

The University Senate of Michigan Technological University
Proposal 2-25
(Voting Units: Academic)

Proposal to Amend Senate Policy 102.1: Policy on Class Attendance
Presented by: Academic and Instructional Policy Committee

This proposal seeks to amend the current policy to eliminate any reference to absences because of COVID-19. With the COVID-19 pandemic behind us, COVID-19 absences should be treated like any other illness that would prevent students from attending class as noted by the [CDC guidance](#). Students will need to provide documentation from a medical provider to receive an excused absence from the Dean of Students Office.

Edits have also been made to the policy to make it more clear to students and instructors and to redefine the parameters of what constitutes an excused absence. In the 2023-2024 academic year, the Dean of Students Office processed 1270 absences from 1500 requests. This does not include absences related to a disability. After benchmarking with the other 14 Public Universities in the State of Michigan and several other universities, we are the only University that grants excused absences for less than 3 days. A point about limits on excused absences was also added to reduce the number of instances when students are asking for excused absences after the semester has ended.

Additions and corrections have been made in red.

Policy

- Attending class is essential for academic success. The University expects students to attend all scheduled class times unless an absence is excused under this policy. An excused absence is one in which a student is absent due to an off-campus event (see below) or involves a legitimate extenuating circumstance (**with documentation**) which causes the student to miss class **for three or more days**, or **miss a major assignment and/or examination**. ~~other graded requirement of the class.~~
- Students should contact the Dean of Students Office for excused absences of 3 or more consecutive days **or if their absence resulted in missing a major assignment or examination** ~~or other graded requirement of the class.~~

- Students do not need to contact the Dean of Students Office for excused absences involving fewer than 3 consecutive days. Students are expected to notify their instructors of any absences as soon as possible. Instructors have the discretion to excuse student absences for reasons other than described in this attendance policy.
- **Excused absences will be considered within 30 days of the requested dates (with proper documentation). Excused absences will not be granted after 30 days of the requested dates and/or the conclusion of the semester.**

Categories of University excused absences:

- Off-campus events:
 - Including intercollegiate athletics; fine arts performances; **Academic** program-sponsored competitions; **academic** program-sponsored field trips; and similar official events where students represent the University in an official capacity.
 - The instructor or staff supervising students participating in these events must provide notice to the students' instructors and the Dean of Students Office prior to the date of the activity. The notice must include the name of the activity, the date(s) of class absence, the name of the supervising instructor or staff, and the names of all participating students.
- Absences involving legitimate extenuating circumstances beyond a student's Control: Examples of situations in which an excused absence notification may be sent out to a student's faculty members, include:
 - Medical or mental health hospitalizations
 - Serious accidents
 - Death of close loved one
 - Student impacted by natural disaster
 - Military duty;
 - Jury duty or subpoena for court appearances

Documentation Requirements:

~~With the exception of extended absences related to COVID-19,~~ Documentation will be required for all absences of three or more consecutive days or when the student missed a major assignment and/or an examination ~~or other graded requirement of the class.~~

- ~~COVID-19 related absences—Students will contact the Dean of Students Office for assistance and support services. Students are encouraged to seek COVID-19 testing as per the recommendations of the CDC, Western Upper Peninsula Health Department, etc. Following the recommendation of the American College Health Association in their document Considerations for Reopening Institutions of Higher Education in the COVID-19 Era, students who become ill due to COVID-19 will not be required to make unnecessary visits to a healthcare provider for the purposes of obtaining documentation. Students advised by the university or through government recommendations/regulations to self-isolate for a period of time, will not be required to provide documentation from a healthcare provider. These students will work with the Dean of Students Office for assistance and support services.~~

Instructors retain the discretion to excuse student absences for reasons other than those described in the above paragraphs. Students participating in activities on behalf of a student organization may obtain a verified absence letter from the Student Activities Office. This letter is meant to confirm a student's participation in an extracurricular activity and may be presented to the instructor when requesting an absence from class.

Students are responsible for notifying their instructors prior to missing a class and arranging a mutually-acceptable make-up procedure. In emergency situations, where students are unable to notify their instructors, students should promptly contact the Dean of Students Office for assistance.

Students with an excused absence shall be allowed to earn full credit for missing assignments by performing equivalent work, as long as the instructor deems that the learning objectives of the course can still be met. Where this is in question, it should be determined in conversation between the student and the instructor, if necessary in consultation with the Dean of Students. This conversation should happen as soon as possible. The substance of the equivalent work and the deadline for its completion shall be determined by the instructor. Instructors concerned with a student's excessive absence should contact the Dean of Students Office for advice and assistance.

The Dean of Students Office may be contacted by an instructor or a student for assistance in informally resolving any disputes under this policy. If a dispute cannot be resolved informally, the student may follow the Student Academic Grievance policy.