



Institutional Absences

Purpose

This policy outlines the expectations of students to attend all scheduled class sessions. It also outlines the parameters for institutional absences and the responsibilities of students and faculty.

Persons Affected

This policy applies to students and faculty.

Definitions

Collaborative Learning Activities: activities that require participation with other students during class time, such as labs, class discussions, and rehearsals. By their nature, some collaborative learning activities may not be possible to make up.

Day: any business day (Monday – Friday) when the University is open.

Faculty: The person hired by the University to conduct classroom or teaching activities or who is otherwise considered by the University to be a faculty member.

Institutional Absence: an absence deemed by the University to be excused where Faculty must honor and allow for make-up of all missed work or activities.

Keystone Events: a special or unique assignment, test, project, experience, or other academic exercise identified by the faculty member as critical for successful completion of standards of the class and unable to be missed. These events must be identified on the syllabus at the beginning of the semester and communicated to the students. Events added to the syllabus later will not qualify for Keystone Event status. Keystone Events where the date/time is changed will no longer be considered a Keystone Event.

Policy

Students are expected to attend all classes, laboratories, and other class-related activities on a regular and punctual basis. Attendance and make-up policies will be stated in the course syllabus. For those classes where attendance is a factor in the course grade, an accurate record of attendance will be maintained. An Institutional Absence may be granted to a student who participates as a representative of the University in academic (including research), extra- or co-curricular, or athletic activities. Students may be excused for institutional purposes from otherwise required academic activity only when a valid Institutional Absence is approved by the appropriate administrative unit or official. Students seeking attendance accommodation should contact Disability Services.

Institutional Absences will not be approved for Keystone Events as defined above. The student is responsible for identifying conflicts with a Keystone Event and changing class sections or taking the class later.



At the discretion of the faculty, students may be excused from attendance for reasons not defined as Institutional Absences under this policy. When possible, students should notify their faculty in advance about absences. Students requesting an absence for reasons not defined under this policy should contact their faculty.

Authorized administrative units or officials may, upon application, grant an Institutional Absence, as defined below, to qualified students who will participate as a representative of the University in academic (including research), extra- or co-curricular, or athletic activities.

Academic. Approved by the academic dean, or their designee, of the relevant academic college, the Academic Institutional Absence may be issued to students who participate in i) curriculum-based, scheduled course activity outside of a normal class meeting time; or ii) academically-oriented or post-graduation career activity (e.g., conferences, research presentations, graduate school interviews, job interviews related to earned degrees, etc.).

Athletic. Approved by the Faculty Athletics Representative, or their designee, the Athletic Institutional Absence may be issued to students who participate in athletic events sanctioned by the National Collegiate Athletic Association ("NCAA").

Extra- or Co-Curricular. Approved by the Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students, or their designee, the Extra- or Co-curricular Institutional Absence may be issued to students who participate in approved extracurricular or co-curricular events sponsored by student clubs and organizations.

Military. Those students seeking Institutional Absences for military reasons should reference SFA HOP 04-112.

Procedures

Institutional Absence requests for Academic, Athletics, or Extra- or Co-Curricular reasons should be submitted on the Institutional Absences website. Those Institutional Absences for Military reasons should be submitted in accordance with SFA HOP 04-112.

Student Responsibilities

Students will follow the attendance policy outlined in the course syllabus and are responsible for applying for, obtaining, and confirming with their faculty their relevant Institutional Absences in a timely manner as outlined in this policy. Students should make themselves aware of any Keystone Events identified in the syllabus to ensure there are no conflicts. Students must notify their affected faculty and present a copy of their approved Institutional Absence forms no later than five (5) Days prior to any anticipated absence. In circumstances where a five-day notice is not possible, exceptions to the required five (5) day notice will be made. Students should contact their faculty members as soon as possible to discuss the circumstances. In such circumstances, the sponsoring faculty or staff member will notify impacted faculty directly on the student's behalf.



Falsifying or otherwise submitting an Institutional Absence application in bad faith is subject to corrective disciplinary action up to and including expulsion in accordance with the University's applicable conduct policies and procedures.

Student athletes are required to provide each of their faculty members with a schedule of all athletic events in which they are required to participate as a member of one of the university's NCAA-sanctioned athletic teams, prior to the beginning of each season. Athletics will notify all impacted faculty at the beginning of each sport season.

All students must notify their faculty of any planned absence, provide the Institutional Absence approval form and discuss arrangements for missed work with faculty members as soon as possible. The student is responsible for following up with their faculty on any missed work.

Faculty Responsibilities

All faculty must honor Institutional Absences granted under this policy. The options for doing so include, but are not limited to, permitting an excused student to complete in advance or to make up afterward all assignments, tests, quizzes, examinations, or any other evaluation-reliant coursework or class activity missed during an Institutional Absence, so long as the student is not penalized. The timeline and other details for completing the make-up work will be determined by the faculty. Faculty must also identify any Keystone Events as part of the class and communicate these during the first meeting.

Faculty have the discretion whether to honor absences not covered in this policy or Institutional Absences provided less than five (5) Days prior to the start date of the Institutional Absence unless a five-day notice is not possible as discussed above. Requests provided after the start date of the Institutional Absence will not be honored.

Whether absences are excused or unexcused by the faculty, a student is still responsible for all course content and assignments. Students with Institutional Absences will be permitted to make up work for absences equaling no more than 15% of the scheduled meeting times for the term, depending on the nature of the missed work. Faculty will have the discretion to allow students to make up work more than the 15%.

Related Statutes or Regulations, Rules, Policies, or Standards

SFA HOP 04-111 Military Service Activation

SFA HOP 02-102 Class Attendance

SFA HOP 04-101 Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Responsible Executive

Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs & Provost; Vice President of Student Affairs; Director of Athletics

Forms



**STEPHEN F. AUSTIN
STATE UNIVERSITY**

Handbook of
Operating Procedures

Policy Number: 04-110
Last Revised: May 30, 2024

Institutional [Absence Request Forms](#)

Revision History

September 1, 2023 (original)
May 30, 2024