Policy Recommendation:
Student Excused Absence Policy

Legislative History: no previous policy

Whereas: While faculty and staff have the ability to take an excused absence without penalty during a semester, students currently do not have this option; and

Whereas: Some faculty have denied students the ability to make up work when students have had a family emergency or work problem; and

Whereas: Students can have valid reasons for missing classes and should have the option to make up work as long as the work is submitted in a reasonable time frame; and

Whereas: SJSU is trying to promote student success and timely graduation, so supporting students during times of short-term crisis is one way to help students continue to succeed and graduate on time; therefore be it

Resolved: That the following become university policy.

Approved: January 31, 2022
Vote: 13-0-2
Present: Allen, Frazier, French, Hill, Jackson (non-voting), Kaur, Kumar, Leisenring (non-voting), Lupton, Masegian, Merz, Rollerson, Sen, Walker, Wilson, Yang, Yao
Absent: Merz, Wolcott
Financial Impact: undetermined
Workload Impact: undetermined
Excused Student Absence

Students may have a valid reason to miss a class, whether anticipated or unforeseen. Students are responsible for informing their instructor of the reason for the absence as soon as possible. Absences may be considered “excused” and require accommodation.

1. Faculty responsibilities

Faculty shall accommodate absences when students have demonstrated the need. Examples of valid excused absences are listed below. Excused absences normally should not exceed two cumulative weeks of class time. Faculty may request valid documentation, as discussed below. The faculty member should make arrangements with the student to address missed learning opportunities, which could include submitting work late, completing a different but comparable assignment, or waiving an assignment.

2. Student responsibilities

If the student is aware of an excused absence, the student shall inform the instructor within the first two weeks of classes or as soon as the student learns of the absence.

Valid excused absences include but are not limited to:

- ROTC or other military duties
- Jury duty
- Death of a family member or friend
- Illness or injury, including physical and mental health-related issues
- University-sanctioned SJSU Athletics competitions
- University-sanctioned leadership or academic conferences
- Duties related to elected or appointed Associated Students representatives
- Mandatory work-related activity or travel that temporarily impacts a student’s ability to participate in their academics
- Caregiving duties for family members, including parents, spouses or domestic partners, a minor child, an adult child, a child of a domestic partner, grandparent, grandchild, or sibling
- Personal instability in a student’s life that temporarily affects their ability to attend class

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1 Family often extends beyond those defined herein. Faculty should be considerate of those family members that may not be clearly defined here, but have a familial relationship with the student.

2 Personal instability may include housing instability, food insecurity, or other financial crises.
3. Verification

Faculty may request verification at their discretion. Valid reasons for absences include but are not limited to:

- Documentation from superior military officer
- Documentation from the court
- Documentation from medical personnel
- Documentation from appropriate coach, advisor/counselor, case manager, staff, faculty, or work supervisor
- Written notification from student regarding the death of a family member or friend

4. Possible considerations following extended absences

The following are situations when an excused absence could become an incomplete or a course withdrawal. Students should consult with their instructor and/or advisor to determine the most suitable course of action.

- If the absence exceeds two consecutive weeks of class time.
- If the student returns to the class and attempts in good faith to complete the missing work but is overwhelmed and can not finish.