UNIVERSITY HEALTH SERVICES
Division of Student Affairs

P.O. Box 7339 • Austin, Texas 78713-7339 • 512-471-4955
healthyhorns.utexas.edu

Dear Faculty Member,

In alignment with the recommendations of the American College Health Association and our peer institutions, University Health Services (UHS) has implemented a policy of not providing written excuses for students who miss classes or assignments due to short-term illnesses or injuries.

This policy was created with several considerations in mind. Firstly, it recognizes that minor, self-limiting illnesses or injuries, such as colds or gastrointestinal upsets, often require rest and self-care at home as the most effective course of action. Additionally, for certain communicable diseases such as COVID-19, it is important that individuals exhibiting symptoms of the virus stay home, isolate, and follow the testing and guidance provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

By refraining from issuing written excuses for students seeking them solely for the purpose of missing class, we aim to address several concerns. These include minimizing the financial burden placed on students, ensuring availability of appointments for those in need of medical care, reducing the risk of exacerbating illnesses or injuries through travel, and mitigating the potential exposure of contagious illnesses to others.

As we strive to foster the development of independent adults, we provide a free 24/7 Nurse Line at 512-475-6877, where registered nurses are available around the clock, every day of the year, to offer self-care instructions and guidance regarding the need for medical attention to students with minor medical concerns.

Regarding missed classes or deadlines due to illnesses or injuries, we request that students follow the guidelines outlined in the course syllabus for notifying their instructors, preferably in advance of the test, deadline, or class. We greatly appreciate faculty members' willingness to communicate with students and explore alternative ways for them to fulfill their academic responsibilities while prioritizing their health and the well-being of others. It is important to note that UHS cannot disclose medical information without the student's consent through a release form.

For students facing significant health challenges, there are additional university resources available to support them. These include Student Emergency Services at deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency, 512-471-5017 and Disability and Access, which coordinates course load reductions and medical withdrawals, at diversity.utexas.edu/disability, 512-471-6259.

Please be assured that UHS remains committed to providing medical care and appropriate documentation to students experiencing serious or prolonged illnesses, injuries, or disabilities.

We appreciate your dedication to the welfare and growth of our students. If you have any questions or require further clarification regarding this policy or any other UHS-related matters, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at t.hines@uhs.utexas.edu.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Terrance Hines, M.D.
Executive Director & Chief Medical Officer
University Health Services
The University of Texas at Austin