Absences Due to a Significant Health Condition or Personal/Family Emergency

The Office of the Dean of Students has the authority to issue University approved absences in limited circumstances. However, students must work directly with instructors to navigate the details of making up missed work, rescheduling mid-terms or other tests/exams, or requesting extensions to deadlines.

Step 1: Communicate directly with faculty about your absences

Instructors often build policies about absences into their syllabi, allowing for flexibility with a certain number of absences to account for commonly occurring illnesses or other obligations that do not meet the criteria for a University approved absence. Connect with your instructor about your absences before determining if your absence warrants University approval and submitting a request. It is not required of instructors that an absence be University approved by the Office of the Dean of Students, but if an instructor would prefer that the circumstances of the absence be verified, they may refer you to our office. Instructors may work with students to meet attendance needs that do not fall within University approved absences. For situations when an absence is not University approved (commonly occurring illnesses/minor injuries, job interviews, planned travel etc.), instructors determine their own approach to missed classes and make-up assessments and assignments.

Step 2: If determined necessary, submit a request for University approved absences (applicable for a significant health condition or personal/family emergency)

Under the Class Attendance Policy a student can request an absence be University approved if it falls within the criteria outlined below:

1. Authorized University activities

2. Disability/religious observance/pregnancy, as required by law and approved by Accessibility Resources and Service and/or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (EOC)

3. Significant health condition and/or personal/family emergency as approved by the Office of the Dean of Students, Gender Violence Service Coordinators, and/or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (EOC).

Examples of a significant health condition may include (but are not limited to):

- emergency surgery, hospitalization, medically ordered isolation due to a dangerous
communicable diseases (tuberculosis, measles, mumps, varicella), a severe injury/condition that immediately affects mobility and/or cognition, or acute exacerbation of a chronic mental health issue necessitating immediate stabilization.

Examples of a personal emergency/family emergency may include (but are not limited to):

- the death or acute onset of a life-threatening illness of an immediate family member, direct exposure to or involvement in a current or recently occurring personal traumatic event, or a dramatic and sudden change to life circumstances.

**Documentation Requirements**

For the majority of circumstances, documentation will be required for a request for University approved absences to be evaluated. Documentation may include a letter from a treatment provider indicating absences were medically necessary, hospital discharge paperwork (health information should be redacted), an obituary or program from memorial services, or other applicable documentation, a patient bracelet, dated/named hospital visitor badge, legal documents, etc. If no documentation is available to verify the situation, students may be required to meet with an ODOS staff member for the request to be evaluated.

Self-authored or family/friend-authored word documents, prescriptions, proof of attending a medical appointment, and medical records that do not state absences were medically necessary, will not be accepted as documentation. Commonly occurring illnesses or minor injuries do not warrant University approved absences unless a treatment provider indicates otherwise. The Office of the Dean of Students does not subjectively evaluate medical diagnoses, or non-specific documentation, so the provision of appointment times and doctors notes that do not state absences were medically necessary, will not be accepted as verification in the evaluation of a request for University approved absences. Such documentation may be accepted by instructors who can determine their approach to an absence that is not University approved.

**When Should I Submit a Request?**

Requests for University approved absences must be made within a reasonable time-frame related to the absence. Once you are able to return to classes, a request with supporting documentation should be submitted immediately. The Office of the Dean of Students will not approve retroactive absences if a request is not made in a timely manner. The Office of the Dean of Students will not approve requests for University approved absences that span multiple weeks and are intermittent in nature. Students with chronic illnesses or mental health diagnoses whose ongoing symptoms impact consistent attendance, should register with Accessibility Resources and Service to determine their eligibility for academic accommodations. Please note that Accessibility Resources and Service does not provide retroactive academic accommodations.

Students are bound by the Honor Code when making a request for a University approved absence.

- Submit an online **Request for University Approved Absences** (may be completed by the Student, Family Members, Faculty/Staff, or Physicians)
For more information about the University’s class attendance policy, please review the Undergraduate Bulletin [4].

**Absences During Final Exams**

The Office of the Dean of Students **DOES NOT** issue University Approved Absences for final exams. **DO NOT SUBMIT AN ONLINE REQUEST FOR UNIVERSITY APPROVED ABSENCES FOR FINAL EXAMS.**

If you will miss a final exam due to a medical or mental health concern, family or personal emergency, religious observance, or exam schedule conflict, please follow the instructions below and communicate directly with your instructor to schedule a make-up.

**To change an exam date due to a medical or mental health concern:** [5]

Visit a CHS or CAPS provider to be considered for the ?Excused Examination List? OR visit a non-CHS or CAPS provider and fax documentation of your visit to CHS Health Information (919-966-0616). Follow next steps given by CHS or CAPS. ***For more detailed information, see [https://caps.unc.edu/services/academic-interventions/final-exam-excuse-request](https://caps.unc.edu/services/academic-interventions/final-exam-excuse-request).***

- **Mental Health: Counseling and Psychological Services** [6]
  - Hours: Monday - Friday 8AM?5PM
  - Phone: (919) 966-3658
- **Illness or Injury: Campus Health Services** [7]
  - Hours: Monday - Friday 8AM - 5PM
  - Phone: (919) 966-2281

**To change an exam date due to personal or family emergency:** [8]

Visit Academic Advising during drop-in hours [9] as soon as possible.

- **Academic Related/Other Non Medical Issues: Academic Advising** [9]
  - Phone: (919) 966-5116
  - Drop-in hours are available for quick meetings and are intended for brief guidance on matters such as withdrawing, dropping/adding, course approval forms, and other topics that can be handled in five-to-ten minute sessions. See Drop In Hours Schedule [9]
  - Chat: Advisors are available on chat service [10] Monday through Friday from 4:00 pm until 5:00 pm, except for University holidays. You should use this service for general questions about policies and procedures only.

**To change an exam date due to 3 or more exams within 24 hours, or two exams at the same time:** [8]

To change an exam date due to religious observance: [8]

Contact and meet with an Academic Dean in your department as soon as possible.

Source URL: https://odos.unc.edu/student-support/class-absences-final-exam-rescheduling

Links
[2] https://ars.unc.edu/
[6] https://caps.unc.edu/
[7] https://campushealth.unc.edu/
[9] https://advising.unc.edu/see-an-advisor/
[10] https://advising.unc.edu/chat