

To: Julie Harlin, Speaker of the Faculty Senate

From: Ann Kenimer, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies

Date: 2 April 2019

Re: Student Rule 7 Attendance, summary of proposed changes

This comprehensive revision of Student Rule 7 Attendance was proposed by a special task force comprised of representatives from the Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee; student leadership; Student Affairs; and department-, college-, and university-level administrators. The proposed rule language was subsequently reviewed and edited by the Student Rules and Regulations Committee. Because the red-line mark-up of the proposed change is extensive, a summary of changes to the rule follows:

Introduction

- Added an expectations statement specific to distance education courses

7.1 Notification of Absence

- Moved to the beginning of the rule to highlight the need for notification and applicable deadlines

7.2.1 Absences Defined by State and Federal Regulation

- Separately listed absences considered excused by federal/state law versus those defined by the university; included specific language from related laws for each category
- Added a new category of federally-defined absence related to ADA requirements to support students with disabilities including chronic illnesses (e.g., Crohn's disease)

7.2.2 Absences Defined by Texas A&M University

- Dropped separate listing for personal injury or illness of less than three days and now require documentation for personal injury or illness, regardless of the duration of the absence
- Added language that interviews for graduate and professional school be mandatory, fixed date by university/school policy, and cannot be rescheduled
- Added language to include mandatory interviews for permanent, full-time employment and full-time internships having a duration of at least 10 weeks that are related to the student's academic program, are fixed date by employer policy and cannot be rescheduled; absences related to interviews are limited to one per term
- Added language to include presentation at professional conferences related to the student's academic program
- Added language that for compelling reasons not already defined, the dean or dean's designee of the student's college with the support of the dean or dean's designee of the college offering the course may provide a statement verifying the absence as excused

7.3.1 Absence Verification

- Clarified that the instructor has the authority to evaluate absence documentation and determine whether or not the absence is excused
- Clarified that instructors may choose to defer confirmation of absence documentation to the dean of the student's college with support of the dean or designee of the college offering the course
- Provided publically-available resources that may be used to validate excused absences

7.3.2 Absence Documentation

- Provided examples of documentation that could be used to validate an excused absence and, for some absences, related deadlines for submission of documentation
- Removed reference to the student-reported "Statement of Absence" form
- Clarified that students cannot be required to provide HIPAA-protected health information
- Included documentation for employment/internship interviews and professional conference presentations

7.4 Make-up Work

- Added a recommendation that students with scheduled absences work with instructors to complete make-up work in advance of the absence
- Clarified that make-up work related to Title IX (section 7.2.1.3) may require more than 30 days

7.5 Extended Absences

- This text remains largely unchanged

To: Julie Harlin
Faculty Senate Speaker

From: Anne Reber
Chair, Rules & Regulations Committee

RE: Rule Change Proposals from March Meeting of Rules & Regulations Committee

Date: March 6, 2019

The Rules & Regulations Committee reviewed two rule change proposals during its March meeting. Below find a brief explanation of the rule change proposals approved. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

Student Rule 7

Dr. Ann Kenimer provided a draft of proposed rule changes after working with a task force of individuals from the campus community including students, faculty and staff during the fall semester. The document you are receiving is the final product with the changes to the original rule marked in red.

Student Rule 24.4.23

Changes proposed and accepted were simply to clarify the types of hearings or proceedings that students could disrupt or inappropriately influence.

DRAFT - Revisions

7. Attendance

(Revised: 2019)

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](#).

Violation of this attendance policy is subject to disciplinary action through the Aggie Honor System Office and the Student Code of Conduct (see Rule 24).

7.1 **Notification of Absences**

7.1.1 Unless otherwise stated in this rule, to be considered for an excused absence the student must notify the instructor in writing (e-mail is acceptable) prior to the day of absence. In cases where advanced notification is not possible, the student must provide notification by the end of the second business day after the last date of the absence. This notification must include an explanation of why notice could not be sent.

7.2 **Absences**

7.2.1 Excused Absences Defined by State and Federal Regulations

7.2.1.1 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.

7.2.1.2 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.

7.2.1.3 In accordance with Title IX of the Education 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 medical provider. 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.

7.2.1.4 In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Texas A&M University shall provide equal access for students with disabilities. Some students with disabilities may qualify for an attendance policy modification and should provide the instructor with proper notification from Disability Services concerning this accommodation prior to a disability-related absence. Questions about disability-related absence should be directed to Disability Services.

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

7.2.2.1 Personal injury or illness that is too severe or contagious for the student to attend class.

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

7.2.2.2 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.

7.2.2.3 Illness of a dependent family member.

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

7.2.2.4 Participation in legal or governmental proceedings that require a student's presence and that cannot be rescheduled.

7.2.2.5 Graduate or professional school interviews which are mandatory, and fixed date by university/school policy, which cannot be rescheduled.

7.2.2.6 Mandatory interviews for permanent, full-time employment or full-time internships (including those that are part of a cooperative education program) that have a duration of at least 10 weeks, provided that such interviews are related to the student's academic program and provided that the interviews are fixed date by employer policy and cannot be rescheduled. A student may not request excused absences for employment or internship interviews for more than one scheduled class meeting in one academic term.

7.2.2.7 Presentation of research or scholarship at a professional conference related to the student's academic program, provided that the student is a presenter.

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

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

7.2.2.10 For compelling reasons not included in Section 7.2, the dean or dean's designee of the student's college with the support of the dean or dean's designee of the college offering the course may provide a statement (email is acceptable) that the deans or designees have verified the absence as excused.

7.3 Absence Documentation and Verification

7.3.1 Absence Verification

7.3.1.1 The student is responsible for providing documentation substantiating the reason for the absence, including reasons stated in Section 7.2. This documentation must be provided within three business days of the last date of the absence, unless otherwise stated in this rule.

7.3.1.2 An instructor may confirm a student's absence documentation and excuse a student from attending class for the reasons stated in Section 7.2 or other reasons deemed appropriate by the student's instructor.

7.3.1.3 An instructor may choose to defer confirmation of a student's absence documentation, including cases when documentation is not available. Upon deferral, the dean or dean's designee of the student's college with the support of the dean or dean's designee of the college offering the course may provide a statement (email is acceptable) that the deans or designees have verified the absence as excused.

7.3.1.4 The university authorized activity list, on-line interfaith calendars, athletic competition schedules, and other published resources may be used to confirm student absences.

7.3.1.5 Students who furnish false information may be found in violation of Student Rule 24.4.1 and the Aggie Honor Code.

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

7.3.2.1 A medical confirmation note from the student's medical provider. The medical provider 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.

7.3.2.2 A medical confirmation note from the medical provider involved in the care of the student's immediate family member or dependent. The medical provider 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.

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

7.3.2.4 Documentation regarding the scheduling of legal or governmental proceedings that require a student's presence and that cannot be rescheduled.

7.3.2.5 Documentation regarding the scheduling of mandatory admission interviews for professional or graduate schools as described in 7.2.2.5. Documentation must be provided 5 business days in advance.

7.3.2.6 Documentation regarding the scheduling of mandatory interviews as described in 7.2.2.6. Documentation from the employer must be provided 5 business days in advance.

7.3.2.7 Documentation regarding the scheduling of presentations of research or scholarship as described in 7.2.2.7. Documentation for professional conference presentations must include confirmation of the student's role as a presenter. Documentation must be provided 5 business days in advance.

7.4 Make up Work

7.4.1 If **a student's** 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. Students are encouraged to work with instructors to complete make-up work in advance of known scheduled absences (interviews, administrative proceedings, etc).** 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 Education Amendments of 1972 (see Section 7.2.1.3) 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

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."

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