

## Student Religious Observance Policy

Recent North Carolina legislation requires UNC campuses to enact a student religious observance policy. The following policy revision of the UNC-Chapel Hill Class Attendance and Final Examination Policies goes **into immediate effect** and will be shared with UNC General Administration, Faculty Council, the Faculty Executive Committee, Student Government, the Deans and Faculty. The revisions to the existing policies are highlighted in the document. This policy revision reaffirms UNC-Chapel Hill's fundamental reliance upon the Code of Student Conduct and its trust in the integrity of its students and faculty.

### Revised UNC-Chapel Hill Class Attendance Policy: 8-18-2010

Regular class attendance is a student obligation, and a student is responsible for all the work, including tests and written work, of all class meetings. No right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings except for excused absences for authorized University activities (see below) or **religious observances required by the student's faith**. If a student misses three consecutive class meetings, or misses more classes than the course instructor deems advisable, the course instructor may report the facts to the student's academic dean.

Students are authorized up to two excused absences each academic year for religious observances required by their faith. Students who wish to request more than two excused absences in an academic year for religious observances required by their faith will need to contact their course instructors and request the additional absence, which will only be granted with the course instructor's permission. Primary holy days for religious observance are noted on a web-based interfaith calendar site at [www.interfaithcalendar.org](http://www.interfaithcalendar.org).

Students are responsible for providing a written notice for an excused absence for a religious observance two weeks in-advance of the date requested or as soon as possible if the date occurs within the first two weeks of the semester. This policy also applies to students who have an excused absence for a religious observance during the summer.

Students must be given the opportunity to make up tests and other work missed due to an excused absence for a religious observance. Make up tests may entail an alternative examination, or other accommodation which allows the student not to be penalized for an excused absence for a religious observance.

Only course instructors excuse absences from class for valid reasons (illness or family emergency, **religious observance**, etc.). A student should present his or her explanation for any absences in writing to the course instructor in advance if the reason for the absence could be foreseen, or as soon as possible thereafter if the reason for the absence could not be foreseen.

A student may appeal a course instructor's denial of a request that an absence be excused if the request to be excused from class and the reasons for the request are presented to the course instructor in writing within the time limits above. The appeal is to be made to the course instructor's immediate academic supervisor.

Students who are members of regularly organized and authorized University activities and who may be out of town taking part in some scheduled event are to be excused during the approved period of absence. Notification of such an absence must be sent by the responsible University official to the course instructor before the date(s) of the scheduled absence.

## Final Examinations

Undergraduate courses taught on campus must include a final assessment (i.e., final examination) unless the provost grants an exception. A traditional final examination is written, is administered at a predetermined time as specified in the final examination schedule, and takes place at a designated location.

The final examination schedule, announced prior to the beginning of the semester, sets the time for each examination. Once having been established, the schedule cannot be changed. Examinations must be held at the time shown on the schedule. No special preparation quizzes may be given during the last five days of classes (last two days of classes for summer school) before the beginning of the final examination period. No examination may start later than 7:00 p.m. Final examinations for a full course should ordinarily cover a minimum of two hours and should not exceed a period of three hours. Only examinations requiring an exceptional portion of practical work should be longer than three hours.

Only the provost can grant exceptions to the scheduled time and location of a traditional examination after review and approval by the appropriate department head and the dean. No examination (except for laboratory sections) may be held at a time other than that specified in the general schedule except with the advance approval of the provost (see below).

A course instructor may, due to highly unusual circumstances, petition for a change in the examination schedule. The petition must be made before the first day of final examinations, and it must be cleared by the department head and the appropriate dean before consideration by the provost. If the petition is approved, the course instructor assumes responsibility for making special arrangements to give the examination to any student who has a schedule conflict as a result of the change.

Chairs (i.e., heads of instructional units) must give permission for faculty members to use nontraditional examinations, such as a portfolio of a semester's work or a take-home examination. The chair should submit to the appropriate dean an annual summary of the exceptions that were granted. For multidisciplinary and co-taught courses, permission to give a nontraditional examination must be granted solely by the chair of the instructional unit in which the course is based.

All regular final examinations must be held in Chapel Hill. Students who are absent from an examination receive a course grade of AB (absent), which is equivalent to F (zero quality points), or FA (absent and failing regardless of performance on the final examination). When students are unable, for reasons clearly beyond their control, to take a final examination at the scheduled time, they can be excused only by the director of Campus Health Services (who can authorize the registrar to issue an "official permit to take final examination") or their academic dean (who can issue an "examination excuse"). An absence may be excused for severe health problems leading to the student's placement on the Infirmary List, for serious personal or family problems, for religious observances required by the student's faith, or for a scheduling conflict involving multiple examinations. In cases of illness, personal or family emergency, or religious observance, additional documentation may be required by the dean.

- Students may be excused for a final exam for religious observances required by their faith. Primary holy days for religious observances are noted on a web-based interfaith calendar site: [www.interfaithcalendar.org](http://www.interfaithcalendar.org). Students must be given the opportunity to make up final exams missed due to an excused absence for a religious observance. Students are responsible for providing the course instructor and the dean a written request for an excused absence from a final exam for a religious observance no later than the last day of classes.

- Campus Health Services. Students who are seriously ill during the time of their final examination(s) should consult Campus Health Services or Counseling and Wellness Services about having their names entered on the Infirmary List. In some cases, outpatient treatment can also result in a student's name being entered on the Infirmary List. Students on the Infirmary List may obtain an official permit from the Office of the University Registrar to take the final examination to remove a grade of AB. They must make arrangements to take the final examination with their course instructor and provide the course instructor with their official permit. If students are treated at Campus Health Services or Counseling and Wellness Services but do not appear on the Infirmary List, they should see the dean of their college as soon as possible.

- Academic Dean. If students know in advance that they must miss one or more final examinations because of illness, religious observance or other serious problems, they should notify in writing both the course instructor and the dean of the school in which they are enrolled no later than the last day of classes. If this is not possible, they should write or see their dean as soon after the fact as possible. For students in the College of Arts and Sciences, only the associate dean for advising (or designee) is authorized to issue examination excuses for reasons other than three exams in 24 hours or two exams at the same time. For other students, only the dean of the school in which the student is enrolled has that authority. The dean may require documentation of a student's religious observance, illness or problems.

Assuming that a student did not take a final examination for one of the reasons previously cited, the dean will issue an official examination excuse, which the student must present to the course instructor when arrangements are made for a suitable time to take the final examination.

If a student presents an examination excuse or an official permit to take the final exam to a course instructor or the course instructor's chair or dean, then a final examination must be given to the student at a time subsequent to the regularly scheduled exam but no later than the end of the following semester.

A student who has three final examinations scheduled by the Office of the University Registrar within a 24-hour period or two scheduled at the same time may request his or her dean (or designee) for permission to have one of the scheduled examinations rescheduled. In the event that one of the scheduled examinations is a common final examination for a multiple-section course, that examination is the one to be rescheduled.

Students who have secured an examination excuse or an official permit and who transmit the document to the course instructor or the course instructor's chair or dean must be granted permission to take the exam at an alternate time, although students will need to arrange a mutually convenient time with the course instructor. Except when the provost has provided an exception in writing, the exam will be taken at a time subsequent to the regularly scheduled exam, though no later than the end of the following semester.

The final examination in any course may be taken only by regularly enrolled members of the class whose registration has been certified and by students certified to be eligible to take a special examination in that course. The certifying authority is the Office of the University Registrar.

Each student is required to sign a full and explicit Honor Code pledge certifying that he or she has neither given nor received aid during the examination.

(Class Attendance Policy 8-18-10.doc)