

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Amy Nielsen, Executive Secretary
Faculty Senate

FROM: Becky Bitter, Registrar's Office

FOR: Academic Affairs Committee

DATE: 17 December 2019

SUBJECT: Proposal to Revise Rule 72, Class Attendance and Absences

At its meeting on November 19th, 2019, AAC approved a proposal to revise Rule 72, Class Attendance and Absences. The initial prompt for the revision came from the Access Center, which requested that section c.3 on Flexible Attendance as an Access Accommodation be revised to reflect current policy and practice. AAC also reviewed and revised the policy in its entirety to update and clarify the information presented in the rule.

Based on feedback at the Faculty Senate meeting on December 5, 2019, further revisions were made to sections c.5 and f. The additional revisions are included in the copy that follows.

At this time, Faculty Senate review and approval is recommended, to be effective fall 2020.

72. CLASS ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCES

Students are responsible for ensuring that they attend all class meetings and complete all in-class and out-of-class work as assigned by the instructor. Students are also responsible for communicating with the instructor should they need to be absent.

a. **Attendance Policy:** The instructor is responsible for determining the attendance policy and for making decisions regarding the policy, including the consequence of missed classes, within guidelines established by the academic unit. The instructor is responsible for communicating the policy to the students, ~~both in the classroom and on~~ in the course syllabus.

b. **Administrative Drops for Non-Attendance:** Students who have not attended class meetings (including lectures, laboratories, and other meetings) during the first week of the semester or according to a prorated schedule for shorter sessions may be dropped from the course by the department. Students enrolled in online classes may be dropped if they have not logged into the class during the first week.

Students should not assume that they have been dropped without checking their class schedules.

c. **Absences:** Students should make all reasonable efforts to attend all class meetings. However, in the event a student is unable to attend a class, it is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor as soon as possible, explain the reason for the absence (and provide documentation, if appropriate), and ~~make arrangements for any missed work~~ make up class work missed within a reasonable amount of time, if allowed. Missing class meetings may result in reducing the overall grade in the class.

1. **University-Sponsored.** Any student who is required to participate in off-campus, university-sponsored activities such as field trips, musical performances, judging teams, intercollegiate athletic events, etc., should obtain an official Class Absence Request form from the faculty or staff member supervising the on- or off-campus activity. The form must contain specific information concerning the activity and date, be signed by the supervising faculty or staff member, and be submitted by the student at least one week in advance to the individual instructors of the student's classes. Alternative forms of the Class Absence Request may also be provided by the supervising faculty or staff member and are acceptable for requesting university-sponsored absences. It is recommended, but not required, that a student not be penalized for absence from class provided a properly signed ~~Class Absence Request~~ form has been filed with the instructor prior to the absence. These university-sponsored absences are subject to an instructor's attendance policy and are not intended to imply additional acceptable absences. In all instances, it is the student's responsibility to make up all work missed.
2. **Military Service Members.** Students who are members of the National Guard or a reserve branch of a military service are occasionally required to miss class for weekend drills, active duty, and related responsibilities and are entitled to make up the class (RCW 28B.10.270). In such a case, instructors ~~should~~ must not penalize students for the absences and ~~should~~ must allow them to make-up the missed work. In each instance, it is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor of the duty before

the absence, provide appropriate documentation if requested, and complete the missed work as soon as reasonably possible.

3. **Flexible Attendance as an Access Accommodation.** ~~Due to certain disabilities or chronic medical conditions, flexibility with attendance may be regarded as a reasonable accommodation. In these situations, instructors will receive notification of approved accommodations and procedures from the Access Center. The Access Center also provides accommodations on a temporary basis for injuries such as broken limbs or concussions but does not provide accommodations for acute illnesses (e.g., flu, mono).~~ Some students have disabilities or chronic medical conditions of an episodic nature that may require flexibility regarding attendance. The Access Center recognizes that in some cases, allowing absences beyond those normally allowed in a course is a reasonable accommodation. However, there are courses in which a specified standard of attendance may be an essential part of the course. When the Access Center determines that flexible attendance may be a reasonable accommodation, instructors will receive notification of approved accommodations and procedures for their consideration. Final determinations regarding flexible attendance will be determined on a case-by-case basis. See the Flexible Attendance Guidelines at the Access Center website and Rule 83.

NOTE: The Access Center does not provide accommodations for acute illnesses that cause extended absences (e.g., mono, strep throat, conjunctivitis). In these cases, students are to work with their instructors as indicated under c.5. Other Absences.

4. **Adverse Weather Conditions.** When appropriate campus authorities declare a “Yellow / Delayed or Limited Operations” or “Red / Closed” campus condition (BPPM 50.40-46), or travel to instructional locations is unsafe, classes may be cancelled or delayed. When a student does not attend due to adverse conditions, the instructor will not penalize the student. See the Inclement Weather Policy online at each campus website and at the Office of the Provost website.
5. **Other Absences.** Students must sometimes miss class meetings, examinations, or other academic obligations affecting their grades due to extenuating personal circumstances. It is the responsibility of the student to provide a written explanation for the absence to the instructor as soon as it is reasonable to do so. When possible, students should provide appropriate documentation for their absence but instructors cannot require written excuses from health care professionals.

As long as ~~such~~ absences are not excessive, it is recommended, but not required, that the instructor provide and document reasonable arrangements. Determinations regarding the acceptance of an absence are the discretion of the instructor based on the attendance policy as stated in the class syllabus.

Students who attempt to gain advantage through abuse of any aspect of the ~~this~~ absence policy (e.g., by providing an instructor with false information) may be referred to the Center for Community Standards Office of Student Conduct for disciplinary action.

d. **Emergency Notifications:** While the Office of the Dean of Students does not excuse or verify student absences, in the event a student is going to be away from class for an extended period and is unable to contact the instructor in a timely manner, the Office of the Dean of Students may provide an emergency notification on the student's behalf to the instructors, informing them of the student's absence and the planned duration of the absence. An emergency notification should not be required or used to excuse a student's absence.

It is the responsibility of the student to contact their instructors as soon as possible to make arrangements to complete for missed work. It is up to the instructor to determine what, if any, arrangements will be made for the student based upon the attendance policy as stated in syllabus.

e. **Request for Consideration:** The Office of the Dean of Students and/or the Office of Civil Rights Compliance and Investigation ~~Office for Equal Opportunity~~ may contact instructors on a student's behalf when the student's involvement in a matter implicating the WSU Policy Prohibiting Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct, Executive Policy #15, is having a significant impact on the student's academic progress.

In such cases, the instructor is strongly encouraged to work with the student to address the student's needs without compromising learning objectives. It is the responsibility of the student to contact the instructor to make these arrangements.

f. **Complaints:** Students who wish to raise a concern about ~~are dissatisfied with~~ the instructor's arrangement regarding missed work may follow the Academic Complaint Procedure, Rule 104.

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