

# THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE AT CHATTANOOGA

## Title: Policy on Student Academic Absences

### I. PURPOSE

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga ("UTC") is committed to maintaining a safe, healthy, and supportive learning community. This policy provides a consistent process for the management of student academic absences requests, allowing for a fair and equitable process for student absences across academic disciplines.

### II. DEFINITIONS

- A. "Academic Department" refers to any University department with responsibility for one or more academic disciplines.
- B. "Business day" refers to an official workday during which the University conducts business. Typically, a business day is a weekday (Monday through Friday), excluding any weekdays designated by the University as a holiday or in which the University is administratively closed. Each business day commences at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 5:00 p.m.
- C. "Course Requirements" refers to all obligations outlined in the catalogue and course syllabus, including but not limited to attendance at course sessions, participation in experiential learning opportunities, and completion of assignments and examinations.
- D. "Faculty" or "Course Instructor" refers to any University employee who holds faculty rank and whose primary appointment is to engage in academic instruction, research, or service.
- E. "Office of Student Conduct" refers to the University office designated with primary responsibility for administering and enforcing the Student Code of Conduct and implementing student conduct-related rules, policies, procedures, training, and education.
- F. "Office of Student Outreach and Support" refers to the office designated with primary responsibility for non-clinical case management for University students.
- G. "Student(s)" refers to a person who is admitted, enrolled or registered for study at the University, either full-time or part-time, pursuing undergraduate, graduate, professional, and/or non-degree courses; or has completed a preceding academic term at the University and is eligible for re-enrollment without re-applying for admission and/or otherwise has a continuing relationship with the University.
- H. "University" or "UTC" refers to the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

### III. ATTENDANCE REQUESTS AND PROCESS

Students are expected to attend all class sessions and complete all course requirements, including but not limited to course sessions, experiential learning (e.g. laboratory experiments, clinical

observation, internship, practicum), assignments (e.g. readings, oral or written assignments), examinations, and other requirements outlined in the course syllabus. If a student is unable to attend course session or experiential learning opportunity, or complete an assignment, examination, or other requirement due to documented bereavement (death), medical concern, military obligation, legal obligation, University-approved activity, or other reason, the student may request an excused absence or assignment extension.

A. Absence requests are submitted to the Office of Student Outreach & Support by visiting [www.utc.edu/excuse](http://www.utc.edu/excuse).

1. Requests should be submitted a minimum of five (5) business days prior to the absence (if pre-planned) or within five (5) business days after the absence (if unexpected or emergent).
2. All requests must include supporting documentation.
3. Requests will generally be reviewed within one (1) to two (2) business days.
4. Verified requests will be sent to course instructors via e-mail.
5. The Office of Student Outreach & Support reserves the right to grant or reject requests.
6. Submitting a false request or documentation will result in a referral to the Office of Student Conduct for disciplinary action.

B. Upon receipt of a verified request, a course instructor may:

1. Allow the student to be excused from a course session or experiential learning opportunity; OR
2. Allow the student to complete the missed course assignment, examination, or other obligation at a date determined by the course instructor; OR
3. Assign the student an alternative assignment, examination, experiential learning opportunity, or other obligation at a date determined by the course instructor.

C. A course instructor may deny verified requests if the instructor believes that the student cannot reasonably achieve course learning objectives due to:

1. The student has missed more than the number of course sessions or experiential learning opportunities, as determined reasonable by the academic department; OR
2. The student has missed more the number of course assignments, examinations, or other obligations, as determined reasonable by the academic department.

D. Students who are denied absence excuses are encouraged to consult with the Office of Student Outreach & Support regarding the University's Withdrawal process.

E. Academic departments will develop and submit department-specific attendance procedures to the Office of Student Outreach and Support, which shall be added as an appendix to this policy.

1. All department-specific procedures must be consistent with this and other University policies.
2. The Office of Student Outreach and Support will maintain a website with up-to-date department-specific procedures.

3. Department-specific procedures will be reviewed on or before the review deadline for this policy.
- F. Course instructors may not deny verified requests if law or policy require otherwise (e.g. T.C.A. § 49-7-2305 – Excused Absences for Documented Mandatory Military Service; T.C.A. § 4-1-407 – Free exercise of religion; burden by government entity).

#### **IV. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Students who are unable to fulfill requirements outlined in the course syllabus due to ability or disability must register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to receive appropriate educational accommodations.

#### **V. HISTORY AND REVIEW**

- A. This is the first version of this policy.
- B. This policy is effective [INSERT DATE]. This policy shall be reviewed on or before August 1, [INSERT 5 YEARS AFTER EFFECTIVE DATE]

**AUTHORIZATION**

REVIEWED BY:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Office of General Counsel

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Policy Review Committee Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chancellor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date