

Summary of the proposed changes to Student Rule 7

The rule was completely rewritten as a recommendation to the Faculty Senate by the Student Rules and Regulations Committee for clarity and to incorporate substantive changes, hence the reference to the current version and the proposed version. The black-lined version at the beginning of the .pdf is the current rule; the red-print proposed version of the rule begins on page 6 of the .pdf.

Substantive changes:

- Eliminates the statement that “ an absence for non-acute medical services does not constitute an excused absence” [exists in current version of the rule section 7.1.6.3]
- In case of injury or illness too severe or contagious for the student to attend class less than three consecutive days, faculty members are prohibited from ever requiring documentation unless the requirement is included in the course syllabus [added in proposed version of the rule section 7.3.2.2.2]
- Addition to University mandatory excused absences: Mandatory interviews for employment and internships that cannot be rescheduled are added as required excused absences. “The student must provide documentation certifying that the interview cannot be rescheduled.” [added in proposed version of the rule 7.3.2.6, and in 7.2.3.4]
- Removes the reference to the “Texas A&M Explanatory Statement for Absence from Class” as an option of valid documentation for an excused absence if accepted by the faculty [exists in current rule 7.1.6.2a]

Clarifying changes:

- Added an expectation statement specific to distance education courses [added in introduction to the proposed rule]
- Clarifies that students cannot be required to provide HIPAA-protected health information [clarified in proposed rule 7.2.3.1]

- Adds suggested options/sources for documentation for absences [proposed version of the rule 7.2]
- Separately lists absences considered excused by federal/state law versus those defined by the university; included specific language from related laws for each category [separated in proposed version of the rule 7.3.1 and 7.3.2]

DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

**OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS**




Dr. Anne Reber
Dean of Student Life

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 11, 2017

TO: Dr. Leonard Bierman
Speaker, Faculty Senate

FROM: Dr. Anne Reber 
Chair, Rules and Regulations Committee

SUBJECT: Proposed Revisions to the Texas A&M Student Rules

Attached please find proposed revisions to the Texas A&M University Student Rules as approved by the Rules and Regulations Committee. These changes are for the following rule:

Change in Rule 7 Attendance

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Where Students Experience the Spirit of Aggieland

Student Rules and Regulations Committee

Proposal to Revise Rules

Page 2 of 8



(Additions to rules are bolded and in red font, deletions to rules are indicated by strikethrough)

PROPOSAL

Please see attached rule for extensive changes

JUSTIFICATION

The proposed changes to Student Rule 7 aim to accomplish several goals:

- Provide clearer direction regarding notification of absence
- Provide suggested options for documentation and clarify that HIPAA-protected information cannot be required
- Specifically identify absences that are considered excused by State or Federal law
- Extend university excused absence to job and internship interviews that cannot be rescheduled.

PROPOSED BY

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Approved by the Student Rules and Regulations Committee on 04/07/2017

(Additions to rules are bolded and in red font, deletions to rules are indicated by strikethrough)

Present Rule with additions in **bold red font** and deletions ~~struck~~

7. Attendance

(Revised: 2014-**2017**)

Introduction

~~The university views class attendance as an individual student responsibility. Students are expected to attend class and to complete all assignments. Instructors are expected to provide notice of the dates on which major exams will be given and assignments will be due on the course syllabus, which must be made available by the first class period. Graduate students are expected to attend all examinations required by departments or advisory committees as scheduled formally.~~

The School of Law requires regular and punctual attendance of students in all courses. Juris Doctorate (JD) students are not required to seek an excused absence from an instructor or equivalent, but students will be administratively dropped from a class for excessive absences as defined in the [School of Law Academic Standards](#). JD students are expected to take examinations as scheduled. Requests to reschedule an examination must be submitted to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in accordance with the process set forth in the [School of Law Academic Standards](#).

Students who are requesting an excused absence are expected to uphold the Aggie Honor Code and Student Conduct Code ([See Rule 24](#)).

Excused Absences

~~7.1 The student is responsible for providing satisfactory evidence to the instructor to substantiate the reason for absence. Among the reasons absences are considered excused by the university are the following: (Muster)~~

~~7.1.1 Participation in an activity appearing on the university authorized activity list. ([see List of Authorized and Sponsored Activities](#))~~

~~7.1.2 Death or major illness in a student's immediate family. Immediate family may include: mother, father, sister, brother, grandparents, spouse, child, spouse's child, spouse's parents, spouse's grandparents, step-mother, step-father, step-sister, step-brother, step-grandparents, grandchild, step-grandchild, legal guardian, and others as deemed appropriate by faculty member or student's academic Dean or designee.~~

~~7.1.3 Illness of a dependent family member.~~

~~7.1.4 Participation in legal proceedings or administrative procedures that require a student's presence.~~

~~7.1.5 Religious holy day. ([See Appendix IV](#).)~~

~~7.1.6 Injury or illness that is too severe or contagious for the student to attend class.~~

~~7.1.6.1 Injury or illness of three or more days. For injury or illness that requires a student to be absent from classes for three or more business days (to include classes on Saturday), the student should obtain a medical confirmation note from his or her medical provider. The Student Health 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. The medical confirmation note must contain the date and time of the illness and medical professional's confirmation of needed absence.~~

~~7.1.6.2 Injury or illness less than three days. Faculty members may require confirmation of student injury or illness that is serious enough for a student to be absent from class for a period less than three business days (to include classes on Saturday). At the discretion of the faculty~~

(Additions to rules are bolded and in red font, deletions to rules are indicated by strikethrough)

~~member and/or academic department standard, as outlined in the course syllabus, illness confirmation may be obtained by one or both of the following methods:~~

~~a. Texas A&M University Explanatory Statement for Absence from Class form available at <http://attendance.tamu.edu>.~~

~~b. Confirmation of visit to a health care professional affirming date and time of visit.~~

~~7.1.6.3 An absence for a non-acute medical service does not constitute an excused absence.~~

~~7.1.7 Required participation in military duties.~~

~~7.1.8 Mandatory admission interviews for professional or graduate school which cannot be rescheduled.~~

~~7.1.9 Mandatory participation as a student athlete in NCAA sanctioned competition.~~

~~7.1.10 In accordance with Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Texas A&M University shall treat pregnancy (childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy and recovery therefrom) and related conditions as a justification for an excused absence for so long a period of time as is deemed medically necessary by the student's physician. Requests for excused absence related to pregnancy should be directed to the instructor; questions about Title IX should be directed to the University Title IX Coordinator.~~

~~7.2 The associate dean for undergraduate programs, or the dean's designee, of the student's college may provide a letter for the student to take to the instructor stating that the dean has verified the student's absence as excused.~~

~~7.3 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 in Section 7.1, or other reason deemed appropriate by the student's instructor. Except in the case of the observance of a religious holiday, 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 or after the absence, but not later than two working days after the absence.~~

~~If needed, the student must provide additional documentation substantiating the reason for the absence, that is satisfactory to the instructor, within one week of the last date of the 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 upon by the student and instructor. If an instructor has a regularly scheduled make-up exam, students are expected to attend unless they have a university approved excuse. The make-up work must be completed in a timeframe not to exceed 30 calendar days from the last day of the initial absence.~~

~~7.4 The instructor is under no obligation to provide an opportunity for the student to make up work missed because of an unexcused absence.~~

~~7.5 See [Part III, Grievance Procedures: 49. Unexcused Absences](#), for information on appealing an instructor's decision.~~

~~7.6 If the student is absent for excused reasons for an unreasonable amount of time during the semester, the academic Dean or designee of the student's college may consider giving the student a grade of W during the semester enrolled or a NG (no grade) following posting of final grades.~~

~~7.7 Whenever a student is absent for unknown reasons for an extended period of time, the instructor should initiate a check on the welfare of the student by reporting through the head of the student's major department to the Dean or designee of the student's college.~~

(Additions to rules are bolded and in red font, deletions to rules are indicated by strikethrough)

~~† In accordance with Faculty Senate Resolution FS.14.101 (see Faculty Senate meeting minutes of Feb. 10, 1997), "faculty members are encouraged not to hold exams on the day of Muster. Any absence from classes beginning after 5 p.m. to attend Muster will be considered a university excused absence."~~

Introduction

Introduction

Class attendance and participation is an individual student responsibility. Students taking traditional face-to-face courses are expected to attend class and to complete all assignments by stated due dates. Students enrolled in distance education courses are expected to regularly engage with instructional materials and complete all assignments by stated due dates. Instructors are expected to provide notice of the dates on which major exams will be given and assignments will be due on the course syllabus, which must be made available by the first class period. Graduate and professional students are also expected to attend all examinations required by departments or advisory committees as formally scheduled such as, but not limited to, qualifying exams, preliminary exams and final defenses.

The School of Law requires regular and punctual attendance of students in all courses. Juris Doctorate (JD) students are not required to seek an excused absence from an instructor or equivalent, but students will be administratively dropped from a class for excessive absences as defined in the School of Law Academic Standards. JD students are expected to take examinations as scheduled. Requests to reschedule an examination must be submitted to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in accordance with the process set forth in the School of Law Academic Standards.

Students who are requesting an excused absence are expected to adhere to the Aggie Honor Code and Student Conduct Code (See Rule 24).

7.1 Notification of Absence

7.1.1 Except in the case of the observance of a religious holy day, to be considered for an excused absence the student must notify the 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, the student must provide notification by the end of the second working day after the last date of the absence. This notification should include an explanation of why notice could not be sent prior to the date of absence.

7.2 Absence Documentation and Verification

7.2.1 If required as described in Section 7.3 or in the course syllabus, the student is responsible for providing documentation that is satisfactory to the instructor substantiating the reason for the absence within one calendar week of the last date of the absence.

7.2.2 As described in Student Rule 24.4.1., a student furnishing false information to a university official is subject to conduct sanctions as outlined in Student Rule 27.

7.2.3 Absence documentation may include, but is not limited to, the following:

7.2.3.1 A medical confirmation note from the student's medical provider. The medical professional can provide a medical confirmation note only if medical professionals are involved in the medical care of the student. The medical confirmation note must contain the date and time of the medical assessment and the date at which the student may return to classes. Students cannot be required to provide detailed medical information.

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7.2.3.2 A medical confirmation note from the medical provider involved in the care of the student's immediate family member or dependent. The medical professional can provide a medical confirmation note only if medical professionals are involved in the medical care of the immediate family member or dependent. Students cannot be required to provide detailed medical information.

7.2.3.3 Death notice, obituary, or death certificate for a student's immediate family member.

7.2.3.4 Documentation regarding the scheduling of legal proceedings, administrative procedures, or mandatory interviews for employment, internships, or professional or graduate school. Documentation for interviews must include confirmation that the interview cannot be rescheduled.

7.2.3.5 Instructors may also use the university authorized activity list, on-line interfaith calendars, athletic competition schedules, and other published resources to confirm student absences.

7.2.4 If an instructor is unable to confirm a student's absence documentation or if documentation is not available, the dean or designee of the student's college may evaluate the student's case and, if verified, provide statement to the instructor verifying the student's absence as excused.

7.3 Absences

7.3.1 Excused Absences Defined by State and Federal Regulations

7.3.1.1 In accordance with Texas Education Code Section 51.911 Religious Holy Days, Texas A&M University shall excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. An instructor may appropriately respond if the student fails to satisfactorily complete the assignment or examination within a reasonable time after the absence. Questions about religious holy days should be directed to the Dean of Faculties.

7.3.1.2 In accordance with Texas Education Code Section 51.9111 Excused Absence for Active Military Service, Texas A&M University shall excuse a student from attending classes or engaging in other required activities, including examinations, in order for the student to participate in active military service to which the student is called, including travel associated with the service. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to complete an assignment or take an examination from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. An instructor may appropriately respond if the student fails to satisfactorily complete the assignment or examination within a reasonable time after the absence.

7.3.1.3 In accordance with Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Texas A&M University shall treat pregnancy (childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy and recovery there from) and related conditions as a justification for an excused absence for so long a period of time as is deemed medically necessary by the student's physician. Requests for excused absence related to pregnancy should be directed to the instructor; questions about Title IX should be directed to the University Title IX Coordinator.

7.3.2 Excused Absences Defined by Texas A&M University (Muster¹)

7.3.2.1 Participation in an activity appearing on the university authorized activity list. (see List of Authorized and Sponsored Activities)

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7.3.2.2 Injury or Illness that is too severe or contagious for the student to attend class.

7.3.2.2.1 Injury or illness of three or more consecutive days. For injury or illness that requires a student to be absent from classes for three or more consecutive days (to include classes on Saturday), the student should obtain documentation as described in Section 7.2.

7.3.2.2.2 Injury or illness less than three consecutive days. At the discretion of the instructor or academic department standard, instructors may require documentation confirming student injury or illness that is serious enough for a student to be absent from class for a period less than three consecutive days (to include classes on Saturday) as described in Section 7.2. Any requirement for documentation confirming student injury or illness of less than three consecutive days must be included in the course syllabus. If the course syllabus does not include requirements for documentation, no documentation is required for injury of illness less than three consecutive days.

7.3.2.3 Death or major illness in a student's immediate family. Immediate family may include: parents, siblings, grandparents, spouse, child, spouse's child, spouse's parents, spouse's grandparents, step-parents, step-siblings, step-grandparents, grandchild, step-grandchild, legal guardian, and others as deemed appropriate by faculty member or student's academic dean or designee.

7.3.2.4 Illness of a dependent family member.

7.3.2.5 Participation in legal proceedings or administrative procedures that require a student's presence that cannot be rescheduled.

7.3.2.6 Mandatory interviews for employment, internships, or professional or graduate school which cannot be rescheduled. The student must provide documentation confirming that the interview cannot be rescheduled.

7.3.2.7 Mandatory participation as a student-athlete in NCAA-sanctioned competition.

7.4 Make-up Work

7.4.1 Students may be excused from attending class on the day or due date of a graded activity or when attendance contributes to a student's grade, for the reasons stated in Section 7.3, or other reason deemed appropriate by the student's instructor. 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 upon by the student and instructor. If an instructor has a regularly scheduled make up exam, students are expected to attend unless they have an excused absence. Make-up work must be completed in a timeframe not to exceed 30 calendar days from the last day of the initial absence. Absences related to Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 (see Section 7.3.1.3) may necessitate a period of more than 30 days for make-up work, and the timeframe for make-up work should be agreed upon by the student and instructor.

7.4.2 The instructor is under no obligation to provide an opportunity for the student to make up work missed because of an unexcused absence.

7.4.3 See Part III, Grievance Procedures: 49. Unexcused Absences, for information on appealing an instructor's decision regarding an excused absence.

7.5 Extended Absences

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7.5.1 If the student is absent for excused reasons for an unreasonable amount of time during the semester, the academic dean or designee of the student's college may consider giving the student a grade of W during the semester enrolled or a NG (no grade) following posting of final grades.

7.5.2 Whenever a student is absent for unknown reasons for an extended period of time, the instructor may initiate a check on the welfare of the student by reporting through the head of the student's major department to the dean or designee of the student's college.

¹ In accordance with Faculty Senate Resolution FS.14.101 (see Faculty Senate meeting minutes of Feb. 10, 1997), "faculty members are encouraged not to hold exams on the day of Muster. Any absence from classes beginning after 5 p.m. to attend Muster will be considered a university excused absence."