

FAQs

Does Penn State have university-wide policies on student absence from courses? Yes. The University Faculty Senate Policy is [42-27: Class Attendance](#). The policy recognizes that on occasion, students may opt to miss a class meeting in order to participate in a regularly scheduled university-approved curricular or extracurricular activity, or due to unavoidable or other legitimate circumstances such as illness, injury, family emergency, or religious observance.

The procedures for Senate Policy 42-27 are implemented as Academic Administrative Policy and Procedure [E-11: Class Attendance](#). E-11 expands on the brief summaries provided here.

How much notice does a student have to provide for a foreseeable absence? Whenever reasonable, a student should submit a [class absence form](#) a week in advance.

Are religious observances considered legitimate reasons to miss class? Yes, religious observance can be a legitimate reason for an absence. Academic Administrative Policy and Procedure [R-4, Religious Observances](#), provides further information and a link to an all inclusive list which provides both major and minor religious holidays, maintained by the Center for Ethics and Religious Affairs.

If a student is ill, must she or he provide a physician's verification? Generally, no. As of Fall 2002, University Health Services (UHS) no longer provides verification of illness forms for minor illnesses or injuries. Verification will be provided only for serious illnesses for which UHS clinicians provided services, or when UHS has received such documentation from outside providers.

What if a student misses a quiz, test, or homework assignment as a result of a legitimate absence? Students should be provided with a reasonable opportunity to make up missed work. The University does recognize that this increases the burden on faculty. However, simply

re-weighting other assessments used to determine the course grade or similar approaches are not consistent with giving opportunity to make up the work. As a matter of policy, the faculty's rule-making body—the Faculty Senate—and the administration through the Administrative Council on Undergraduate Education—are in agreement. A student burdened by an unavoidable absence should not be denied the full mosaic of learning opportunities, including tests and quizzes, enjoyed by her or his peers.

What if the instructor believes that students' continued absences are causing harm to their academic achievement? If an instructor believes a requested absence for regularly scheduled events will harm a student scholastically, the instructor should present evidence for necessary action to the head of the department in which the course is offered and inform the assistant/associate dean of the college in which the student is enrolled, or to the Division of Undergraduate Studies if the student is so enrolled.