

GUIDELINES FOR ABSENCE DUE TO PARTICIPATION IN UNIVERSITY SPONSORED EVENTS

Policy: Classes at The University of Akron are conducted on the premise that regular attendance is expected. However, certain university sponsored student activities and events may be recognized as legitimate reasons for absence from class. For the purposes of this policy statement, a university sponsored event means an event that is linked to an academic department, athletics (games, not practices), or an administrative requirement for the student involved (such as a disciplinary hearing). These might include academic field trips, participation in an approved concert, performance, or athletic event, and participation in a university disciplinary hearing. This policy explicitly does not cover absences due to illness or any cause other than participation in a university sponsored event. University sponsored events—from marching band to theatre, from soccer to engineering competitions—should be seen by all members of the campus community as an important part of a student’s university education.

Seek to encourage a spirit of faculty-student collaboration for student success in linking curricular and co-curricular activities. In this spirit, an effort should be made to treat university sponsored events as excusable absences, whenever possible not triggering grade-related penalties. At the same time, **the course syllabus is the final word on attendance and assignment completion for any given class.** Therefore, students are responsible for reading the syllabus closely to be certain that they understand, and are prepared to meet, the instructor’s expectations regarding attendance. To encourage collaboration for student success, the following guidelines are suggested for each party: sponsors, students, and instructors. The process begins with the sponsor’s and student’s responsibilities:

Event Sponsors shall:

1. Make every effort to prioritize class work when scheduling university sponsored events.
2. Provide to each instructor a list of all university sponsored events which might involve student absences from their class, including absences related to travel required for participation in the event. The list should be given to the instructor at or before the first scheduled class, activity, or field trip of the semester, or before the end of the second week of the semester, whichever occurs first. Once the faculty member signs the attached “Assignment Completion Form” and returns this list to the student (and the student returns it to the sponsor), all parties should be able to assume that accommodations will be made for those listed activities.
3. In cases where the date and time of the scheduled activity are not known within this time frame (e.g., play-off games, tiered competitions), approval to schedule an event which will result in student absences or missed assignments must be secured from the administrative officer directly above the sponsoring unit (e.g., college dean, director of athletics, etc) AND then, unless completion of the assignment is precluded by policies stated in the class syllabus, the instructor will make an effort to accommodate even these less timely requests, though **accommodation should not be assumed or taken for granted** (see Instructors section, below).
4. Provide each participating student with an “Assignment Completion Form” for each of the student’s affected classes at the time the list of events is distributed.

5. Seek resolution of conflicts with the instructor, in cases where the syllabus is silent, as early as possible. If the syllabus contains a policy precluding completion due to the nature of a particular assignment, however, the sponsor and the student will accept the syllabus as the definitive policy statement and arrange the student's activity schedule to accommodate classroom demands.

Students shall:

1. Provide the sponsor of the activity with a list of classes (and their syllabi) which conflict with any proposed university sponsored activity. This list should be presented during or before the first week of each term.
2. Be responsible for all material covered in class during their absence. Students are responsible for completing all work, (see syllabus), resulting from their absence.
3. Present an "Assignment Completion Form" to instructors in all affected courses and return the signed form(s) to the sponsor of the activity before the end of the second week of the semester.

Instructors are requested to:

1. Respond to requests to complete missed work due to university sponsored events as outlined here. If the course syllabus includes assignments that cannot be completed outside of class, the instructor agrees to provide an explanation on the "Assignment Completion Form."
2. Try to accommodate a first request from a student participating in a university sponsored program.
3. Try to accommodate students who request an opportunity to complete a missed assignment due to an absence related to a university sponsored event.
4. Sign the "Assignment Completion Form" when instructor and student have reached agreement and keep a copy.