

Faculty Guidance Regarding Medical Documentation

We realize that students sometimes approach faculty members to request exceptions to class attendance and course requirements due to extenuating circumstances. To support you in maintaining the integrity of your course and managing student situations with which you are presented, we offer the following framework related to situations where students present reasons for missed class attendance and class performance.

Support/Compassion:

- We encourage faculty to support students and show empathy for their situations, especially if they are facing medical, mental health or disability-related challenges. However, the students are emerging adults and are therefore responsible for the coursework for which they registered.
- Being compassionate means using your best judgment and discretion on a case-by-case basis.
- In most cases, being compassionate means referring students who need help beyond your scope (those registered with the Disability Resource Center or those who are clearly struggling, for example) to resources on campus where staff can assess the student's situation and create a treatment plan or academic coaching plan (see the chart below.)

Single Absences:

- Students may have a single absence where they are ill or must miss class for a justifiable reason.
- In that case, a faculty member uses their discretion whether to not count the absence based on the attendance policy. Any notes voluntarily provided by the student must be dated and general in nature without listing ongoing diagnoses or medical history. The note should then be returned to the student.

Excessive Absences:

- If a student is struggling with attendance (excessive absences) or overdue course assignments and attributes their performance to a physical, mental health or disability-related condition, that condition should be documented with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at the college, not with the faculty member.
- A faculty member should NOT accept medical documentation with diagnoses or history from any student. The student should be advised that it is against college policy to do so.
- Providing academic adjustments (extensions, an alternate assignment, etc.) for students who present a special request is at the discretion of the faculty member. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) remains available for consultation when requests for adjustments are presented to a faculty member by a student (x3020 or email drc@newpaltz.edu).

False Documentation:

- If you think that a student has submitted any documentation to you that is false, it should be reported to the [Office of Student Conduct](#), as it is a chargeable offense.

Student Referrals:

- Following the charts below, faculty are encouraged to refer students to appropriate offices whose role it is to validate the condition and ensure a treatment plan is in place. *When appropriate, professional staff will then communicate with faculty (without medical details).*
- If a student is hospitalized, the Office of Student Affairs will contact the faculty members and advisor to inform them. The student is encouraged to reach out to each of their faculty members also, if they are able. Note: students hospitalized may not have access to a phone or computer.
- If a student notifies a faculty member directly that they are in a hospital, the student should be referred to the Office of Student Affairs (x3260), so they notify the college of the hospitalization.
- If a student has required an academic accommodation in the past and anticipates an academic accommodation will be needed in the future for a temporary or ongoing disability that will require accommodations, they should contact the DRC.

Faculty response to reasons a student is missing classes

Death of a family member	Student reports they feel too ill to attend class	Doctor's appointment(s)	Physical Health	Mental Health	Hospitalized
<p>Faculty discretion to not count the absence based on the attendance policy.</p> <p>Refer the student to the PCC (x2920) if the student is in notable distress and misses further classes, appearing to need assistance due to grief.</p>	<p>Faculty discretion to not count the absence based on attendance policy.</p>	<p>One appointment – Faculty discretion to accept dated note from the treatment provider to excuse the absence.</p> <p>Ongoing physical illness with more than one appointment where condition is interfering with class attendance or performance - Refer student to the Student Health Service to assess their medical condition (x3400). SHS will consult with DRC if appropriate.</p>	<p>Refer the student to the Student Health Service (x3400). Only contact University Police at x2222 if there is a medical emergency.</p> <p>In cases where the student is requesting academic accommodations for a disability, SHS staff will refer them to the DRC.</p>	<p>Refer the student to PCC (Counseling Center) where staff will assess their needs; and then call and alert PCC that you are referring the student (x2920).</p> <p>In cases where the student is requesting academic accommodations for a disability, PCC staff will refer them to the DRC.</p>	<p>Refer the student to Student Affairs (x3260). Appropriate faculty & their advisor will be notified & student will be referred to PCC or Student Health Service.</p> <p>(See Student Referrals, above.)</p> <p>In cases where the student is requesting academic accommodations for a disability, they will be referred to the DRC.</p>

What is the protocol for students after I refer them to the Disability Resource Center?

<p>Step 1: If the student chooses to reach out to the DRC, staff discusses the available accommodations and required documentation to begin the process.</p>	<p>Step 2: DRC staff meets with the student to review the documentation and discuss appropriate accommodations in their case.</p>	<p>Step 3: Accommodation information will be sent to the faculty members through the 'Accommodate' class roster, as well as an email.</p>
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Medical Documentation Summary:

Single Absences: Any notes voluntarily provided by the student must be dated and general in nature without listing ongoing diagnoses or medical history. The note should then be returned to the student.

Excessive Absences:

- **Students are NEVER to provide paperwork listing a diagnosis or specific details of their physical or mental health history to a faculty member.** Allowing students to do so places you as the faculty member in an awkward position and exposes you to personal information you should not have to review.
- If the student is seeking academic accommodations or adjustments for a temporary or ongoing disability, they should be referred to register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) for services.

Note: Sometimes the most advisable outcome for a student who has missed a great deal of work is a Withdrawal from the course, taking an Incomplete grade option (if they completed 75% of the coursework) or taking a Leave of Absence for a semester or year.