

Helpful Tips for Talking with Faculty Regarding an Absence

Life is full of unexpected challenges. Sometimes, despite our best efforts, we find ourselves in difficult situations. At the Dean of Students Office, we understand how overwhelming life can be at times. Our goal is to support you in navigating through tough times and making the best out of a bad situation. Whether it's dealing with illness or the loss of a loved one, we know that these circumstances are beyond your control. However, when life throws you a curveball, we're here to provide you with practical tips on communicating with your faculty and getting the support you need to bounce back.

If you will be missing class, give your instructor a heads-up

- Ideally, it is best to inform your instructors about an anticipated absence as soon as possible.
- If an unexpected illness or family emergency does happen, reach out to your instructor as soon as possible.
- While emailing them directly is a great first step, we encourage you to visit their office hours or schedule a quick meeting with them.

What should I Say?

- There is no need to say every detail in your story as to why you will be absent. It is important to note that professors are people too, and most of them understand when life happens. Remember that being honest is paramount to your success as an Arizona Wildcat.
- Be clear and concise with your explanation. This includes giving the general nature of your situation, the time frame you will be absent, and when you expect to return to the classroom.
- Be ready to show any documentation or proof, as some instructors request this information.
- If the absence is medical, remember you must not provide every detail about your condition, but ensure your instructors get enough information to determine how your case will be handled.

Be ready to do make-up work

- Review your instructor's syllabus or assignment calendar to see what you missed. This is also a great opportunity to familiarize yourself with their attendance policies.
- Get a head start and work ahead on the assignments you will miss.
- Let your instructor know when you can turn in the assignments or the dates and times you have available to take an exam (if applicable).
- Connect with the [Think Tank](#) if you need tutoring support or attend office hours.

Connect with your classmates

- Text or email one person in each of the classes you will miss. They are a great resource for catching up with any concept you missed in class. Plus, you may make a new friend!
- Set up a time to meet with a classmate to go over the class notes they took. But remember, take notes using your own style, it is the best way to learn.

Be realistic about the situation

- Instructors may not respond to your email immediately, please allow a reasonable time for them to respond. If you do not hear from them within a few days, attend their office hours.
- Understand that some classes have different expectations for missed work, especially lab classes. This may make it hard for the instructor to credit you for the assignments or projects you missed.
- Most classes expect students to earn a passing grade for all materials covered in the course. If you miss many classes or fall too far behind, it may not be possible to gain the grade you want in the class.
- Instructors must be fair with all students. Therefore, this may mean they will be unable to excuse your absences or grant make up work in some cases.

Additional Information

- If a student falls too far behind or the challenge they are facing is overwhelming, it may be appropriate to contact your instructor and the [Office of the Registrar](#) to learn more about receiving a grade of [incomplete](#).
- If your absence is related to a disability, we encourage you to contact the [Disability Resource Center](#) to learn about the support their department can offer.
- Refer to the [Attendance Policies & Practices](#) page to learn more about the attendance policy within the University of Arizona.
- If your instructor is not being cooperative and you have tried to work with them, the next step would be to contact the department head in the department in which the professor teaches in.
- If you disagree with the final grade awarded for the class, you can visit the [Grade Appeal Policy](#).
- If you have any other questions regarding what would be the best way to address an incoming absence, feel free to contact us at 520-621-7057 or email us at DOS-deanofstudents@email.arizona.edu.