



ATTENDANCE POLICY	
Responsible Official: <b>PROVOST</b>	Responsible Office: <b>OFFICE OF THE PROVOST</b>

### Policy Purpose

This policy specifies ETSU's expectations for class attendance and provides guidelines for make-up exams and coursework necessitated by excused absences.

### Policy Statement

East Tennessee State University affirms the value of class attendance as a significant factor in student success. Failure to attend and participate in class regularly can adversely affect student learning, achievement of course objectives, and progression through an academic program. ETSU does not specify a maximum number of class absences as university-wide policy; each department or college within the university has the right to set a maximum number of absences permitted during an academic term. A department or college attendance policy should be published in each course syllabus. Any approved departmental attendance policy must be documented in meeting minutes and approved by the dean of the school/college.

To assist ETSU in complying with federal regulations pertaining to financial aid, instructors are required to report student non-attendance at the start of each academic term. If a student stops attending a class, the instructor records a last date of attendance. Depending on the circumstances and timing, the last day of attendance can adversely affect financial aid, scholarships, veteran's benefits, and other types of assistance, including the loss of such benefits. Student misrepresentation of an excused absence constitutes academic misconduct.

- I. Class Attendance.
  - A. Students are expected to attend each meeting of every class for which the student is registered.
  - B. Each instructor shall include the attendance policy on the course syllabus so that all students will be fully informed of their attendance responsibilities, including penalties imposed for failing to meet these responsibilities.

- C. A student who is absent from class is expected to assume the responsibility for making arrangements to complete the work missed.

## II. Excused Class Absences.

Excused absences shall not be included in the calculation of participation or attendance grades. Students must be allowed a reasonable opportunity to complete all assignments and examinations missed because of excused absences. Make-up assignments and examinations shall be of comparable difficulty to the original assignment or examination.

In the circumstances detailed below, student absences will be excused:

### A. Absences Due to Participation in University-Sponsored Events.

Absences due to participation in University-Sponsored Events must be excused. It is the responsibility of the student, with the approval of the faculty or staff sponsor of the event, to inform the instructor of the upcoming absence. This information may be provided by giving a [Class Absence Authorization Form](#) or athletics travel letter to the instructor.

### B. Absences Due to Military Service.

The university values the contributions and obligations of students serving in Active Duty, Reserve, or National Guard military service. The instructor must excuse absences for participation in officially documented military assignments. Students will work with the ETSU Office of Veterans Affairs to provide the instructor with proper documentation of military service.

### C. Absences Due to Religious Observance.

Instructors must accept a student's assertion of the need to be absent from class for religious observance and must excuse the absence. Students should provide the instructor with written notice of an anticipated absence due to a religious observance two weeks before the absence will occur.

### D. Absences Due to Death of an Immediate Family Member.

Students are permitted to miss up to three days of class due to the death of an immediate family member. The instructor must excuse the absences and may require documentation of the death of the family member.

### E. Absences Due to Hospitalizations.

Instructors must excuse an absence when students are absent due to an emergency

that requires hospitalization. The student should be allowed a reasonable opportunity to complete all assignments and tests missed. In such cases, it is the responsibility of the student to explain the situation and provide documentation to the instructor as soon as possible.

F. Absences Due to Childbirth or Adoption.

Instructors must excuse an absence when students are absent due to the birth or adoption of a child. The student should be allowed a reasonable opportunity to complete all assignments and tests missed. In such cases, it is the responsibility of the student to explain the situation and provide documentation to the faculty member as soon as possible.

G. Absences Due to Imposed Court Appearance.

Instructors must excuse an absence when students are required to be in court (e.g., jury duty). The student should be allowed a reasonable opportunity to complete all assignments and tests missed. In such cases, it is the responsibility of the student to explain the situation and provide documentation to the instructor as soon as possible.

H. Absences Due to Emergencies, Special Circumstances, or Illness.

Instructors should exercise their professional judgment when students are absent due to circumstances other than those listed above. In case of an emergency (e.g., death in the family or illness not requiring hospitalization), an absence from class may be excused, and the student allowed reasonable opportunity to complete all assignments and tests missed. In such cases, it is the responsibility of the student to explain the situation to the instructor as soon as possible.

I. Absences Due to Disability Registered with the Office of Disabilities Services.

Students registered with the Office of Disability Services who have a disability that might impact class attendance should ask the Office of Disability Services to communicate accommodations needed related to attendance during the first two weeks of the semester or as soon as the Office of Disability Services registration processes are complete. Absences due to a registered disability must be excused.

III. Appeal.

If a student has evidence that an instructor has violated this policy, or is unwilling to accept a request for an excused absence, the student must submit a written appeal explaining the circumstances of the absence to the chair of the department.

Authority: TCA 49-8-203, et. seq.

Previous Policy:

## Defined Terms

*A defined term has a special meaning within the context of this policy.*

Immediate Family Member	Includes: 1) spouse; 2) child or step-child; 3) parent or step-parent, foster parent, parent-in-law; legal guardian; 4) sibling(s); 5) grandparents and grandchildren; and 6) other members of the family who reside within the home.
University Sponsored Event	Events sponsored by a university department or student organization officially recognized by the university, including but not limited to club activities, athletics competitions, university trips, etc.

## Policy History

### Effective Date

- a. Initial: 08/24/20
- b. Revised: 11/09/23

## Procedure

### I. Requesting an Excused Absence.

The procedure for requesting an excused absence:

As soon as the student is aware of the need to request an excused absence, the student submits a written request for an excused absence via email. The written request for an excused absence should be submitted prior to, or as soon as possible after, an absence. The request for an excused absence should explain the reason for the absence and provide necessary documentation (e.g., doctor's excuse, Class Absence Authorization form, athletics travel notice). If the student is unable to make a written request, a phone call to the instructor or chair of the department is acceptable.

If additional documentation is needed, the student must respond to the request for additional

documentation within 3 business days of receiving the request for additional documentation.

II. Instructor Review of Excused Absence Request.

Within three (3) business days of receiving a request for an excused absence, the instructor responds to the email or phone call, stating whether they accept or deny the request for an excused absence. The instructor may request additional documentation.

Once additional documentation is provided by the student, the instructor must respond to the student request for an excused absence within 3 business days stating whether they accept or deny the request for an excused absence.

III. Appeals.

The procedure for appealing a denied request for an excused absence is:

- A. Within three (3) business days of receiving an email from an instructor who denies the request for an excused absence, the student must email the department chair, or the department chair's designee, to appeal an instructor's decision about a request for an excused absence. The appeal to the department chair, or the department chair's designee, should include all communication and documentation related to the request for the excused absence.
- B. Within three (3) business days of receiving the request to appeal an instructor's decision, the department chair, or the department chair's designee, provides a written response to the student and the instructor regarding the appeal. If the student accepts the department chair's decision, the matter is complete. If the student does not accept the department chair's decision, the student has the option to appeal the decision to the college dean.
- C. Within three (3) business days of receiving an email from the department chair denying the request for an excused absence, the student must email the college dean, or the dean's designee, to appeal a department chair's decision about a request for an excused absence. The appeal to the dean, or the dean's designee, should include all communication and documentation related to the request for the excused absence.
- D. Within three (3) business days, the dean, or the dean's designee, provides a written response to the student and the instructor regarding the appeal. The decision of the dean is final.

## Procedure History

### Effective Date

- a. Initial: 8/24/2020

b. Revised: 11/09/23

### **Related Form(s)**

[Class Absence Authorization Form](#)  
[Disability Services](#)

### **Scope and Applicability**

Primary: Faculty

Secondary: Students