Academic Standards Subcommittee Agenda, January 13, 2022

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ACADEMIC STANDARDS SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE EDUCATION POLICIES COMMITTEE

Meeting to be held January 13, 2022, from 3:00-4:00 p.m. in Champ Hall and via Zoom.

MEMBERS

- Renee Galliher, Chair, Associate Vice Provost
- Mykel Beorchia, Advising
- Sterling Bone, Jon M. Huntsman School of Business
- Dan Coster, College of Science
- Fran Hopkin, Registrar’s Office
- Porter Casdorph, USUSA
- Kacy Lundstrom, University Libraries
- Robyn Peterson, subcommittee secretary (ex officio; not a voting member)

AGENDA

New Business

- Comprehensive review of the Excused Absences policy (Fran Hopkin)
  - “As the Registrar’s Office continues their deep dive of catalog policies, we recognized that while a portion of the Excused Absences policy was reviewed last year, the policy may benefit from a comprehensive review.”

ATTACHMENTS

- See below for the current Excused Absences policy in the catalog.

## Excused Absences
# Attendance & Excused Absences

## Introduction
Instructors set course content and structure and are responsible for determining if a student has met the minimum requirements for completion of the course. The university views class attendance as an individual student responsibility. Students are expected to attend class and to complete all assignments in accordance with individual instructor and course policies. The excused absence policy does not guarantee that a student’s absences from a course will not negatively impact his or her success in the course. Furthermore, it is the student’s responsibility to ensure that excused absences do not conflict with clearly established instructor policies on course attendance and participation.

There are multiple mechanisms that should be considered if absence from a class is necessary:

- **Incomplete (I) Grade**: If a student is unable to complete all of the coursework because of extenuating circumstances, a grade of “I” (Incomplete) may be submitted by the instructor. Refer to Incomplete policy for details.

- **Withdrawal**: Students may drop courses without notation on the permanent record through the first 20% of the class (i.e. 3 weeks of a 15-week term). If a student drops a course after that initial grace period, a “W” will be permanently affixed to the student’s record. After 60% of the class is completed (i.e. 9 weeks of a 15-week term), the student’s academic advisor must sign any drop request, and a “W” with a grade assigned by the instructor will be entered on the student’s permanent record. Under normal circumstances, a student may not drop a course after 75% of the class is completed. (Check General Catalog for exact dates.)

- **Excused Absence**: An absence may be excused for the reasons and in accordance with the procedures outlined below. Students who are requesting an excused absence are expected to uphold the Student Code of Conduct.

## Excused Absences

### Reasons
A student requesting an excused absence is responsible for providing evidence to the instructor substantiating the reason for missed class or course deadlines/due dates. Excused absences may not exceed 20% of the class meetings.

Acceptable reasons for absences and other missed course requirements include the following.

#### University Supported Participation
1. Participation in a university-sponsored or sanctioned activity.
2. Mandatory participation as a student-athlete in NCAA-sanctioned competition.

#### Injury, Illness, Medical Condition/Status
1. Injury, illness, or medical condition/status that is too severe or contagious for the student to participate in class.
   - At the discretion of the faculty member, as outlined in the course syllabus, injury or illness confirmation may be obtained through a note from a health
care professional affirming the date and time of visit. The Student Health & Wellness Center or an off-campus medical professional can provide a medical confirmation note only if medical professionals are involved in the medical care of the student. Medical documentation can be collected after the missed participation has occurred.

- An absence for a non-acute (e.g., elective) medical service does not constitute an excused absence.

4. Major injury, illness, or medical condition/status in a student’s immediate family (as defined in Policy 346.1 of the USU Policies Manual).

5. A death in a student’s immediate family (as defined in Policy 346.1 of the USU Policies Manual).

Other Allowable Reasons

6. Required participation in military duties, including mandatory medical appointments for veterans and military personnel.

7. Mandatory admissions interviews for professional or graduate school, or internships, that cannot be rescheduled.

8. Religious holy day.

9. Participation in legal proceedings or administrative procedures that require a student’s presence.

10. Accommodation or other support requests, as negotiated with student service offices, such as the Disability Resource Center or Office of Student Conduct.

11. Supportive measures requested through the Office of Equity related to sexual misconduct and/or discrimination (see USU Policy 339).

12. In accordance with Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, pregnancy and related conditions are a justification for an excused absence for so long a period of time as is deemed medically necessary by the student’s physician.

Procedures

Students may be excused from attending class on the day of a graded activity or when attendance contributes to a student’s grade, for the reasons stated above or for other reasons deemed appropriate by the student’s instructor. For reason #1 (Participation in a university sponsored or sanctioned activity) or #2 (Mandatory participation as a student-athlete in NCAA-sanctioned competition), a dean or vice president (or the designee) must provide a letter for the student to provide to instructors that verifies the student’s absence as excused.

Student

Excused absence notifications should be provided to instructors as soon as possible. In some cases, such as athletics or other university-sponsored and sanctioned events with known schedules, instructors should be informed during the first week of classes. Instructors have the right to deny any request that exceeds 20% of class sessions.

To be excused, the student must notify his or her instructor in writing (acknowledged e-mail message is acceptable) prior to the date of absence if such notification is feasible. In cases where advance notification is not feasible (e.g. accident or emergency), the student must provide notification by the end of the second working day after the absence. This notification should include an explanation of why notice could not be sent prior to the class.
Accommodations sought for absences due to the observance of a religious holiday can be sought either prior to or after the absence, but not later than two working days after the absence. On request of the instructor, the student must provide additional documentation substantiating the reason for the absence, which is satisfactory to the instructor, within one week of the last date of the absence.

**Instructor**

Instructors are under no obligation to provide an opportunity for the student to make up work missed because of an unexcused absence. If the absence is excused, the instructor must either provide the student an opportunity to make up any quiz, exam, or other work that contributes to the final grade or provide a satisfactory alternative by a date agreed on by the student and instructor. Students with an excused absence shall be “held harmless” and benefit from all classroom policies. In some cases, such as classes that include time-dependent group, field, lab, or studio work, instructors are not required to recreate a precisely equivalent experience, but should identify a suitable alternative that respects both their own and the student’s time and meets educational goals.

Any make-up work must be completed within 14 calendar days of the last day of the initial absence.

**Appeal Procedures**

A student may appeal an instructor’s decision that an absence is unexcused if the student believes either that he or she has presented the instructor with adequate substantiating evidence for an excused absence (as outlined in this policy) or that the instructor’s decision was arbitrary, capricious, or prejudicial. Any appeal must be initiated within three class days of the instructor’s decision. In the appeal process, the burden of proof shall be on the student. Any student appeal must be submitted to the following persons or bodies in the sequence listed below:

13. The head of the academic department in which the course is offered;
14. The dean or designee of the college in which the course is offered;
15. The Provost (in the case of an appeal by an undergraduate student), or the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies (in the case of an appeal by a graduate student).