

# **UNIVERSITY POLICY FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**

## **Policy No. UPAA-2**

### **CLASS ATTENDANCE**

- 1 General Information
  - 1.1 Scope: Academic policy regarding class attendance
  - 1.2 Authority: W. Va. Code §18B-1-6
  - 1.3 Passage Date: December 2, 2025
  - 1.4 Effective Date: December 2, 2025
  - 1.5 Controlling over: Marshall University
  - 1.6 History: Adopted General Faculty Meeting, May 12, 1970; Clarified by Faculty Senate on April 10, 2001; SR-04-05-(06)63 BAPC, Approved November 18, 2004 for Implementation Fall 2005. Further revisions were made in 2006 and Spring 2025 (SR 24-25-33 BAPC).
2. Policy
  - 2.1 It is Marshall University's policy that each instructor evaluates the importance of student class attendance. In the course syllabus, the instructor must provide their policy on class attendance, make-up work, and related matters. Reasons for excused absences are at the instructor's discretion but must include all excused absences listed in this policy, and the syllabus must include these excused absences either directly or by reference to this policy. If a student is absent from class because of a circumstance that is included in the class excused absence policy, the absence will be handled by the instructor of the missed course or the Director of Student Advocacy within the Division of Student Affairs. In cases where a student has an absence whose excuse is guaranteed by this policy, and for which the instructor has not excused the student, the student can obtain an official excused absence following the procedure described below. This policy excludes those academic endeavors that require the completion of a certain number of clock hours, as in clinical experiences, practica or internships. For those courses, the maximum number of absences will be determined by the department chair or program supervisor. This policy applies to all undergraduate courses regardless of delivery modality including on-campus and distance education courses where students are unable to attend class or meet assignment or exam submission deadlines specified in the syllabus due to circumstances or conditions that qualify under this policy. This policy does not supersede program accreditation requirements.

- 3. Definitions of Excused Absences
  - 3.1 Excused absences fall into six categories:
    - 3.1.1 University-sponsored activities
      - 3.1.1.1 Academic activities including, but not limited to, performing arts, debate and individual events, honors classes, ROTC, and departmental functions.
      - 3.1.1.2 Athletics, official athletic events sponsored by the Athletic Department.
      - 3.1.1.3 Other University activities, including student government, academically-oriented student organizations, and careers fairs. The activity must have a clear educational mission and be closely linked to academic pursuits or to other official University functions.
    - 3.1.2 Student Illness or Critical Illness/Death of a close family member.
      - 3.1.2.2 Student Illness or injury
        - 3.1.2.2.1 Absences will be excused only for illnesses or injuries that prohibit students from participating in class. Routine doctor's appointments scheduled in advance are not considered excused absences in the scope of this policy and will not be approved by the Division of Student Affairs. (These may be approved as absences if agreed between the student and instructor.)
      - 3.1.2.3 Critical Illness of someone in a close relationship with the student.
        - 3.1.2.3.1 Absences will be excused if the student documents that they had to provide needed care and/or support for a critically ill person.
      - 3.1.2.4 Death of a someone in a close relationship to the student.
    - 3.1.3 Short-Term Military Obligation: This is defined as absence as the result of military orders for a short-term period. Review section 4.1.3 of this policy for more details. Note: Students subject to federal activation are covered by a separate policy.
    - 3.1.4 Jury Duty or Subpoena for Court Appearance
      - 3.1.4.1 This applies to absences that are a result of official requests from a court of law.
    - 3.1.5 Religious Holidays

- 3.1.5.1 This applies to major religious holidays. Please see the Division of Student Affairs for a list of such holidays.
- 3.1.6 Extreme personal emergencies.
- 3.1.6.1 Examples of such events include, but are not limited to, house fires, a natural disaster, an accident that directly impacts the student's safety or well-being, or any other life-altering or life-threatening situations which can be determined by the Director of Student Advocacy within the Division of Student Affairs.

#### 4 Process

- 4.1 Students should generally request an absence first from their instructor, within five instructional days of the end of the event necessitating the absence. (For example, if a student is hospitalized, within one week of release from hospital.) For events that are scheduled in advance, such as University activities, the excuse must be requested from the instructor prior to the absence. Should the student receive a denial of the request for an excused absence, or if the instructor does not respond within five instructional days, the student may then request a university-excused absence through the Division of Student Affairs. If the student does not submit their request for an excused absence within ten instructional days, it will not be accepted. If the student wishes to appeal this decision due to circumstances beyond their control, they may email the Director of Student Advocacy. If the appeal to the Director of Student Advocacy does not yield a satisfactory result, the student may further appeal to the Senior Director of Student Advocacy and Accountability. This will be the final step in the appeal process."
- 4.1.1 University Sponsored Activities
  - 4.1.1.1 Academic Activities: These absences are excused by the Division of Student Affairs. To gain approval, documentation must include a letter from the professor or staff member responsible for requiring student attendance or overseeing the event. The letter must detail the name of the event, its purpose, the educational value for the students, the date and time, and a list of the students attending. The letter must be reviewed and signed by the Division of Student Affairs.
  - 4.1.1.2 Athletics: These absences are excused by the Chief Academic Officer (CAO), who must pre-approve any notice given/sent to faculty.
  - 4.1.1.3 Other University activities: These absences are pre-approved by the Director of Student Advocacy within the Division of Student Affairs.

4.1.2 Student Illness or Critical Illness/Death of someone in a close relationship to the student.

4.1.2.1 Student Illness or Injury: The student must submit official documentation of treatment by a medical practitioner to the Division of Student Affairs as soon as he/she returns to class. Documentation must specify the inclusive dates to be excused. The office will notify faculty that the absence(s) meets the criteria to be excused.

4.1.2.2 Critical Illness of someone in a close relationship to the student: The student must submit official documentation from the person's health care provider that substantiates the critical nature of the illness and the student's need to provide the care/support. This documentation is to be submitted to the of Student Affairs upon the student's return to class. The Office will notify faculty that the absence(s) meets the criteria to be excused.

4.1.2.3 Death of someone in a close relationship to the student: To obtain an excused absence, the student must submit one of the following to the Office of Student Affairs upon return to classes: an obituary or a funeral program; verification on letterhead stationery of the death by clergy or funeral home personnel. The student must also submit evidence of the relationship to the deceased. The Office will notify faculty that the absence meets the criteria to be excused.

4.1.3 Short-Term Military Obligation

4.1.3.1 Extent of excused absences for short-term military leave: Students who receive military orders for short-term obligations (such as annual training, unit drills, deployment, or state active duty) must notify their instructors and/or the Division of Student Affairs within two instructional days of receiving their orders. Students may be excused from classes for up to 15% of instructional hours in the course (~2 weeks of a 15-week term), provided they are making satisfactory academic progress. For military orders necessitating an absence extending between 15% and 30% of instructional hours, approval for excused absences is at the discretion of the department chair in conjunction with the course instructor. Military leave resulting in absences exceeding 30% of instructional hours for the course is generally not counted as an excused absence; however, students may choose to withdraw from the semester and receive a full tuition refund under the provisions of UPAA-4.

4.1.3.2 Instructor Responsibilities for Military Leave: Instructors must excuse class absences related to short-term military leave, as defined above, without applying attendance penalties. They are responsible for providing reasonable academic accommodations for missed work, which may include alternate assignments, extended deadlines, equivalent assessments, or

online/remote learning options. If essential course learning outcomes or accreditation/licensure requirements cannot be met through makeup work, the instructor, department chair, and student must collaboratively explore alternative solutions-such as assigning an Incomplete grade, initiating a course withdrawal, or transferring to a different course section.

4.1.3.3. Appeals: If a student believes their short-term military leave request or its implementation has not been appropriately honored, they may submit a written appeal to the Director of Student Advocacy. If the issue is not resolved, a final appeal may be submitted to the Senior Director of Student Advocacy and Accountability. Appeals must be submitted within ten instructional days of the decision regarding the student's military leave.

4.1.4 Jury Duty or Subpoena for Court Appearance

4.1.4.1 The student who seeks an excused absence for jury duty or court appearance must submit his/her subpoena or official notification of jury duty to the Division of Student Affairs prior to the date of the obligation. The Office of Student Advocacy and Accountability will notify faculty that the absence is to be excused.

4.1.5 Religious Holidays

4.1.5.1 Absences resulting from major religious holidays will be excused when the student presents the request in advance of the absence to the Division of Student Affairs. The Office of Student Advocacy and Accountability will then notify the faculty that the absence is to be excused.

Notice: Any student who falsifies information or documentation in order to obtain an excused absence has committed a violation of the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities and will be referred to the Office of Student Advocacy and Accountability for appropriate sanctions.

For all University Excused Absences, students must submit their request within ten instructional days from the date of the event. Requests submitted after this timeframe will not be accepted. If a student wishes to appeal this decision due to circumstances beyond their control, they may email the Director of Student Advocacy. Should the appeal to the Director of Student Advocacy not result in a satisfactory outcome, the student may escalate the appeal to the Senior Director of Student Advocacy and Accountability. This step will serve as the final stage of the appeal process.

Approved by:

  
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Brad Smith, President

Date:

12/2/2025