



COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

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## Faculty Absence Policy

College of Fine Arts  
University of Texas at Austin

1. Faculty Leaves—Faculty members are relieved of teaching duties when they are on an approved paid or unpaid leave. Examples are: Dean’s Fellow Leave, Faculty Research Assignment, Family Medical Leave, or leaves funded externally by some other source. Leaves from teaching duties may be full-time, for varied periods, or teaching “load reductions.” In every case, when on leave, a faculty member’s teaching duties will be reassigned, by prior arrangement, by the chair or director or her designee.

2. Planned Absences—Students have a right to instruction from the professor assigned to a course as the “instructor of record.” However, faculty members may have to miss class and other formal teaching duties for conferences, performances, clinical or other professional activities, or for religious observances.

All planned absences must be approved in advance, preferably prior to the beginning of the semester, by a faculty member’s chair or director, or his or her designee. The request for a planned absence should be done in writing (e.g. email) with a clearly proposed plan for covering or making up missed classes, lessons or rehearsals. The chair or director, or designee, should approve or disapprove this request in writing.

Additional guidelines for planned faculty absences:

- Planned absences should be limited to no more than two consecutive weeks in a semester and not more than three aggregate weeks in any one semester;
- Chairs and directors will exercise their discretion about whether any planned absence, for any duration, is warranted;
- All absences should be covered through some appropriate substitution that could, under appropriate circumstances and with proper approvals, include the following:
  - A faculty colleague or an approved Teaching Assistant substituting in organized classes;
  - An approved guest speaker/lecturer/artist, appropriately supervised, as a substitute;
  - Course work or workshops (e.g. offered by the Center for Teaching and Learning or the Libraries, etc.) that students can complete during the teacher’s absence;
  - Teleconferencing or “skyping” into a class.
- Faculty members should be in residence, meeting their classes, for the first and final days of each semester. Faculty should avoid conflicts that would require absence from scheduled juries, auditions, portfolio reviews or other programmatic duties.
- Students should receive advance notice of a planned absence through the course syllabus or some other notification.
- Teaching Assistants should be used to substitute for a supervising faculty member only sparingly and for appropriate lectures or lessons.

3. Unplanned Absences -- When missing a class or teaching assignment is not predicted or planned:

- The faculty member should make every reasonable effort to notify students as early as possible, preferably by email, text, or a course web site;
- The faculty member should also make every effort, as soon as feasible, to notify students about how the class, lesson or rehearsal will be made up or what substitution will occur in place of the missed class;
- The faculty member should notify his or her chair, director or designee of any unplanned absence.
- If an unplanned absence must continue beyond a week of consecutive classes, a faculty member should discuss with his or her chair or director a plan for substitution.
- If a prolonged illness or family need continues for two weeks or more, the faculty member should discuss the possibility of a Family Medical Leave.

4. Substitute Teachers -- A faculty member's chair or director, or designee, should be made aware of and approve any substitute teacher (who is not a UT faculty member or approved Teaching Assistant.) A faculty member may never contract privately with a substitute (i.e. with his or her personal funds as contrasted with COFA instructional funds, fellowship dollars or professorships). Compensation from substitute teachers must come from the department, school or college.

5. Holidays, "Dead Days," and Exam Week

- Classes scheduled in the days before or after a holiday or Spring Break may not be canceled to extend the break. Students should be made aware of this in a course syllabus.
- Per university policy, no classes, exams, or organized and required course activities may be scheduled in the "Dead Days" preceding Exam Week.
- No exams counting toward more than 30% of a final course grade may be administered in the last week of scheduled classes.
- Faculty members should make themselves available by email or other means after returning final assignments and grades to students at the end of the semester.



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Dean, College of Fine Arts  
University of Texas at Austin

January 22, 2014  
Date