# Cultural or Ceremonial Leave Proposal, 3/15/18 (amended)

**Class Attendance/Absence Policy**

Students who are registered for a course but do not attend the first two class meetings may be required by the instructor to drop the course. This rule allows for early identification of class vacancies to permit other students to add classes. Students not allowed to remain must complete a drop form or drop the course through [CyberBear](http://cyberbear.umt.edu/) to avoid receiving a failing grade. Students who know they will be absent should contact the instructor in advance.

Students are expected to attend all class meetings and complete all assignments for courses in which they are enrolled. Instructors are encouraged to notify advisors or the appropriate administrators regarding students with excessive unexcused absences. Instructors may excuse brief and occasional absences for reasons of illness, injury, family emergency, religious observance, cultural or ceremonial events, or participation in a University sponsored activity. (University sponsored activities include for example, field trips, ASUM service, music or drama performances, and intercollegiate athletics.) Instructors shall excuse absences for reasons of military service or mandatory public service.

Cultural or ceremonial leave allows excused absences for cultural, religious, and ceremonial purposes to meet the student’s customs and traditions or to participate in related activities. To receive an authorized absence for a cultural, religious or ceremonial event the student or their advisor (proxy) must submit a formal written request to the instructor. This must include a brief description (with inclusive dates) of the cultural event or ceremony and the importance of the student’s attendance or participation. Authorization for the absence is subject to approval by the instructor. Appeals may be made to the Chair, Dean or Provost. The excused absence or leave may not exceed five academic calendar days (not including weekends or holidays). Students remain responsible for completion or make-up of assignments as defined in the syllabus, at the discretion of the instructor.

Instructors may establish absence policies to conform to the educational goals and requirements of their courses with due consideration of the class’s diversity. Such policies ~~will ordinarily~~ should be set out in the course syllabus ~~Customarily, course syllabi will describe~~  and should include the procedures for giving timely notice of absences, explain how work missed because of an excused absence may be made up, and stipulate any penalty to be assessed for excessive or unexcused absences.

The UM Faculty Senate encourages the faculty to accommodate students incurring an excused absence by allowing them to make up missed work when this can be done in a manner consistent with the educational goals of their courses. Students expecting to incur excused absences should consult with their instructors early in the term to be sure that they understand the absence policies for each of their courses.

**Proposed Header under the “Academics” Section of the Catalog**[**http://catalog.umt.edu/academics/policies-procedures/**](http://catalog.umt.edu/academics/policies-procedures/)

*The University of Montana has established the following policies and procedures for the purpose of governing the academic operations of the university and to inform faculty and students of their rights and responsibilities. Faculty, administrators, and students should recognize ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic diversity among the student population and make appropriate accommodations when interpreting and applying the University of Montana academic policies and procedures. The goal is to ensure the highest standards of academic quality, while at the same time to provide an optimal educational experience for students.*