



BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

University Policy 4420

Faculty Absences from Assigned Responsibilities

Effective Date

July 1993

Last Revision Date

September 18, 2025

Responsible Party

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, (208) 426-1202
Human Resources and Workforce Strategy, (208) 426-1616

Scope and Audience

This policy applies to all faculty as defined under this policy, including those teaching in-person, hybrid, or online courses.

Additional Authority

- Idaho State Board of Education Policy II.G; II.I; II.L
- University Policy 4000 (Faculty Code of Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct)
- University Policy 4410 (Annual Leave – Faculty)
- University Policy 4460 (Nonreturnees – Faculty)
- University Policy 7230 (Family and Medical Leave)
- University Policy 7260 (Sick Leave – Faculty)
- University Policy 7530 (Employee Files)

- University Policy 7580 (Parental Leave for Graduate Assistants)
 - University Policy 7610 (Paid Parental Leave)
 - University Policy 7620 (Time Away From Work)
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1. Policy Purpose

To establish guidelines for a faculty member's absence(s) during their contract period, ensuring that instructional, research, and service responsibilities are met. Faculty must adhere to the approval processes outlined in this policy when planning an absence that may affect their university responsibilities.

2. Policy Statement

Boise State University is committed to supporting faculty in balancing their professional and personal responsibilities while ensuring that teaching, service, and other academic obligations are fulfilled to uphold the university's mission and meet the needs of students and colleagues.

Unless otherwise approved by the Unit Administrator, such as an arrangement for remote teaching, faculty members are expected to fulfill their teaching, service, and other academic responsibilities. Exceptions include absences due to illness, personal emergencies, religious observances, professional obligations (e.g., attending conferences, presenting seminars, serving on review panels, or conducting scholarly work), or circumstances beyond the faculty member's control.

Faculty members are salaried (FLSA exempt) employees and, as such, are not required to adhere to a fixed number of hours per workday. Instead, their professional responsibilities—including teaching, research, service, and other assigned duties—determine the nature and extent of their work. Faculty are expected to fulfill these responsibilities in a manner that ensures their obligations to students, colleagues, and the university are met (see University Policy 4000 - Faculty Code of Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct). Any necessary absences that may impact assigned duties must be communicated in advance and approved by the appropriate Unit Administrator.

3. Definitions

3.1 Absence

Lack of engagement with professional responsibilities as assigned/contracted. "Absence" does not equate to lack of physical presence.

3.2 Approved Leave

Leave available to the faculty member that is approved following the required approval and reporting requirements (see section 6.1 for the list of applicable leave policies).

3.3 Faculty/Faculty Member

As defined in the Faculty Constitution and in University Policy 7000 (Position Definitions), University Faculty includes: Tenure/Tenure Eligible Faculty, Teaching Faculty/Lecturers, Clinical Faculty, Research Faculty, Administrative Faculty, Adjunct Faculty, Affiliate, and Visiting Faculty. For the purposes of this policy, “Faculty” also includes emeriti faculty members and any person employed by the University to conduct classroom learning, and/or scholarly/creative activities (including employees whose primary appointment may be “professional staff” but who also conduct classroom learning). The term “Faculty” is used as a collective noun in this policy, and the term “Faculty member” refers to an individual.

3.4 Resignation

Voluntarily leaving or abandoning university employment, not including retirement.

3.5 Unit Administrator

For the purposes of this policy, individuals with administrative responsibilities in academic units who have direct supervision over Faculty Members (e.g., department chairs/heads/directors, etc.).

3.6 Work

For the purposes of this policy, “Work” refers to a Faculty Member’s assigned responsibilities within the scope of their employment, per their workload assignments each year. See the following policies:

- University Policy 4560 (Workload For Tenured And Tenure-Track Faculty)
- University Policy 4215 (Part-Time Tenure-Eligible Faculty)
- University Policy 4220 (Adjunct Faculty)
- University Policy 4250 (Lecturer Faculty)
- University Policy 4490 (Clinical Faculty)

3.7 Working Days

For the purposes of this policy, “Working Days” are defined as Monday through Friday, excluding official university holidays and campus closures. Weekends (Saturday and Sunday) are not considered Working Days unless a Faculty Member’s specific assigned teaching.

4. Responsibilities

- a. Faculty are responsible for fulfilling their assigned responsibilities and must exercise reasonable care to discharge their agreed commitments as outlined in University Policy 4000 (Faculty Code of Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct).
- b. Faculty are expected to meet their regularly scheduled classes. Failure to meet scheduled classes without prior notice to their Unit Administrator and students is excusable only for reasons beyond the control of a Faculty Member (see University Policy 4000 - Faculty Code of Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct, section 5.3.1).
- c. Faculty whose commitments to the University include Scholarship, publication, or other similar professional endeavors must exercise reasonable care to discharge their agreed commitments (see University Policy 4000 - Faculty Code of Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct, section 5.3.2).
- d. When assigned, Faculty must be diligent in fulfilling committee obligations and in accepting their share of the governance tasks of the University. When Faculty are engaged in professional or administrative efforts with other persons, they must be responsive in meeting their obligations to their associates and in performing the tasks they have agreed to perform (see University Policy 4000 - Faculty Code of Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct, section 5.3.2).

5. Expectations

Absences from scheduled obligations may adversely affect students, other Faculty, and university staff. Faculty are urged to limit Absences during times that conflict with scheduled classes, office hours, and other university-related obligations (see also section 2).

5.1 Faculty on 9-, 10-, and 11-Month Contracts

- a. Faculty members on academic year, 9-month, or other contract periods (10- and 11-month) do not accrue vacation leave. Therefore, vacation-related Absences during the contract period are not permitted (e.g., Faculty cannot miss online, remote, or in-person class meetings for vacation-related reasons). Faculty contracts are structured to reflect their unique responsibilities, and time away from Work must not interfere with instructional, research, or service duties. Scheduled Absences must align with university obligations, including teaching, advising, and service responsibilities.

- b. Faculty may use university-scheduled breaks (e.g., winter, Thanksgiving, or spring break) for personal travel or vacation purposes, unless they have contractual obligations during these periods.
- c. See section 6.1.4 for Faculty travel for research, conferences, and professional activities

5.2 Adjunct Faculty

Part-time adjunct Faculty are not benefit-eligible and do not earn sick leave. However, in the event of unforeseen personal illness or injury, part-time adjunct Faculty who have been employed by the University for at least one (1) full academic semester are eligible for limited continuation of regular salary (see University Policy 7260, Sick Leave - Faculty).

5.3 Unauthorized or Excessive Absences

- a. Unauthorized Absences, including those for vacation purposes, as well as excessive Absences that significantly hinder a Faculty Member's ability to fulfill teaching, advising, research, or service obligations, may be documented in the personnel record and addressed in the Faculty Member's performance evaluation in accordance with university policies.
- b. Unauthorized or excessive Absences may be used to inform personnel decisions or constitute adequate cause for discipline. Before disciplinary action is taken due to excessive Absences, the Faculty Member must be notified in writing and given an opportunity to respond (see University Policy 4720 - Faculty Due Process and Appeal Procedures). Faculty may appeal through existing university, department, school, or college appeal procedures.

6. Types of Absences

6.1 Leaves of Absence

- a. Faculty must follow university procedures for requesting sabbatical, parental, family medical leave (FMLA), and other forms of leave. See the following policies:
 - University Policy 4410 (Annual Leave – Faculty)
 - University Policy 7230 (Family and Medical Leave)
 - University Policy 7260 (Sick Leave – Faculty)
 - University Policy 7580 (Parental Leave for Graduate Assistants)
 - University Policy 7610 (Paid Parental Leave)
 - University Policy 4400 (Sabbatical Leave)

- University Policy 7620 (Time Away From Work)
- b. Leave with or without pay should be requested for extended Absences not associated with sabbatical, a parental leave, or medical leave, when the leave would prevent the Faculty Member from fulfilling their responsibilities such as teaching, advising and service.

6.1.1 Absences of One Week or Less

Absences of one (1) week or less due to personal medical or family emergencies are handled informally. The Faculty Member must inform their Unit Administrator or dean and make appropriate arrangements to cover or reschedule the missed classes (see University Policy 7260, Sick Leave - Faculty).

6.1.2 Emergency Absences

In the case of an emergency, when the Faculty Member must be absent without advance notice, the Faculty Member must contact the department immediately. It is then the department's responsibility to arrange for someone to cover the Faculty Member's classes, if possible, and post a notice that the Faculty Member is not available for office hours.

6.1.3 Absence for Professional Activities

A Faculty Member traveling for professional activities, regardless of funding source, must submit a Travel Authorization Form prior to the actual travel dates, which the supervisor must approve (see University Policy 6180 - Travel, Section 4).

6.1.4 Travel for Research, Conferences, and Professional Activities for more than Five (5) Consecutive Working Days in a Semester

A faculty member who will be absent for more than five (5) consecutive Working Days due to professional obligations (e.g., research travel, conferences), must notify their Unit Administrator in writing (via email or through the travel authorization process), provide a plan for meeting their responsibilities, and obtain written approval (email is acceptable).

6.1.5 Travel for More than Ten (10) Working Days Overall in a Semester

A Faculty Member who will be away from Work because of travel for more than ten (10) Working Days overall in a semester should inform their Unit Administrator or dean and make appropriate arrangements to cover or reschedule the missed classes. The dean and the Unit Administrator must approve in writing or by email the proposed Absences and plans for meeting the Faculty Member's assigned responsibilities.

7. Notification and Approval Processes

- a. Faculty are responsible for promptly notifying their Unit Administrator of their Absence needs.
- b. Absences must be reported through the University's time reporting system to record any days when the Faculty Member is not meeting their assigned responsibilities, or is otherwise unable to perform the assigned duties of their position.
- c. A Faculty Member who is not able to attend a class (online, hybrid, remote, or in-person), office hours, or other teaching or service duties, should make alternative arrangements so that these responsibilities are met in a way that provides a positive experience for the students and others affected by the Absence. If an online, hybrid, remote, or in-person class session is rescheduled to accommodate a Faculty Member's Absence, it must be rescheduled at a time when all students can attend.

7.1 Request Process for Travel of More Than Five (5) Consecutive Working Days in a Semester

- a. Travel-related requests involving more than five (5) consecutive Working Days should be made no later than one (1) week prior to the intended departure.
- b. Permission will be granted only for travel-related Absences having sufficient benefit to the University and with appropriate plans for meeting the Faculty Member's Work responsibilities.
- c. A Faculty Member may appeal their supervisor's travel-related Absence decision using the appeal processes outlined in university, department, school, or college-level policies to ensure due process.

8. Position Abandonment

- a. If a Faculty Member is absent for seven (7) or more consecutive Working Days without Approved Leave and fails to make appropriate arrangements, the University may consider the position abandoned and may deem the Faculty Member to have voluntarily resigned.
- b. Before assuming voluntary Resignation, the University must make a documented good-faith effort to contact the Faculty Member.
- c. If the Faculty Member does not respond within a reasonable timeframe (e.g., ten (10) Working Days from the University's good-faith effort to contact), the university may proceed with processing the Resignation.

- d. If the Absence is due to circumstances beyond the Faculty Member's control (e.g., incapacitation or the Faculty Member's own medical emergency) and the Faculty Member notifies the University as soon as reasonably possible, the Faculty Member may not be considered to have abandoned their position. For more information, see University Policy 4460 (Nonreturnees - Faculty).

9. Related Information

University Policy 7600 (Telecommuting)

Revision History

July 1995; September 18, 2025