

Excused Absence Policy Workflow

USRR Article II, Section 2

Process Overview


Student provides notification to instructor including details of when the absence will occur and the rationale for the absence. If the student will be absent for an official KU engagement, the student may provide notification from the university department/unit associated with the activity (e.g., competition, field trip, performance, professional conference).

If the student unable is to provide notification to instructor on their own due to extenuating circumstances (e.g., unforeseen life event or medical/mental health emergency), notification to instructor regarding the absence will be provided by the Office of Student Support and Case Management.

If the student is not comfortable or does not want to disclose specific details for the verifiable absence to the instructor, the student should contact the Office of Student Support and Case Management for assistance.



Instructor notified in advance of excused absence



The instructor makes determination of alternate or makeup assignments for any missed work during period of excused absence, and communicates expectations (e.g., deadlines, assignment/exam specifics) to student.

- A student cannot be penalized for an excused absence, including in cases where part of a class grade is based on attendance.
- University excused absences apply to all course requirements, including any final examinations, quizzes, in class work, and tests other than final examinations.
- 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 make arrangements 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.

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Best Practices

For Instructors

- Be mindful that obtaining and providing written verification of students' absences can be difficult to achieve in some circumstances.
- Requiring any form of doctor's note may introduce inequity based on the ability to access medical care and impose on the student's privacy.
- While obituaries, court documentation, or medical documentation can be provided, this information is often highly sensitive in nature and may create additional stressors for the student. Especially in a situation where there is grief and loss, requesting obituaries or additional documentation can be perceived as insensitive, even when this is not the instructor's intent.
- Avoid asking probing questions about specific details of the student's situation.
- Instructors are always allowed to make alternate arrangements or accommodations for students.
- Existing course policies (such as instructors offering students the ability to drop the lowest scores or excused absences permitted) can still be applied, but additional accommodation may be necessary in cases where student excused absences exceed the number of drops allowed. In the spirit of the policy, drops for excused absences should not preclude student ability to drop the lowest scores if drops are not utilized for low scores or unexcused absences.

Grievance Process

For Students

- Students who believe 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.

*Students may also contact the
Office of Academic Success (academicsuccess@ku.edu) or the
Office of Faculty Affairs (facultyaffairs@ku.edu).*