

Resolution to Expand Definition of Excused Absences
Educational Policy & Student Affairs (EPSA) Committee
Faculty Senate
FIRST READING
1/22/2024

Whereas Ohio University and its regional campuses, and higher education institutions more generally, increasingly enroll students who may have caregiving responsibilities for others,

Whereas Ohio University recognizes the need to support students who have caregiving responsibilities for others,

Whereas both undergraduate and graduate students may have caregiving responsibilities for young children, partners, parents, or others;

Whereas Ohio University strives create an inclusive classroom environment for all students and make higher education a viable option for a wider group of individuals,

Whereas Ohio University acknowledges the critical importance of higher education to parents of young children, and that basic needs of parents must be met for them to be successful in higher education,

Be it resolved that the definition of excused absences as stated in the Undergraduate Catalog, Graduate Catalog, and references in the Faculty Handbook sections shall be modified as follows:

Undergraduate & Graduate Catalog:

Excused Absences. Although instructors' policies govern how ~~excused-~~ absences will be handled in their classes, certain absences are considered legitimate by the University and hence instructors should consider excused. These excused absences include illness, medical care of an individual for whom student has care-giving responsibilities, death in the immediate family, religious observance, jury duty, and involvement in University-sponsored activities. Students returning to a class after ~~an excused a legitimate~~ absence can expect their instructor's assistance, within the limits of the instructor's established attendance policy, in arranging accommodations to address the course learning outcomes (e.g., makeup work, excused absences, change of grade computation), ~~and the need to address the course learning outcomes. some accommodation (e.g., makeup work, excused absences, change of grade computation) will be arranged subject to previously announced limitations.~~

~~-. In cases of legitimate absences—such as illness, death in the immediate family, religious observance, jury duty, involvement in University-sponsored activities—~~There are occasions where the size or nature of the course makes it necessary to set limits on the number of excused absences or the availability of makeup work, ~~for exams or special events such as field trips or outside speakers~~ for example, for exams, team assignments, assignments requiring facilities for

which access or availability is limited, or special events such as field trips or outside speakers.

Such limitations will be explained in the instructor's statement of attendance policy at the beginning of each course.

If you are involved in scheduled activities that might conflict with your class schedule, check with your instructor as early as possible to clarify that there will be no conflict with the policy.

You may document reasons for your absence as follows:

- If you are participating in an authorized University activity (departmental trip, music or debate activity, ROTC function, or athletic competition), you can obtain notification from the sponsoring office. If you are in the military reserves and reserve training (including reasonable travel time to training locations), a letter from the commander of your military reserve unit showing the date of the absence and the reason for it will serve as prior notification.
- If you or an individual for whom you have care-giving responsibilities receives medical or dental care from OhioHealth O'Bleness Hospital, Ohio University Campus Care, or other health care facilities, you can ask for and receive official notification from the staff at the time of your visit stating you or your care recipient were seen on a particular day, in order to present the instructors of classes necessarily missed for this reason verification of the date(s) and times you received such care. It is your responsibility to request and obtain such notification.

If your grade has been affected by a legitimate absence or absences that your instructor does not excuse, you may appeal through the normal grade appeal process (first through the instructor, then the department chair or school director, and then the dean of your college). If satisfaction is not achieved through this process, the dean may appoint a faculty committee of five members, including the chair or director of the department or school in question, to consider your case and render a decision. The decision of this committee is not subject to further appeal.

Please note that a legitimate, excused absence does not excuse you from meeting the requirements for the course or mastering course content. Students remain responsible for mastering the content of any missed class and completing any assignments or learning objectives due on the day of the missed class.²

Faculty Handbook (section VIII, C):

A. Notification of Causes of Absence

Students may document reasons for their absences as follows:

1. If a student isyou are participating in an authorized University activity (departmental trip, music or debate activity, ROTC function, or athletic competition), theyyou can obtain notification from the sponsoring office. If theyyou are in the military reserves and reserve training including reasonable travel time to training locations may fall upon class days, a letter from the commander of theyyour military reserve unit showing the date of the absence and the reason for it will serve for prior notification.
2. Students or individuals for whom students have care-giving responsibilities who receive

medical or dental care from OhioHealth O’Bleness Hospital, Ohio University Campus Care or other health care facilities are expected to request official notification from the staff at the time of their visit stating that they or their caregiving recipient were seen on a particular day, in order to present the instructors of classes necessarily missed for this reason verification of the date(s) and times they received such care. It is the responsibility of the student to request and obtain such notification.

3. Students may be absent for up to three days each academic semester to take time off for reasons of faith or religious or spiritual belief system or participate in organized activities conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or other religious or spiritual organization. Faculty shall not impose an academic penalty because of a student being absent nor shall faculty question the sincerity of a student’s religious or spiritual belief systems. Students are expected to notify faculty in writing of specific dates requested for alternative accommodations no later than fourteen days after the first day of instruction. Faculty are expected to keep requests for alternative accommodation confidential. Absences for reasons of faith or religious or spiritual belief systems are considered in addition to other legitimate and unexcused absences permitted by the instructor. Students or faculty should contact the University Equity and Civil Rights Compliance Office with questions.
4. Students returning to a class after an excused absence can expect their instructor’s assistance, within the limits of the instructor’s established attendance policy, in arranging accommodations to address the course learning outcomes (e.g., makeup work, excused absences, change of grade computation). There are occasions where the size or nature of the course makes it necessary to set limits on the number of excused absences or the availability of makeup work, particularly for example, for exams, team assignments, assignments requiring facilities for which access or availability is limited, or special events such as field trips or outside speakers. Such limitations will be explained in the instructor’s statement of attendance policy at the beginning of each course. *If students are involved in scheduled activities that might conflict with their class schedule, it is their responsibility to check with their instructor as early as possible to clarify that there will be no conflict with the policy.*
- ~~2.5. Students returning to a class after a legitimate absence can expect their instructor’s assistance within the limits of the instructor’s established attendance policy. In cases of legitimate absence—such as illness, death in the immediate family, religious observance, jury duty, involvement in University-sponsored activities—some accommodation (e.g., makeup work, excused absences, change of grade computation) will be arranged subject to previously announced limitations. There are occasions where the size or nature of the course makes it necessary to set limits on the number of excused absences or the availability of makeup work, particularly for exams or special events such as field trips or outside speakers. Such limitations will be explained in the instructor’s statement of attendance policy at the beginning of each course. Students with scheduled activities must check with the instructor as early as possible to clarify that there will be no conflict with the policy.~~