creating an academic community that is respectful of and welcoming to persons of differing backgrounds, we believe that every reasonable effort should be made to allow members of the university community to observe their religious holidays without jeopardizing the fulfillment of their religious obligations.

In particular, we believe that:

- Faculty should provide course syllabi at the beginning of each term that specify dates of exams and due dates of assignments. Every effort should be made to avoid scheduling exams on religious holidays. (A calendar of religious holidays will be maintained on the Office of the [University Chaplain web site](#).) It is the responsibility of students to review these syllabi as soon as they are distributed and to consult the faculty member promptly regarding any possible conflicts. Upon the timely request of students, faculty members should, whenever possible, reschedule exams and assignment deadlines that fall on religious holidays. In some cases, it may be advisable for the student to change sections or courses.
- Students should not be penalized for class absences because of religious holidays. Students should notify the faculty member of conflicts due to religious holidays well in advance of any anticipated absence. If asked, the student should provide accurate information about the obligations entailed in the observance of that particular holiday.

## Peer Institution Research – Excused Absence Policies (compiled by the Senate Office, 2015-2016)

- Faculty should be permitted to reschedule class meetings that conflict with their observance of a religious holiday, assuring that appropriate advance notice is provided to both students and the department chairperson and/or dean.

In the past, issues such as those raised in this statement have been successfully handled by informal discussions among students, faculty, and administrators, when necessary. We hope and expect that such accommodations will continue to be made in the future. In the event, however, that agreement cannot be reached through informal means, the student or faculty member should bring the issue to the office of the relevant school dean or, if necessary, to the Provost's office. In the event that advice in resolving the issue is needed, the Provost may seek the counsel of a three person committee chaired by the University Chaplain and including a student nominated by the Associated Student Government and a faculty member nominated by the General Faculty Committee.

Holidays observed by many members of the university community include, but are not limited to: Rosh Hashanah; Yom Kippur; Sukkot; Passover; Shavuot; 'Id al-Fitr; 'Id al-Adha, and Good Friday. Information about these holidays and the dates of their observance is available on the [web page maintained by the University Chaplain](#). More detailed information is also available on this web site. Please note that Jewish holidays begin at sundown the evening before the date listed.

Medical/Illness Coverage: [Academic Work Missed for Medical Reasons](#) (Health Services)

Students who miss class or exams for reasons of illness (other than a final examinations) should:

- Notify your instructor(s) at the time of the illness and arrange for make-up work.
- Call 847.491.2204 for an appointment at the Health Service at the time of the illness.
- If you are seen for medical care outside the Health Service, contact the Health Service and submit records of care provided (not just a doctor's 'excuse note') for submission into your university health record.
- Sign a [release of information](#) (PDF) consent which permits the Health Service to share information about your illness to NU academic and Dean of Students' Office staff.

The Health Service does not write 'excuse' notes, but will verify that you have been seen for a medical problem if you have signed a release of information for student affairs and academic staff and your academic staff can then contact the Health Service at 847.491.2204.

Students who miss final examinations/projects/presentations for reasons of illness:

- Notify your instructors at the time of the illness and arrange for make-up work.
- Call 847.491.2204 for an appointment at the Health Service at the time of the illness.
- If you are seen for medical care outside the Health Service, contact the Health Service and submit records of care provided (not a doctor's 'excuse note') for inclusion into your university health record.
- Sign a [release of information](#) (PDF) consent which permits the Health Service to share information about your illness with NU academic and Dean of Students Office staff.

The Health Service compiles a list of students who miss final exams for medical reasons and sends the list to all academic deans and Dean of Students Office staff after the end of the final exam period each quarter. Academic staff may confirm illness during the final examination period by calling 847.491.2204. The Health Service cannot verify an illness or injury after the fact.

Bereavement Coverage: Not discussed.

Military Service Coverage: Not discussed.

Academic/University-Sponsored Activities Coverage: Not discussed.

Other Coverage: None.

Procedural Notes: None.

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## UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Policy/Guiding Document, Hyperlink: [Handbook for Faculty and Instructional Staff](#) (from the College of Letters, Sciences, and Arts); No university-wide policy was found.

Religious Observance Coverage: [U-M Guidance to Students Regarding Conflicts Between the Academic and Religious Calendars](#)

Although the University of Michigan, as an institution, does not observe religious holidays, it has long been the University's policy that every reasonable effort should be made to help students avoid negative academic consequences when their religious obligations conflict with academic requirements. Absence from classes or examinations for religious reasons does not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the course work required during the period of absence. Students who expect to miss classes, examinations, or other assignments as a consequence of their religious observance shall be provided with a reasonable alternative opportunity to complete such academic responsibilities. It is the obligation of students to provide faculty with reasonable notice of the dates of religious holidays on which they will be absent. Such notice must be given by the drop/add deadline of the given term. Students who are absent on days of examinations or class assignments shall be offered an opportunity to make up the work, without penalty, unless it can be demonstrated that a make-up opportunity would interfere unreasonably with the delivery of the course. Should disagreement arise over any aspect of this policy, the parties involved should contact the Department Chair, the Dean of the School, or the Ombudsperson. Final appeals will be resolved by the Provost. [Official Policy](#)

Medical/Illness Coverage: Absence from Class Due to Illness or Unanticipated Circumstances (College of Letters, Sciences, and Arts)

Students are expected to attend class regularly and meet all requirements set by the instructor. When a student misses class because of an illness or unanticipated event, it is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor and provide an explanation. In the case of documented short-term absence

due to illness or other unanticipated circumstance, instructors should provide reasonable effort to accommodate the student in a way that maintains the integrity of the class. Report My Illness website. LSA provides a website for students to self-report an illness and it is a centralized means of initial contact with all of a student's instructors. It is important for students to realize that this self-reporting does not constitute an excused absence and that instructors may request documentation to substantiate the absence. The email message that is generated to the student after self-reporting does point this out and indicates that it is the student's responsibility to contact their instructors directly about work missed during his/her absence. If the student's absence due to illness causes the student to miss an assignment, an exam, or any other required work for the class affecting the course grade, the professor has the right to require additional documentation verifying the cause of absence. The options available to make up that missed work may be limited and will be determined by the instructor within the limits of the course. Students are held to the expectations outlined in the LSA Community Standards of Academic Integrity when seeking any accommodation due to absence.

Bereavement Coverage: Not discussed.

Military Service Coverage: Not discussed.

Academic/University-Sponsored Activities Coverage: [Letter from the Provost](#) granting ability to make up work without penalty for students missing class that are representing the university. In order for him/her to represent the University of Michigan, he/she may miss a portion of your class. The student will bring you an individualized class excuse form that will explain the obligations that may result in missed assignments and tests as well as missed class time. Absence from class or examinations for these events does not, in any way, relieve the student from responsibility for coursework and required course activities during the period of absence. When students are absent from class on behalf of the University, it is my expectation that you and the student will make alternative arrangements for fulfilling class assignments. The alternative arrangements should not unduly inconvenience either you or the student.

Other Coverage: None.

Procedural Notes: None.

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## **UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES**

Policy/Guiding Document, Hyperlink: No official policy found. According to various syllabi found online, it appears that it is up to the individual instructor to decide on excused absences.

Religious Observance Coverage: [Policy on Alternate Examination Dates](#) (UCLA Catalog)

In compliance with [Section 92640\(a\) of the California Education Code](#), the University must accommodate requests for alternate examination dates for any test or examination at a time when that activity would not violate a student's religious creed. This requirement does not apply in the event that administering the test or examination at an alternate time would impose an undue hardship that could not reasonably be avoided. Accommodation for

Peer Institution Research – Excused Absence Policies (compiled by the Senate Office, 2015-2016)

alternate examination dates are worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the faculty member involved. In general, students should make such requests of the instructor during the first two weeks of any given academic term, or as soon as possible after a particular examination date is announced by the instructor. Students unable to reach a satisfactory arrangement with their instructor should contact the Office of Ombuds Services, 105 Strathmore Building, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 1206 Murphy Hall, for assistance. Instructors who have questions or who wish to verify the nature of the religious event or practice involved should contact the Office of Ombuds Services or the Office of the Dean of Students for assistance.

Medical/Illness Coverage: Not found.

Bereavement Coverage: Not found.

Military Service Coverage: Not found.

Academic/University-Sponsored Activities Coverage: Not found.

Other Coverage: Not found.

Procedural Notes: Not found.

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