

Attendance Considerations due to COVID-19

To promote the health and safety of scholars, the University of Tennessee, Knoxville will excuse COVID-19-related absences for the fall 2020 academic semester. To support instructors, the Office of the Provost developed the following attendance considerations for in-person, hybrid, and online courses.

What constitutes an excused absence due to COVID-19?

The university provides the following guiding language. Examples of the need to self-isolate include:

- Having tested positive for COVID-19
- Developing symptoms of a COVID-19 infection
- Awaiting COVID-19 test results
- Having had close contact with someone known to be diagnosed with COVID-19
- Having been advised to self-isolate by a health authority
- Having recently returned to the US after traveling abroad
- Having recently returned from a cruise (ocean or river)

What does it mean for an absence to be excused?

Scholars whose absence is excused may not receive an academic penalty for their absence and must be allowed to either make up any in-class assignment, quiz, or exam or to complete a substantially equivalent assignment, quiz, or exam.

What are alternatives available to scholars with excused absences?

These are some examples of alternatives that instructors can offer to scholars whose absence is excused. It is not necessary to describe these alternatives in detail on your syllabus, but instructors should plan for the possibility that scholars will have an excused absence. Planning ahead will ensure that instructors employ a consistent approach to all scholars with excused absences, whenever those absences occur during the semester.

- Require scholars to participate in class synchronously through Zoom if they are well enough to do so
- Require scholars to view the Zoom recording of the class asynchronously, and to submit questions about the class material, or a short reflection paper, via e-mail
- Require scholars to complete the assignment, or a substantially equivalent assignment, asynchronously
- Reschedule exams or allow self-isolating scholars to take exams online
- Develop an alternative assignment that is substantially equivalent to the original activity
- Pro-rate grades
- Grant an exception from the requirement

When and how should scholars report they are self-isolating?

If a scholar's self-isolation or health condition could affect their ability to participate in classes, they should communicate directly with their instructors before the scheduled class time. Self-isolating students should also complete the [online self-isolation form](#).

Scholars are being asked to follow the guidance on the coronavirus website on when to self-isolate and what to do if they feel sick. You may want to familiarize yourself with this guidance.

- [When to self-isolate](#)
- [What to do if you feel sick](#)

To reiterate, the University encourages instructors to show compassion, flexibility and creativity during this time. If, after you talk with your scholar, you are unable to negotiate a reasonable solution, you should contact your department head or direct supervisor. Finally, if you believe the student is in need of additional care and support, please contact the [Office of the Dean of Students](#) (DOS) at dos@utk.edu or 865.974.3179. The DOS can work with you to brainstorm support opportunities for the student if needed.

What are the consequences of a missed activity that is not reported?

Absences not reported to the instructor will not be considered excused and will be subject to penalty as outlined in the course syllabus.
