



**Faculty Council**

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**MEMO**

Date: July 16, 2020

To: All Faculty

From: Dr. Joel Avrin  
Faculty Council President

Re: Principles for Instructors Regarding Student Absences

The Fall Planning Advisory Group, a faculty group consisting of the Faculty Executive Committee, chairs of the college faculty council/senates, and the Staff Council and Student Government Association leadership has been meeting regularly to discuss the campus plan related to COVID-19 and academic preparations for Fall 2020. One item of particular importance as we look ahead to the fall term is related to class absences for students. The authority to excuse a student's class absence(s) and to grant a student an academic accommodation (turn in a late assignment(s), provide extra time on an assignment, reschedule an exam(s), etc.) sits with the individual instructor. During the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, there may be a variety of reasons why students might struggle to attend class and/or complete assignments including, but not limited to: positive COVID-19 test result or symptoms of COVID-19, quarantine due to possible or confirmed COVID-19 exposure, or care for someone who is ill. With the high proportion of remote work during this period, there may also be complications with reliable access to computers or the internet. In light of these circumstances, instructors should keep the following principles in mind:

- **Stay Home if Sick.** Institutional guidance for all members of the UNC Charlotte community is to remain home if you are sick.
- **Emphasize that it's important to attend class when it's safe** (no symptoms, no positive diagnosis and are not in quarantine).
- The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) and the [North Carolina Department of Public Instruction](#) recommend:
  - **Establishing classroom policies** that encourage sick individuals to stay at home without fear of reprisals and discontinuing attendance-dependent rewards and ratings
  - **Implementing remote learning options** for students
  - **Enacting participation policies** rather than attendance policies

Faculty members should therefore plan ahead, make any necessary adjustments to their course policies and assignments, and determine remote learning options that can be assigned as needed for students who need to miss class. Accommodations should be non-punitive, flexible, and made on a case-by-case basis. Instructors are also encouraged to make these accommodations explicit and include the recently-developed [suggested syllabus language](#) in their syllabi this term (see: [To clearly set forth a policy on absenteeism during COVID-19](#)).

The [suggested syllabus language](#) is part of a broad set of information on the campus plan for reopening in the fall, which can be found on the Academic Affairs website at: <https://provost.uncc.edu/fall-2020-reopening>.

Thank you for your dedication to student success and for the work you are doing to prepare for this unprecedented fall.