

SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY

A Member of the Texas State University System

SRSU Policy: University Policy on Faculty Absences

SRSU Policy ID: FH 2.10

Policy Reviewed by: Executive Vice President and Provost

Approval Authority: President of the University

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The policy on faculty absences of Sul Ross State University is in consonance with the *Rules and Regulations, Texas State University System*, Chapter V, Sections 2.5 and 4.82.

A. Regents' Policy

The president of each university shall adopt policies and guidelines covering the authorized absences for all faculty and staff employees, including administrative officers. Such policies and guidelines shall be in accordance with the provisions of current statutes and the *Rules and Regulations, Texas State University System*. A leave of absence granted to a faculty or staff employee by the president of the university under the provisions of this subsection shall not modify in any way the employment status of the employee as defined in Chapter V, Sections 1-5, of the *Rules and Regulations, Texas State University System*, unless such modifications in status are approved in advance by the board of regents. Unless approved in advance by the board, upon expiration of the leave the employee shall return to the same job classification, pay benefits, and seniority and under the same conditions of employment as he or she held prior to the leave.

B. Military Leave and Leave for Volunteer Firefighters

Under the provisions of the State Appropriations Act, a leave of absence with full pay shall be provided upon request to any employee who is called to active duty with the National Guard by the governor of Texas.

Employees of the university who are volunteer firefighters shall also be granted a leave of absence with full pay to attend training schools conducted by state agencies provided such leave does not exceed five working days in any one fiscal year. The leave of absence shall not be charged against the employee's vacation- or sick-leave privileges provided by state law.

An employee called to active duty during a national emergency by a reserve branch of the United States armed forces shall have a leave of absence. The employee shall accrue state-service credit while on such leave but does not accrue vacation time or sick leave. The employee retains any accrued sick or vacation leave and will be credited with these leave balances upon their return.

Under the provisions of Article 5765, Section 7, *Vernon's Texas Civil Statutes*, all employees who are members of the state military forces or members of any other reserve components of the armed forces shall be entitled to leave of absence from

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their respective duties without loss of time or efficiency rating or loss of vacation time or salary on all days during which they shall be engaged in authorized training or duty ordered or authorized by proper authority, for not to exceed fifteen days in any one calendar year.

C. Jury Duty

Any university employee may be granted leave with pay on regular work days to perform jury duty. The leave of absence will not be charged against accrued vacation or sick leave. The employee shall not be required to account to the university for any compensation received for jury service.

In no case shall leave with pay be granted in personal litigation unless such actions are the result of an act performed by the employee as part of their official duty as an employee of the university.

D. Authorized Absences

The criteria for authorized absences are found in the *Rules and Regulations, Texas State University System*, Chapter 5, Section 4.821. Generally, those criteria are as follows: a faculty member employed by a university under the governance of the Board of Regents, Texas State University System, has a binding obligation "to discharge faithfully instructional duties and other responsibilities associated with faculty appointment." Faculty members, teaching assistants, research assistants, and laboratory instructors are required to meet all scheduled classes. Absences from classes will be authorized only under the following conditions:

1. Professional Meetings

A faculty member may be absent from classes for the purpose of attending a meeting of a professional organization when, according to the judgment of administrative officers, "attendance at such a meeting would contribute to the improvement of teaching or scholarship" at the university [*Rules and Regulations*, Chapter V, Section 4.821(1)].

2. Personal or Immediate Family Illness

Sick-leave absences from classes are authorized when sickness, injury, or pregnancy and recovery prevent the faculty member's performance of duty or when a member of their immediate family is actually ill. For purposes relating to regular sick leave, immediate family is defined as those individuals related by kinship, adoption, or marriage who are living in the same household or if not in the same household are totally dependent upon the employee for personal care or services on a continuing basis. The faculty member is obligated to notify the department chairperson or head as early as possible so that the latter may

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make appropriate arrangements for classes. Also, the faculty member must submit the prescribed leave forms for all sick leave even though no classes were missed if the absence occurred during the normal workday for the faculty member. The Application for Faculty Absence form is located in the Appendix.

3. Family Emergencies

A faculty member is authorized to be absent from classes in cases of severe illness of immediate family members; for the purpose of attending the funerals of the faculty member's spouse or of the faculty member's or spouse's parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents, or children; or for any other absence designated by the president of the university as an emergency. The faculty member is obligated to notify the department chairperson or head as early as possible so that the latter may make appropriate arrangements for classes.

4. Specific Assignments

A faculty member is authorized to be absent from assigned classes when the president of the university assigns the faculty member to a specific duty of short duration which conflicts with their scheduled classes. "The Board of Regents discourages the use of specific assignments which will cause a faculty member to be absent from assigned classes" [*Rules and Regulations*, Chapter V, Section 4.821(4)].

Authorization for any member of a faculty to be absent from usual and regular duties for specific assignments will be granted only when such absence is on state business.

5. Special Circumstances

In special or unusual circumstances, the president of the university may authorize a faculty member to be absent from classes for short duration when "the President considers such absences to be for valid reasons and in the best interest of both the faculty member and the Component" [*Rules and Regulations*, Chapter V, Section 4.821(5)].

E. Unauthorized Absences

"Unauthorized absences on the part of the faculty member are not permitted." Such absences will be regarded "as a violation of the terms of the faculty member's contract" (*Rules and Regulations*, Chapter V, Section 4.822).

F. Approval Procedures

The following procedures are to be followed for the approval of an absence:

1. Faculty members who are absent on regularly scheduled class days, Monday through Friday, during working hours, must receive approval of such absence.

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2. Absences involving travel, either on personal or official state business, must be approved in accord with the statement on travel regulations appearing in the *Administrative Policy Manual*. In the event of absence due to personal illness, an Application for Faculty Absence form should be filled out and signed by the officials designated on the form.
3. In all absences, the department chairperson and the executive vice president and provost must be informed and their approval obtained. It is the responsibility of the faculty member to work with their department chair to make arrangements for classes missed.
4. A copy of the *Administrative Policy Manual* is available for review online, in the Bryan Wildenthal Library, and in the office of each university administrator, i.e., vice president, college dean, or department chair.