



EXCUSED ABSENCE POLICY

I. POLICY STATEMENT

The College of Pharmacy expects students to attend and participate in all classes, all introductory and advanced practice experiences, and complete all exams and assessments as scheduled (together defined as “coursework”). Missed coursework has the potential to disrupt individual and team learning, invalidate assessment of learning outcomes, create unfair advantages, and divert faculty and student resources away from teaching and learning. However, occasionally an absence from coursework will be unavoidable. This policy sets out the circumstances when an absence will be considered excused along with the expectations for timely communication and makeup of missed coursework with the Course Coordinator.

II. PURPOSE

- To minimize student absence from classes, practical experiences, exams, and major assessments
- To define clearly what types of absences will be excused and for how long
- To create student expectations for timely communication, presentation of evidence, and follow-up on missed coursework
- To empower the student, team, and faculty to collaborate efficiently to address missed coursework in a timely manner
- To avoid placing students at a disadvantage when unavoidable excused absences occur
- To encourage consistency in how faculty allow makeup of missed coursework, rotations, or assessments

III. SCOPE/COVERAGE

The policy applies to all students enrolled at California Northstate University College of Pharmacy.

IV. PROCEDURE

a. Approval of Absence

Students should seek approval for an absence from the course coordinator well in advance of the absence if possible, by completing the Excused Absence Request Form. In the case of emergency absence students should complete and submit the Excused Absence Request Form within **3 business days** of returning to campus after the absence. Timely and professional communication with the course coordinator, and others affected by the absence, will help limit the adverse impact of the absence on their own learning and that of their peers. Regardless of whether an absence is excused or unexcused, students are expected to demonstrate professionalism and to follow procedure when requesting an absence.

b. Duration of Absence

A student may request no more than **three academic days of excused absences per semester or per rotation**; all absences shall not exceed **five academic days per semester or three per APPE Block (excused and unexcused)**. Absences exceeding five academic days per semester may require a student to request a Leave of Absence or a Withdrawal. Students must contact the Office of Academic Affairs (OAA) if any one absence period exceeds five days to discuss these options. Students will be invited to meet with the Dean



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for Academic Affairs in cases where a number of separate absences in a semester have reached the cumulative maximum.

c. Type of Excused Absence

A student may request an excused absence, from the course coordinator, only for reasons listed below:

- Medical (self or immediate family)
- Military duty
- Immigration & Naturalization
- Jury duty
- Legal
- Bereavement (first degree relative)
- Involvement in traffic accident documented by law enforcement report
- Professional Leave – conferences, invited presentations/posters, competitions, or residency interviews (requires verification of academic standing).

d. Makeup Allowances

Students are responsible for contacting the course coordinator to arrange makeup of coursework, otherwise they will receive zero. A student seeking an excused absence should complete the Excused Absence Request Form and seek the Course Coordinator's signature for each course the student was absent **within 3 business days** upon return to courses or campus. The form must then be given to the Dean of Academic Affairs, who will approve or not the absence request. The OAA will notify the student and course coordinator of the outcome of the absence request.

If an absence is excused students will be allowed the option to make up missed coursework, rotations, or missed assessments. The nature and type of makeup, makeup time, date, format, duration, and grading is at the sole discretion of the Course Coordinator, but in general Coordinators will draw the following distinction between 'high' and 'low' stakes assessments/coursework, and professional leave:

- A student who is absent for a 'high stakes' exam or other such activity considered high stakes, provided the absence has been excused, will be required and allowed to make up.
- If a student is absent for a 'low stakes' assessment the Course Coordinator may choose to drop the missed coursework from the gradebook or provide a makeup opportunity
- A student requesting an absence to attend a professional meeting must demonstrate they are in good academic standing. Requests for professional leave must be submitted at least **10 business days in advance of the professional conference attendance**. If attendance coincides with a high stakes exam it is highly likely that the absence will be denied.

e. High Stakes Absences

A High Stakes Absence is defined when a student misses ANY of the following: an IPPE or APPE rotation, or part thereof, an exam, delivering a presentation, project, poster, participation in any course activity listed on the Calendar of Important Dates on the front page of the course syllabus, any course activity specifically designated High Stakes in the course syllabus, or any missed coursework worth 5% or more of the overall course grade.

This category of absence will be held to the highest standard for documentation and communication. A student requesting to receive an excused High Stakes Absence must satisfy the following criteria:

- **Nature:** The nature of the absence is listed under the 'May Request' list above. Note: the Course Coordinator can choose to exclude excusing Professional Leave for High Stakes Absences, please contact the Course Coordinator in advance.
- **Urgent and Necessary:** The nature of the absence must demand immediate attention by the student to avoid significant harm or loss. Note: Staying home or scheduling a medical visit for a routine cold, flu, nausea, migraine, dental visit, physical, annual exam or other nonemergency illness generally does not satisfy this criterion.
- **Unavoidable:** Students must demonstrate that the absence could not be anticipated and cannot be avoided by way of rescheduling to avoid the High Stakes Absence. Students must also demonstrate they returned to courses as early as possible and safe.
- **Timely Communication:** The student reaches out in writing (typically by email) directly to the Course Coordinator as soon as it is possible and safe to do so, providing preliminary details of the nature and urgency of the absence. Where possible, this is done in advance of the absence.
- **Well-Documented:** A fully completed Excused Absence Request Form must be submitted to the Course Coordinator. The student must provide sufficient written documentation demonstrating in detail the above criteria, no later than 3 business days after the student returns to any course or to campus. The student must respond to requests by the Course Coordinator for additional documentation in a timely manner and no later than 48 hours following each request made by the Course Coordinator.

Makeup coursework for a High Stakes Absence: As any missed assessments or exams may be compromised by the delay in assessment, it is recommended (but not required) that the Course Coordinator add to or replace the original assessment with a one-on-one oral and/or written exam. The student should notify the Course Coordinator immediately upon their return to campus, even if full documentation of the High Stakes Absence is pending, and be prepared to complete the makeup coursework at any time as designated by the Course Coordinator.



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f. Low Stakes Absences

A Low Stakes Absence is defined when a student misses assignments not designated within the High Stakes Absence, typically these will include some or most IRATs, and normal topics without a significant assessment due. The Low Stakes Absence category does not apply to IPPE or APPE courses.

Makeup coursework for Low Stakes Absence: The Course Coordinator may choose to drop the missed coursework from the gradebook or allow for makeup at the Course Coordinator’s discretion, without penalty to the student. It is the responsibility of the student to reach out to their team for copies of missed materials.

g. Professional Leave

California Northstate University College of Pharmacy supports the learning and professional development opportunities professional conferences can provide students; thus the college has a policy to allow student participation and attendance. Only students in good academic standing may submit an excused absence request to attend a professional conference. A range of criteria will be used to determine whether a student is in good academic standing, for example: GPA should be 3.0 or higher; there must be no academic alerts in the current semester; there must be no outstanding professionalism charges.

Course Coordinators and students have the option to request review of the absence by the Office of Academic Affairs.

Students must refer to the Experiential Education Handbook regarding expectations for Excused Absences during IPPE or APPE rotations.

Associated Forms:

- Excused Absence Request Form
- Leave of Absence Form
- Withdrawal Form

Approval Record:

- Approved COP: February 2016
- Approved PEC: June 2016
- REVIEW: every 2 years (or more often if require)