

The proposed changes to the University Senate Rules and Regulations will provide guidance to faculty and students on excused absences. The policy has been drafted using language from other AAU institutions as a guide and edited with help from Student and Faculty Senate members including input from the Academic Policies and Procedure and Faculty Rights Privileges and Responsibilities Committees. The changes would replace the current policy sections that deal with exams and final exams and cover all work missed by an excused absence. The goal of the revisions is to provide a concise policy that provides the definition of an excused absence, the scope of reasons for an excused absence, the responsibilities of the student and faculty in the event of an excused absence, and the process for appeal. This new policy will benefit students by providing the right to make up work that was missed for specific reasons that constitute an excused absence. The new policy will also benefit faculty by providing guidance on handling excused absence requests from students. Overall, the new policy will lead to better consistency across campus.

Specific changes:

- USSR Article 2, new Section 2: University Excused Absences.
- Amendment to USSR Article 1:
 - 1.3.8, 1.3.9, and 1.3.10 were deleted on Section 3, and the substance added to new Section 2, Article II.
 - 1.4.4, 1.4.5, and 1.4.6 were deleted, and substance added to Article 2. Section 2.
- Amendment to USSR Article 2.1.
 - 2.1.3 and 2.1.4. were deleted and substance of 2.14 moved to Article 2. Section 2.

Article II. Academic Work and Its Evaluation

Section 2. University Excused Absences

2.2.1 The responsibility for class attendance rests with individual students. Students are expected to attend classes regularly and meet all requirements set by the instructor. Students are responsible for planning their schedules to avoid excessive conflicts with course requirements. Attendance policies may vary for individual instructors and shall be included in the course syllabus.

2.2.2 A university excused absence is an absence for which a student cannot be penalized and shall receive an accommodation for completing the missed work. University excused absences apply to all course requirements, including any final examinations, quizzes, in class work, and tests other than final examinations. In cases where part of a class grade is based on attendance, a student shall not be penalized for missing class due to a university excuse absence.

2.2.3 Legitimate reasons for a university excused absence include:

- religious observance
- military service
- illness or injury
- personal verifiable mental health or medical crisis or that of a relative or close friend,
- unforeseen life event or compelling circumstances beyond the student's control (e.g., divorce, birth or adoption of a child, death, loss of employment, sexual assault, domestic violence, mental health emergency)

- academic field trips
- participation in university activities at the request of university authorities (e.g. an approved concert or athletic event)
- jury duty or officially mandated court appearances
- professional association or conference participation

2.2.4 Students are responsible for informing their instructors, including providing verifiable documentation with as much advance notice as possible, prior to the absence or if not possible prior to, as soon as possible after the absence. In the case where a student does not want to disclose specific details of the verifiable absence to an instructor, the student may use the Student Support and Case Management Office to assist in the verification of an excused absence. In these cases, the Student Support and Case Management Office will provide confirmation to the instructor verifying the excused absence without providing specific details of the reason. In the case where a student has an unforeseen life event or medical/mental health emergency that requires the student to be away from campus for more than three days and the student is unable to communicate to their faculty, the Student Support and Case Management Office will assist in notifying the faculty.

2.2.5 For a verified excused absence, the instructor will provide the student with appropriate assistance and counsel about completing missed assignments and class material. The instructor is not required to waive essential or fundamental academic requirements to accommodate a student's absence, and a student is responsible for fulfilling all course requirements mutually agreed upon, including completing any makeup work resulting from their absence. A makeup assignment must be equitable and equivalent in substance and rigor to that missed and offered in a reasonable timeframe. The instructor and student must agree on a time and place for makeup work as appropriate, which must not interfere with the student's regularly scheduled classes. If makeup work is not feasible, the instructor will provide an alternate accommodation for excused absences. Alternate accommodations will be mutually acceptable by both the student and the instructor of the course.

2.2.6 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 contact the Chair of the Department, or Dean if there is not a Chair. A final grade appeal may be made to the University Senate Judicial Board.

Redundant text removed

Section 3. Final Examination Schedules

[The following sections are being deleted and the substance will be added to the (New) Section 2. University Excused Absences]

~~1.3.8 Students with a verifiable medical crisis should be excused from being present for the final examination. It is the responsibility of the student to initiate discussion with the instructor, prior to the examination/test if possible. The instructor and student shall come to a mutually agreeable method of making up the missed examination.~~

~~1.3.9 Students with a verifiable medical crisis of a relative or friend may be excused from being present for the final examination. It is the responsibility of the student to initiate discussion with the instructor, prior to the examination/test if possible. The instructor and student shall come to a mutually agreeable method of making up the missed examination.~~

~~1.3.10 Students currently serving as members of the Reserve or Active Components of the United States Armed Forces or the National Guard of the United States who receive temporary orders necessitating their absence from the final examination shall be excused from being present for the final examination. It is the responsibility of the student to initiate discussion with the instructor, prior to the final examination if possible. The instructor and student shall come to a mutually agreeable method of making up the missed examination.~~

Section 4. Examinations, Quizzes and Tests Other Than Final Examinations

[The following sections are being deleted and the substance will be added to the (New) Section 2. University Excused Absences]

~~1.4.3 Examinations and tests other than final examinations should not be scheduled in conflict with mandated religious observances. In order to ascertain in a given class if a scheduled examination conflicts with a mandated religious observance, at the beginning of the semester the instructor shall ask students who may be affected to identify themselves privately so that a makeup examination may be scheduled at a mutually acceptable time.~~

~~1.4.4 Students with a verifiable medical crisis should be excused from being present for scheduled examinations and tests. It is the responsibility of the student to initiate discussion with the instructor, prior to the examination/test if possible. The instructor and student shall come to a mutually agreeable method of making up the missed work.~~

~~1.4.5 Students with a verifiable medical crisis of a relative or friend may be excused from being present for scheduled examinations and tests. It is the responsibility of the student to initiate discussion with the instructor, prior to the examination/test if possible. The instructor and student shall come to a mutually agreeable method of making up the missed work.~~

~~1.4.6 Students currently serving as members of the Reserve or Active Components of the United States Armed Forces or the National Guard of the United States who receive temporary orders necessitating their absence from a scheduled examination, quiz, or test shall be excused from being present for the scheduled examination, quiz, or test. It is the responsibility of the student to initiate discussion with the instructor, prior to the examination/test if possible. The instructor and student shall come to a mutually agreeable method of making up the missed work.~~

Article II. Academic Work and Its Evaluation

Section 1. Recorded Evaluation of Student Performance

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2.1.2 Information about the basis for evaluating students' performance and about the requirements that students must fulfill shall be made available to students, in print or electronic format by the 10th class day of the semester or, for summer or short courses, by the 5th class day.

This requirement does not apply to discussion sections or labs for which a separate grade is not given, or to courses that meet by appointment, such as thesis, dissertations, directed studies, and

directed projects. Students who are not in class when such information is provided are responsible for knowing it. Students are also responsible for subsequent announcements about course content and grading policies. This information should not be considered a contract; the information may be revised as the course progresses, provided students are given timely notice of such revisions.

~~2.1.3 The faculty of the College or a school may prescribe conditions under which individual students may be exempted from final examinations, provided that such exemption is based on grades received prior to the time of the final examination.~~

[Delete 2.1.3 because it is this the same as 1.3.3, which states: "1.3.3 The instructor of a course shall decide whether a final examination is necessary unless the department in which a course is given (or the College or school, for courses, which are not listed in a department) makes that decision. Decisions by the department, the College, or school would normally relate to multisections or service courses. As early as possible in the course, the instructor shall inform the students of the function of the examination in determining the course grade."]

~~2.1.4 In cases where part of a class grade is based on attendance, a student shall not be penalized for absence from regularly scheduled class activities which conflict with mandated religious observances. In cases of conflicts between regularly scheduled class activities and mandated religious observances, the student is responsible for initiating discussion with the instructor to reach a mutually acceptable solution.~~

[Move from 2.1.4 to new Section 2, University Excused Absences]