

## **Title: Excused Absence Policy and Procedure**

### **Section 1. General**

1.1. Scope: All WVSU students are expected to attend every class session, as attending class is essential for academic success. Each instructor will establish attendance requirements that will be distributed at the beginning of each term as part of the course syllabus. The University understands that students may periodically need to miss class due to unforeseen circumstances. Students are expected to notify their instructors of any absences as soon as possible. The University expects students to attend all scheduled class times unless an absence is excused under this policy, however even then the work missed should still be completed.

1.2. Authority: W. Va. Code §18B-1-6

1.3. Application: This policy shall apply to all faculty and students enrolled or teaching classes for West Virginia State University

1.4. Effective Date: October 12, 2023

### **Section 2. Definitions**

2.1. Excused absence: An excused absence is one in which a student is absent due to a University-sponsored activity or other extenuating circumstance(s) that would cause a student to miss class, major assignments, exams, or other important graded materials for which a student will not be penalized and will be granted an opportunity to complete make-up work or alternate course requirements.

2.2. Faculty Members: Faculty members include all regular, full-time faculty and all part-time course instructors teaching classes either in person or virtually for West Virginia State University

2.3 Student: Students include any persons taking courses at or from West Virginia State University, inclusive of full-time and part-time, pursuing undergraduate, graduate, or professional studies.

2.4 Immediate Family: The immediate family includes any spouse/life partner, child, parent, legal guardian, sibling, grandparent, or grandchild

### **Section 3. Categories of University Excused Absences**

#### **3.1 Legally Required Obligations**

- a. Performance of a military duty or obligation imposed by state or federal law, as documented in writing by the appropriate state or federal authority.
- b. Legal obligation to appear at or participate in a judicial or administrative proceeding, including the performance of jury duty, as documented in writing by the appropriate judicial or administrative authority.

- c. Any medical condition related to pregnancy or childbirth, as documented by the student's health care provider, requiring the student's absence from class. **Students should proceed through the Title IX office for these accommodations.** Accommodation requests should be made as soon as possible. You can contact the office at carolyn.stuart@wvstateu.edu or titleixcoordinator2@wvstateu.edu.
- d. A disability, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act and as documented by the student with the Student Accessibility Resources, which prevents the student from attending class. People can contact the center at SAR@wvstateu.edu if additional information is needed.
- e. Observance of a religious practice, holiday or holy day, if the instructor of the class is provided written notification by the student of their intent to observe such religious practice.
- f. Any other absences required to be excused by applicable state or federal law.

### **3.2 University Sanctioned Events or Activities**

- a. Participation in an authorized University activity, in which the student plays a formal, required role. Such activities include, but are not limited to, musical performances, academic competitions, and athletic events. Requests for excused absences and the required documentation of participation should be provided in advance of the absence.
- b. Student illness or immediate family member illness that the student must serve as the primary caretaker, with appropriate documentation.
- c. Death of an immediate family member
- d. Family Crisis situations. This includes accidents, major injuries, or other disasters that the student is responsible to manage

### **3.3 Faculty Discretionary absence**

- a. Non-closure weather-related emergencies that impact a student's capacity to reach campus or that require a student's presence off-campus.
- b. Mandatory interviews related to employment, professional school, and/or graduate school that cannot be rescheduled.
- c. University sponsored co-curricular activities due to their role in providing additional growth and career development.
- d. Any other situation deemed excusable by the instructor. Instructors are encouraged to show understanding toward students' needs while remaining mindful of the University's high academic standards that students learn in co-curricular activities as well.

## **Section 4. Accepted Types of Substantiating Documentation**

### **4.1. University-Sponsored Activities**

Appropriate verification from the instructor/department, Academic Affairs, Athletics, or Enrollment Management and Student Affairs.

### **4.2 Illness or Critical Illness/Death or other Unavoidable Circumstances**

- a. Verification must come from a licensed mental health or medical professional and contain the date and time of the in-person visit occasioned by the injury or illness and the anticipated duration of the absence.

- b. Obituary, funeral program, verification on letterhead stationary of the death and the relationship by the clergy or funeral home personnel.
- c. Or circumstance specific documentation to be reviewed by the Academic Affairs

#### **4.3 Military Duties and Obligations**

Military service-related medical appointments, military orders, or National Guard Service obligations must present official documentation of their orders to duty prior to absence

#### **4.4 Legal and Compulsory Activities**

Appropriate verification of subpoena or official notification of jury duty associated with local, state, or federal government must be submitted.

### **Section 5. Procedure and Appeals**

- 5.1 Students should contact the Office of Academic Affairs for excused absences that fall into categories with section 3.1 or 3.2 of this policy.
- 5.2 Students will complete the Excused Absence Request Form. Students will be required to submit substantiating documentation to verify excused absence. The Associate Provost will be responsible to review the request within 3 instructional days
- 5.3 If approved, instructors will be notified via email from the Academic Affairs Office.
  - a. If approved, the instructor must honor a university excused absence covered by this policy and allow the student an opportunity to catch up/make up work missed. Student shall not be penalized for a university excused absence. Instructors will provide students with an equal opportunity to make up the missed work consistent with the number of days missed, such as, if a student is excused for 3 days, instructors would allow the student 3 days to make up the work.
  - b. If denied, the student will be notified via email. (All WVSU students are expected to check their email at least once within 24 hours)
- 5.4 If a student is denied the excused absence that they believe should have been provided then they can appeal to a three-person committee composed of the Provost, Vice President for Student Affairs, and Vice President for Business and Finance (or their designee). This committee will make final determination if an absence should be treated as an excused absence.

### **Section 6. Special notes for faculty**

- 6.1. If the excused absence is a planned scheduled activity, then all work that was due must be turned in before the day of the absence
- 6.2 The University Title IX or Americans with Disability Act (ADA) Coordinators may be consulted with absence requests to ensure federal compliance.
- 6.3 This policy is limited to face to face lecture based courses. Asynchronous online courses are unique in structure and scheduling and some activities requiring excused absences for typical in person courses would not impact a student's ability to complete online course work.

- 6.4 Faculty/Instructors establish their own course attendance policies, and should include a clear statement of expectations for class attendance, as well as an attendance policy if attendance is factored into the calculation of the student's grade. Any such statement must be clearly defined in the course syllabus, and should delineate between excused and unexcused absences. These policies must conform to the University policy.
- 6.5 Faculty members are encouraged to work with students who experience legitimate and verifiable absences, as well as with staff and administrators responsible for student success, in such a way that both the faculty and students' educational goals are met. In some instances, however, the most viable option may be to encourage a student to withdraw from the course or seek an "Incomplete" grade.

*Policy History: New Policy*

*Cabinet Position and Department: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs*