

Excuse Policy

It is the policy of University Health Services not to provide students with excuses for short-term absences from class or missed deadlines due to illness, injury, or mental health appointment. In the event of a prolonged illness or injury requiring medical attention and an absence of more than five days, we frequently work with students to provide appropriate documentation.

Documentation of mental health illnesses is generally provided only to those clients with whom we have an ongoing or formerly established therapeutic relationship.

This policy helps UHS to direct its finite resources toward providing health care access for as many students as possible, rather than toward verification of short-term absences. Moreover, in cases of students seeking excuses after a brief illness or injury that has been effectively and appropriately managed by self-care, our clinicians may have no direct knowledge about the student's condition at the time of the absence.

This policy has been in place for many years and reflects our respect for students' privacy and our educational mission to help them become mature and independent stewards of their own health care. It is in accord with the university policy that does not require its employees to provide a written excuse for short-term absences. And it is consistent with the policies of many peer institutions, as well as with the excuse recommendations of the American College Health Association.

We recognize that faculty seek equitable means of determining when to excuse student absences, and we believe this policy reinforces the students' responsibility to communicate directly and proactively with faculty about conditions that interfere with their class attendance. We encourage students to speed their own recovery and to refrain from spreading infections such as colds and flu throughout the campus community by making mature decisions when they are too sick to attend class or go to work. And we appreciate the many ways in which faculty and other members of the campus community support and assist students during such absences.