

D170: Student Attendance

Approved By: Faculty Senate

Last Updated: **Draft 9/9/19**

Responsible Faculty Committee: Faculty Senate Policy Committee

Office Responsible for Administration: Dean of Students

Legend: Proposed changes are highlighted in **red**. Recent changes to address campus comments are shaded in **gray**.

Revisions to the Policy Rationale, Policy Statement, and Applicability sections of this document must be approved by the full Faculty Senate.

POLICY RATIONALE

Class attendance is critical for the overall success of the students at the University of New Mexico (UNM). However, there are situations when a student may qualify for an excused absence and be provided with the opportunity to make up assignments or examinations missed. This Policy describes absences that normally qualify as excused absences and provides the process for reporting such absences and completing missed assignments and exams.

POLICY STATEMENT

The absences listed below are normally excused unless the instructor determines that the absences are excessive or adversely impact learning, or fundamentally threaten the integrity of the class. An excused absence does not relieve the student of responsibility for missed assignments, exams, etc. The student is to take the initiative in arranging with the ~~his/her~~ instructor to make up missed work, and it is expected that the instructor ~~faculty member~~ will cooperate with the student in reasonable arrangements in this regard. ~~Students should have the opportunity to make up any assignments or examinations missed. Instructors should provide an opportunity to make up an assignment or test and not limit the accommodation to dropping the lowest test or assignment grade.~~ However, the student must recognize that some classes or class-work (quizzes, seminars, ~~small~~ labs, etc.) cannot be made up. Classes or class-work that cannot be made up will be identified in the syllabus.

To ensure equitable treatment of students, when there is concern on the type of absences that should be excused and reasonable accommodations for such absences, instructors are encouraged to consult with their chair or dean, or the Dean of Students or equivalent position designated for graduate or professional schools or colleges and branch community colleges.

1. UNM Official Absences

Instructors should excuse absences due to UNM official absences which result when a student is required to represent UNM at University functions or related extracurricular activities such as professional meetings, academic competitions, field trips, research activities, NCAA athletic competitions, or other similar activities. UNM Official Absence(s) will be determined by a college dean or the Provost, or designee.

2. Legally or Administratively Compelled Absence(s)

Instructors ~~should~~ must excuse absences due to a legally or administratively compelled absence when a student is required to participate in legal proceedings or administrative procedures. This includes mandatory admissions interviews for professional or graduate school, or mandatory internships that cannot be rescheduled.

3. Military Obligations

Instructors ~~should~~ must excuse absences due to military obligations for students serving in the military, military reserves, or National Guard of the United States who are required to miss class due to military obligations. If the military obligations require withdrawal, ~~in recognition of the service of deployed military personnel,~~ the instructor should refer to the *UNM Catalog* or contact the Dean of Students Office or equivalent position for graduate or professional schools or colleges and branch community colleges for procedures pertaining to withdrawal and re-enrollment of military personnel.

4. Illness, Accident, or Death in the Family

Instructors should excuse unexpected absences due to personal or family illness, accident, or death in the family. Instructors may require students who are ill for ~~more than fifteen percent (15%) of required contact hours~~ ~~six (6) class days or longer~~ to obtain official notification from the Dean of Students office or equivalent position designated for graduate or professional schools or colleges and branch community colleges.

5. Disability

Instructors ~~should~~ must excuse absences due to disabilities where reasonable. Such requests must be processed in accordance with University Administrative Policy **2310** "Academic Adjustments for Students with Disabilities." ~~although instructors may require students to provide confirmation from the Accessibility Resource Center for ADA-protected disabilities.~~ For a short-term disability due to an illness or injury not covered by the ADA, students should contact the Dean of Students Office or equivalent position designated for graduate or professional schools or colleges and branch community colleges for assistance. They can also assist instructors with verification of the short-term disability.

5.1. Attendance Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

Attendance during scheduled class times is a necessary part of the learning process. The Accessibility Resource Center (ARC) may recommend flexibility in attendance for some students. This accommodation should be provided unless the accommodation threatens

the integrity of the course as offered. The following six factors should be used in considering if attendance is an essential element of the course and the flexibility in attendance recommended is not considered a reasonable accommodation:

1. Are there classroom interactions between the instructor and the students and among the students?
2. Do student contributions constitute a significant component of the learning process?
3. Does the functional nature of the course rely on student participation as an essential method for learning?
4. To what degree does a student's failure to attend constitute a significant loss to the educational experience of the other students in the course?
5. What do the course description and syllabus say?
6. What are the classroom practices and policies regarding attendance?

If an instructor disagrees with the determination by ARC, the instructor should follow the procedures listed in University Administrative Policy **2310** "Academic Adjustments for Students with Disabilities."

6. Pregnancy

In accordance with Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, instructors ~~should~~ must treat pregnancy related absences as excused as long as deemed medically necessary by the student's healthcare provider. If the length of absence is more than fifteen percent (15%) of required contact hours ~~six (6) class days or longer~~, the student may be required to obtain official notification from the Dean of Students Office or equivalent position designated for graduate or professional schools or colleges and branch community colleges. If instructors have any questions, they may contact the UNM Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO)

7. Religious Observances

In recognition of UNM's diverse student population, instructors are encouraged to schedule important class events to minimize conflict with major religious observances. Students who request that an absence be excused for religious reasons ~~should~~ must be granted reasonable accommodations. Instructors should be sensitive to the difficulty some students may have anticipating all religious obligations. Absences due to religious accommodations should be requested in accordance with Policy **C260** "Religious Accommodations." ~~the faculty member will cooperate with the student in reasonable arrangements in this regard.~~

3. Request for Reconsideration

If a request for an excused absence and/or reasonable accommodation is denied by an instructor, the student may seek informal resolution of the matter by submitting a request for reconsideration to the department chair, program/course director, or equivalent position or designee. ~~college/school dean~~. Given the need for timeliness of the issue, the student's request for reconsideration should be addressed as expeditiously as possible. This does not preclude the student from addressing the matter further in accordance with Policies **D175**

“Undergraduate Student Conduct and Grievance Policy” or **D176** “Graduate and Professional Student Conduct and Grievance Policy.”

APPLICABILITY

All academic UNM units, including the Health Sciences Center and Branch Community Colleges.

Revisions to the remaining sections of this document may be amended with the approval of the Faculty Senate Policy Committee and Operations Committee.

DEFINITIONS

WHO SHOULD READ THIS POLICY

- Instructors
- Staff in Office of the Dean of Students
- Staff at Student Health and Counseling (SHAC)
- Administrative staff responsible for student events

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Faculty Handbook

Policy C220 “Holidays”

Policy C260 “Religious Accommodations”

D175 “Undergraduate Student Conduct and Grievance Policy”

D176 “Graduate and Professional Student Conduct and Grievance Policy.”

The Pathfinder—UNM Student Handbook. “Student Grievance Procedures”

CONTACTS

Direct any questions about this policy to Dean of Students Office or equivalent position designated for graduate or professional schools or colleges and branch community colleges.

PROCEDURES

The following procedures pertain to undergraduate students at the Albuquerque campus. Branch community college, graduate, and professional students should follow the attendance procedures issued by their respective school or college, when available.

Absences due to the situations described in the Policy Statement above ~~illness or to attend~~ authorized University activities such as field trips, athletic trips, etc. are to be reported by the student to

his/her instructor and to the Dean of Students Office in accordance with the procedures listed herein. If the student is unable to contact his/her the instructor, the student should leave a message at the instructor's department.

1. Course Attendance Expectations

Students are expected to fulfill all course requirements including attendance if specified. ~~attend all meetings of the classes in which they are enrolled. No extensions of the vacation periods are given to any students, regardless of the location of their homes.~~ Course instructors are responsible for setting attendance policies for their individual courses except where academic units, required by special circumstances such as accreditation standards, establish unit-wide policies through normal faculty governance procedures. Instructors should inform students of their expectations for attendance and participation on the first day of class and are encouraged to include this Policy in the course syllabus. Instructors may also require students to notify them of anticipated absences at the beginning of the semester and may require reasonable verification of the reason for an excused absence such as a doctor's note, hospital billing, military orders, or death notices.

Instructors may drop students with excessive absences with a grade of W ~~W/P or W/F.~~ The instructor. They may also assign a failing grade of "F" at the end of the semester for excess unexcused absences, but should inform students if they will be dropped or penalized for unexcused absences. Academic units may also reserve the right to cancel a course reservation for a student who does not attend the first class meeting of the semester, although notification should be made before the student is dropped and reasonable accommodations should be made for excused absences. ~~Instructor drop request forms are available at all academic department offices.~~ Students should not assume that nonattendance results in being dropped from class. It is the student's responsibility to initiate drops or complete withdrawals within published deadlines utilizing the appropriate process.

2. Verification of Absence

Verification (such as doctor's note, hospital billing, military orders, death notices, etc.) of a student's report of absence will be provided by the student if requested ~~on request~~ by the instructor or the Dean of Students Office. ~~and in accordance with the following general procedures.~~ Student Athletes shall submit documentation to their instructors.

3. Short-Term Absence (Less than or Equal to 15% of Required Contact Hours) ~~(1–5 class days)~~

When notified in advance of an absence of 1–4 days, the Dean of Students Office will prepare an absence notice which the student may pick up and personally deliver to his/her instructor(s). On absences of 1–4 days reported to the Dean of Students Office after the fact, an absence notice may be picked up by the student after consultation with a dean, if such consultation provides a basis for issuing a notice. The Dean of Students Office will encourage the student to speak directly with the instructor to work out absences that are less than fifteen percent (15%) of required contact hours ~~six (6) class days.~~ When requested by an instructor, the Dean of Students Office may assist with verification of absences that are less than or equal to 15% of required contact hours ~~six (6) class days on a case-by-case basis.~~

4. Extended Absence (More than 15% of Required Contact Hours) ~~5–Six (6) days or longer).~~

The Dean of Students Office, as a service to instructors and students, will send absence notifications to the respective instructor should an absence be more than fifteen percent (15%) of required contact hours longer than five (5) class days. This service will only be utilized when an absence is for a family/student medical issue, death of a family member, military leave, or a UNM sponsored activity. The absence notification process is only meant as a notification and not meant to excuse the absence. Excusing an absence is entirely up to the instructor of the course. ~~notices to instructor(s) on absences of 5 days or longer when notification of the absence is received prior to or at the onset of the absence. If notified after the absence, the absence notice will be prepared, but the student must hand carry the notice to his/her instructor(s).~~ Verification of extended absences is recommended (such as a doctor's note, hospital billing, etc.)

5. Exceptions. ~~On request, members of the Dean of Students staff will review specific absence situations to determine if exceptions to the established absence procedures are warranted.~~

It should be noted that written medical excuses for class absence will not be issued routinely by Student Health and Counseling (SHAC) ~~the Student Health Center~~ except in the case of physical education classes, where participation would be detrimental to the student's condition. Where confirmation of a student's attendance at SHAC ~~the Health Center~~ is required by an instructor member of the teaching staff, this will be furnished on direct inquiry, without revealing the medical details necessitating such attendance. If it appears that a student will be absent for more than 15% of required contact hours five class days ~~a week or more~~, the Dean of Students Office will be notified.

HISTORY

Effective:

Unknown (effective date not listed in current policy.)

DRAFT HISTORY

September 9, 2019—Draft revised to address campus comments.

November 11, 2018 – Draft revised for Policy Committee changes.

September 5, 2018 –Draft revised to refine policy revisions further.

June 27, 2018 – Draft revised to address different procedures for graduate and professional students and branch community colleges.

April 28, 2017 -- Draft revised for task force recommendations. April 4, 2017 – Draft revised for task force recommendations.

September 29, 2016 – Draft revised to incorporate input from FSPC member L. Oakes.

January 2, 2016—Draft developed to address COF task force recommendations.

July 19, 2015 Draft developed for Information Items taskforce review.