



University of Colorado Denver

Administrative Policy

Title:	Student Attendance and Absences
Source:	Office of the Provost
Prepared by:	Office of Student Life and Office of International Student and Scholar Services
Approved by:	Mark Alan Heckler, Ph.D. Provost
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Applies to:	Downtown Campus

A. Introduction

Successful performance in college courses is dependent upon regular student attendance and participation. It is the University's expectation that students will participate in every class, independent of whether attendance is formally part of the course grade. The University recognizes there will be occasions when students must miss classes that contain examinations, graded assignments, experiments or projects, and general class participation. This policy statement addresses the issues of student absences, identifies possible accommodations, and outlines both faculty and student responsibilities.

The University also recognizes that excessive excused absences will make it impossible to evaluate a student's performance in a class based on attendance and participation or in a class with multiple missed graded assignments. Under these circumstances, an administrative solution should be explored with the student to drop the course(s) before the end of the semester.

B. Absences because of Disabilities

1. Students who miss classes because of diagnosed disabilities are governed by policies established by the UC Denver Office of Disability Resources and Services.
2. Students who miss a small number of classes because of a temporary disability, such as an illness, are subject to policies in this administrative document.

C. Excused Absences

1. Excused absences are authorized by the University. Anticipated excused absences must be cleared with the instructor prior to the event, and religious observances must be declared at the beginning of the semester. An independent official must verify unanticipated or emergency excused absences. Examples of excused absences and the required documentation and verification are offered in the following table:

<u>Anticipated</u>	<u>Required Documentation</u>
Official university holiday	No verification required, calendar from Registrar
Official university function	University official authorizing the absence
Required court or jury appearance	Clerk of the Court
Required military obligation	Copy of orders, or commanding officer
Religious observances	Student initiated request

<u>Emergency or Unanticipated</u>	<u>Required Documentation</u>
Extraordinary illness or injury	Physician (student authorization may be required)
Death of family member	Copy of death certificate, family relationship
Closed campus/inclement weather	No verification required
Open campus/inclement weather	Highway department closed road verification
Required employment travel	Immediate supervisor

Extraordinary personal circumstances require independent verification based on circumstances

2. Upon failure of the student to notify the instructor in advance (anticipated) or immediately upon return (emergency), the instructor may consider the absence unexcused. Instructors have the right to ask for written, independent verification of an excused absence before classifying the absence as excused, or before providing any accommodations for the absence.

3. Students are responsible for identifying anticipated absences at the beginning of the semester in order to give instructor time to mentor the student about possible accommodations and to provide counseling about whether the student should continue in the class. Students who know in advance about numerous excused absences should avoid, when possible, courses with required attendance or courses in which attendance is part of the course grade.

4. The lack of attendance or class participation as a result of excused absences cannot be counted against a student in a class with required attendance or participation, unless such absences are so numerous as to interfere with the learning process or to preclude an adequate evaluation of student performance in which case an administrative solution should be explored.

5. The lack of academic performance from missed assignments that result because of an excused absence cannot be counted against a student, unless such absences are so numerous as to interfere with an adequate evaluation of student performance in which case an administrative solution should be explored.

6. Students are responsible for materials covered in classes missed during an excused absence. It is the student's responsibility to verify excused absences and to contact the instructor for completing missed materials and assignments.

7. For students with excused absence(s), faculty members will provide accommodations consistent with the number of assignments missed, pedagogy of the discipline, and time frame available. Any makeup accommodations must be at a time and place mutually agreeable to the instructor and student. Accommodations are restricted to material(s) for which the student was originally responsible. Accommodations may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. appropriate substitute assignments, examinations, quizzes, or projects
- b. assignment of individual extra credit equivalent to the missed graded assignment(s)
- c. recalculation of grade on remaining assignments

8. Students who abuse the excused absence policy or provide false documentation are in violation of the UC Denver Academic Honor Code and may be subject to disciplinary action.

D. Unexcused Absences

- 1. Student absences that do not meet the criteria for an excused absence are classified as unexcused.
- 2. Faculty are under no obligation to allow students to make up, or to provide any grading adjustment for, a missed assignments as a result of an unexcused absence. Instructors may have class policies that lower a student's grade because of unexcused absences.
- 3. Faculty should not award an Incomplete grade (IW/IF) to students who claim excused absences but fail to provide requested verification.
- 4. A student who believes a faculty member's attendance policies are inconsistent with University policies or unfair for the circumstances, should discuss the situation with the instructor.

E. Religious Observances

- 1. While UC Denver is a public institution governed by secular policies, instructors have a legal and moral obligation to accommodate students who must miss class because of religious observances. Instructors are encouraged to plan examinations and graded assignments to minimize conflicts with major religious holidays. Students must notify instructors at the beginning of the semester about religious conflicts with graded assignments outlined in the syllabus.
- 2. Students and instructors are encouraged to exercise sound judgment pertaining to absences associated with the observance of religious, or ethnic, holidays.

F. Faculty Responsibilities

- 1. Faculty members are required to provide a course syllabus to students at the first class meeting. The syllabus must clarify how attendance and participation affect, if at all, the student's course grade. The syllabus must identify fixed dates for examinations and fixed due dates for graded assignments.

2. Faculty shall include in the syllabus information regarding academic accommodations for students with disabilities. Faculty shall not provide attendance accommodations to students with disabilities without a current approval letter from the UC Denver Office of Disability Resources and Services.
3. For courses in which attendance is part of the course grade, faculty members must identify how attendance will be taken and must clarify the difference between an absence and being tardy. Faculty are strongly encouraged to use a daily, written record for student attendance when attendance is part of the course grade.
4. Clarify how participation will be evaluated. Faculty are strongly encouraged to communicate student performance based on participation, just as with any graded assignment.
5. Faculty have a responsibility to solicit from students information about planned or anticipated absences. If such planned absences are so numerous the evaluation of student performance is compromised, the faculty member has a responsibility to inform the student in advance of the census date drop deadline.
6. Faculty have a responsibility to meet every class period during the semester or term. Faculty should make every effort to seek class coverage from another faculty member because of professional travel or for short term illness.

G. Grievances and Appeals

1. Either the student or faculty member may appeal an excused absence or excused absence accommodation to the department chair of the registered course.
2. If further appeal is deemed necessary by the student or faculty member, the associate dean of the college in which the course is offered, which may not be the student's home college, will make the final decision.
3. Each level of appeal must be made in writing no later than five calendar days from the date of the decision. Final decisions regarding an appeal shall be sent to the student, in writing, no more than five days from the date the appeal is received.
4. Either the student or faculty member may appeal an excused absence based on religious observances to the department chair of the department offering the course. If necessary, the associate dean in the college in which the course is offered will make a final decision.
5. Once a grade is awarded at the conclusion of the term, a student may appeal a grade based on absences only through the policies and procedures developed in their home college.