

**UNC-Chapel Hill Faculty Governance**  
**Educational Policy Committee**  
**DRAFT February 1, 2018**

Dear Colleagues,

We received approval from the EPC in January to move forward and present this policy change to Faculty Council for approval. If possible, approval at the February meeting will allow time for the development of 1) communication for faculty and students, 2) support assessment resources, and 3) the University Approved Absence Office and staff.

We seek to revise and clarify the [current class attendance policy](#) because:

- All Carolina students should have equitable access to learning and assessment opportunities.
- When considering University Approved Absences, we should balance the rights of students and instructors. Students have the right to be evaluated fairly, and faculty have the right to maintain reasonable expectations related to making accommodations for University Approved Absences.
- The policy on University Approved Absences should emphasize clarity, equity and accountability.

It is our objective that the revised policy, and its implementation with a new centralized **University Approved Absence Office**, will clarify students' and instructors' understanding of University Approved Absences, and will provide resources for faculty to implement the policy fairly and equitably.

Please find below a newly **DRAFTED** policy, based on suggestions based on conversations that we've had with numerous campus stakeholders, including students, the University Policy Review Committee, Continuing Education, the EOC, the Office of Student Conduct, and the Office of the Dean of Students which ultimately will manage the University Approved Absence Office on behalf of the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor.

**The EPC would like to present this policy for approval at the February 2018 Faculty Council meeting.**

Thank you again for your consideration.

All the best,

Joy Renner, Director of the Division of Radiologic Science, UNC-CH School of Medicine

Debbi Clarke, Consultant to the Provost, Office of the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor

**DRAFT February 1, 2018**

**Proposed revisions** to the policy regarding Class Attendance & University Approved Absences

To be amended to the University Catalog <http://catalog.unc.edu/policies-procedures/attendance-grading-examination/>

### **Class Attendance Policy**

This policy applies only to **University Approved Absences**, which are listed below. For absences related to Final Examinations see <http://www.catalog.unc.edu/policies-procedures/attendance-grading-examination/#text>.

Regular class attendance is a student obligation. Students are responsible for all of their work, including assessments, tests and written work, and for all class meetings. If a course instructor chooses to take attendance and sees that a student misses three or more consecutive class meetings or misses more classes than the course instructor thinks advisable, the instructor may report the facts to the student's advisor or academic dean.

No right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings, except for these **University Approved Absences**:

1. Authorized University activities;
2. Disability/religious observance\*/pregnancy, as required by law and approved by [Accessibility Resources and Service](#) and/or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office \(EOC\)](#)
3. Significant health condition and/or personal/family emergency as approved by the [Office of the Dean of Students](#), [Gender Violence Service Coordinators](#) and/or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#).

Instructors work with students in meeting attendance needs that do not fall within University Approved Absences. In situations when an absence is not University Approved (e.g., due to a job interview or club activity), instructors determine their own approach to missed classes and make-up assessments and assignments.

The University's policy regarding University Approved Absences as well as the instructor's course-level policies are communicated to students via the instructor's [course syllabus](#) on the first day of class.

Students are encouraged to communicate early and often with their instructors and are reminded that they are bound by the [Honor Code](#) always to be honest in making a request for a University Approved Absence.

### **Notification of University Approved Absences**

1. **Authorized University Activities:** Students acting as official representatives of the University who are participating in University-sanctioned activities (e.g., student

government congresses, official athletic competitions, music competitions, academic conferences, etc.) will be granted a University Approved Absence.

Request for approval of an absence due to participation in a University-sanctioned activity must be sent by the program sponsor or other responsible University official to the **University Approved Absence Office** which will verify the validity of the request. The program sponsor, or other responsible University official, is responsible for contacting the University Approved Absence Office to request a University Approved Absence for University-sanctioned activity, when possible at least two weeks in advance of the date(s), or as soon as possible if the date(s) occurs within the first two weeks of the semester, or within the first two days of a summer session. This policy applies to Fall, Spring and Summer terms. The University Approved Absence Office communicates the University Approved Absence to the course instructor prior to the date(s) of the scheduled absence(s). The request may be for a single activity or series of activities, but it must include the student name and date of the event, the date and time when the student is expected to be absent, and the date and time that the student is expected to return to class.

**2. Accommodations for disability/religious observance/pregnancy, as required by law:**

- A. [Accessibility Resources and Service](#) verifies University Approved Absences for students who have been identified and provided services by their office. ARS contacts those students' instructors directly.
  
- B. **Religious Observance:** Pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 116-11(3a),\* students are authorized at least two University Approved Absence(s) per academic year for [religious observance/practices](#) required by their faith. Students who wish to request University Approved Absences for religious observance required by their faith should review the [University's Policy on Religious Accommodation](#) and follow the procedure set out in that Policy for requesting such absences. After an absence is approved under that Policy, the University Approved Absence Office communicates the University Approved Absence to the course instructor(s) prior to the date(s) of the scheduled absence(s).

Students are responsible for contacting the Religious Accommodations Advisory Committee to request a University Approved Absence for religious observance at least two weeks in advance of the date(s), or as soon as possible if the date(s) occurs within the first two weeks of the semester. This policy applies to Fall, Spring and Summer terms.

Primary holy days for religious observance are noted on a [web-based interfaith calendar](#). The web-based calendar should **not** be interpreted as an exhaustive

list of holy days that the University will recognize for purposes of religious accommodations.

- C. Pregnancy and Related Medical Conditions:** Students who wish to request University Approved Absences for pregnancy and related medical conditions should review the University's Policy on Pregnant and Parenting Students (link to be inserted) and should contact the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#) for approval. After an absence is approved under that Policy, the University Approved Absence Office will communicate the University Approved Absence to the course instructor(s) prior to the date(s) of the scheduled absence(s).
- 3. Significant health condition and/or personal/family emergencies as approved by the [Office of the Dean of Students](#), [Gender Violence Service Coordinators](#) and/or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#).** Once the Office of the Dean of Students, Gender Violence Service Coordinators and/or the EOC has approved the information, they will then request that the University Approved Absence Office issue a University Approved Absence notification to the student's instructor(s). The University Approved Absence Office will inform the course instructor in advance if the reason for the University Approved Absence is planned, or as soon as possible if the reason for the absence was not foreseen.

Instructors will not receive further explanation or clarification of University Approved Absences beyond notification from the University Approved Absence Office.

### **Make-up Coursework and Assessments**

All students with University Approved Absences will be treated fairly and equitably, regardless of the reason for the absence.

Instructors will provide reasonable alternatives that permit course objectives and learning outcomes to be met. Alternatives may include a make-up exam, alternative assessment, an additional paper or project of equivalent intellectual effort, an electronically-mediated participation opportunity, a due date extension, or other option that allows students to demonstrate what they have learned without being penalized for the University Approved Absence. It is a University expectation that instructors be prudent, fair and equitable when a student misses an assessment due to a University Approved Absence. Course policies should avoid inequities, including discrepancies in preparation time for in-class versus make-up exams, missed opportunities to take and learn from an assessment, and policies that penalize students who must use their dropped grade option for a University Approved Absence.

The [Undergraduate Testing Center](#) provides a secure, proctored environment for administration of makeup assessments, tests and exams for undergraduate and graduate courses throughout each term. There are regularly scheduled session times each week in addition to the Center's traditional use during final exams time. Please see the

center's [website](#) for more information and instructions as well as [teaching and learning resources provided by the Center for Faculty Excellence](#).

[A resource link for instructors and students will be available when the new policy is implemented in fall 2018; including Testing Center, Center for Faculty Excellence info on assessments, University syllabus policy and template, resources for students, etc.]

## Appeals

Given the swift and cumulative nature of a semester, an instructor should contact a student with a preliminary alternative plan within three business days of receiving notification of a University Approved Absence, or sooner if the absence takes place during a summer term. The student must respond to the instructor within two business days of receiving the alternative plan and discuss details with the instructor. After receiving the final alternative plan from the instructor, if a student feels that a reasonable alternative was not provided, they may submit an appeal within three business days to the instructor's Chair or the Chair's designee. [Will add link to list of departments & chair or designee]

At any time, a student may file a report alleging that the University has failed to provide reasonable accommodations for the student's religious beliefs, disability, or pregnancy or related medical condition pursuant to the University's Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment and Related Misconduct ("PPDHRM"). The student may file a report under the PPDHRM following an unsatisfactory appeal determination by the instructor's Chair or the Chair's designee. Alternatively, the student may bypass the University Approved Absence Office appeals process altogether and proceed directly to filing a report under the PPDHRM. If a student first files a report under the PPDHRM, the University Approved Absence Office's appeals process will be stayed until a determination has been made under the PPDHRM.

\*§ 116-11. Powers and duties generally.

The powers and duties of the Board of Governors shall include the following:

(3a) The Board of Governors shall direct each constituent institution to adopt a policy that authorizes a minimum of two excused absences each academic year for religious observances required by the faith of a student. The policy may require that the student provide written notice of the request for an excused absence a reasonable time prior to the religious observance. The policy shall also provide that the student shall be given the opportunity to make up any tests or other work missed due to an excused absence for a religious observance.

**Current Class Attendance Policy for All Undergraduate Students (Undergraduate Bulletin)**  
<http://catalog.unc.edu/policies-procedures/attendance-grading-examination/>

## Class Attendance Policy

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 (see below) 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.

### Excused Absences for Religious Reasons

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](#). 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.

### Other Absences

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.