

BLACK HILLS STATE UNIVERSITY
Policy and Procedure Manual

SUBJECT: Faculty Absence from Class

NUMBER: 2:3

Office: Office of Academic Affairs

Source: [BHSU Faculty Handbook](#); [BHSU Policy 6:12 Emergency Campus Closures](#); [BHSU Policy 4:11 Time and Leave Reporting](#)

1. Purpose

This policy sets forth the process for faculty absence from class for BHSU faculty.

2. Policy

- a. Faculty members are expected to meet with their classes during all scheduled days and times. It is not permissible for faculty members to cancel classes, to extend spring break, or to cancel scheduled class days prior to or immediately following a holiday.
- b. **University or Conference Travel:** In those situations when faculty members must travel at the request of the university or to attend conferences, they must inform their school chair and the college office of their absence from class at least a week prior to traveling. They must also arrange for alternative learning experiences for their students in any affected class meetings (see examples below in the Procedure section of this policy).
- c. **Weather-Related Cancellations:** Only designated university administrators have the authority to issue class cancellations due to inclement weather, with official notifications delivered via the emergency alert system, phone, email, and text message. Faculty members may not make independent decisions about cancelling classes due to weather. In those situations when classes remain in session, but a faculty member is unable to travel to the Spearfish or Rapid City campus to teach his or her courses, the faculty member must consult with the school chair or college dean about options (see examples below in the Procedure section of this policy).

- d. **Absence Due to Illness:** Faculty members will occasionally miss their scheduled class meetings due to illness. In cases of sudden illness, they must make every effort to notify students and their college office of class cancellations as soon as possible. In cases of extended illness, faculty members must work with their school chair to arrange substitute instructors or alternative learning experiences for their students.
 - e. Each college dean has the responsibility and discretion to manage the process of tracking and approving faculty members' absences from their classes.
3. Procedures
- a. **University or Conference Travel:** In the event of any planned travel, faculty members must notify their school chair or college dean and the college secretary at least a week prior to their absence from campus. Additionally, faculty members must arrange for alternative learning experiences for their students in any class meeting affected by their absence. These alternatives may include, but are not limited to, substitute instructors, resource sessions with library staff for class assignments, group projects, attending relevant guest lectures or similar events on campus, or peer-review sessions on writing assignments. Cancelling classes outright must be a last resort and requires the approval of the college dean. The college office is responsible for posting the notice of all class cancellations.
 - b. **Weather-Related Cancellations:** If classes are in session, but a faculty member is unable to reach the Spearfish or Rapid City campus to teach his or her classes in person, the faculty member must communicate with the school chair or college dean about possible alternative arrangements. The faculty member must make every effort to conduct his or her classes remotely via D2L or Zoom or communicate an alternative learning experience to the students. Only if these options prove impractical may the college dean approve cancellation of the faculty members' classes. For class cancellations at the Spearfish campus, the college office will post notice of the cancellations at the respective classrooms. For class cancellations at the Rapid City campus, the school chair or college dean will communicate with BHSU-RC at (605) 718-4073. Staff at BHSU-RC will post a notification on the classroom door(s).

- c. **Absence Due to Illness:** Faculty members must notify their school chair or college dean and the college secretary as soon as possible—ideally before 8:00 a.m.—to cancel class due to a sudden illness. The college office is responsible for posting the notice of class cancellation. If requesting sick leave, the faculty member must submit a leave request through the electronic leave request system upon return to work and prior to submitting the leave report for the pay period in which the leave was utilized.

Faculty members who expect to miss more than a day of classes due to an extended illness must communicate with their school chair and arrange alternative learning experiences for their students. These alternatives may include, but are not limited to, substitute instructors, resource sessions with library staff for class assignments, group projects, attending relevant guest lectures or similar events on campus, or peer-review sessions on writing assignments. Cancelling classes outright must be a last resort and requires the approval of the college dean. The college office is responsible for posting the notice of all class cancellations.

4. Responsible Administrator

The Vice President for Academic Affairs, or designee, is responsible for the annual and ad hoc review of this policy. The University President is responsible for approval of this policy.

SOURCE: Adopted by President 5/4/2020; revised/approved 2023.10.30