

## **Policy 200.7 – Hold Harmless**

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Approved By:

References: UMW Student Handbook

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### **I. POLICY**

The University of Montana Western administration and faculty agree that students will be held harmless for absences due to University sanctioned activities in so far as possible.

### **II. PURPOSE**

The intent of this policy is to insure that students are not harmed academically for absences due to University-sanctioned activities. This policy provides a process for affected faculty and students to develop a plan for completion of academic expectations for a class.

### **III. PROCEDURES**

#### **A. Student's Responsibility to Notify Faculty Member of Expected University Activity Absence**

The University of Montana Western administration and faculty agree that students will be held harmless for absences due to University sanctioned activities in so far as possible. All parties recognize that not all classes are amenable to alternative assignments and in some cases it is impossible to reschedule critical learning experiences. Though faculty has the final decision regarding the appropriateness of alternative assignments or experiences, in all cases they will make a good faith effort to accommodate.

Students should work with their advisors and potential faculty members to design student course schedules that minimize absences in those courses with learning experiences that present special challenges for replication at an alternative time.

Wherever possible, all student work should be completed before the end of the course block. If it is not possible for a faculty member to replicate a learning experience that produces similar critical learning outcomes to the missed experiences in a particular course within the same block, Incompletes may need to be issued to the student until such time as suitable learning experiences, if possible, can occur. Final decisions regarding the appropriateness of assigning Incomplete grades are made exclusively by the faculty.

This policy is effective so long as:

1. The student provides both verbal and written communication to the faculty member or employer on Day 1 of any given block.
2. The student is engaged in a University-sanctioned event necessitating the student's absence. Examples of such events include (but are not limited to) athletic activities, career fairs, and field experiences. The faculty member or employer must be able to verify this activity if so desired.

The student is not excused from academic work required for a course, but in these instances will be allowed to work with a faculty member or employer to alter deadlines, or complete alternate assignments, or make up work as assigned by the faculty member or employer in so far as possible.

Students will not be penalized for engaging in such activity and the faculty member or employer shall attempt to accommodate the student as long as the student provides for 1 and 2 above.

**B. Appeal Process**

Students with complaints that a faculty member is not working under this policy must initiate the following procedure as soon as possible:

1. Initial attempts to resolve the matter should be made in writing with the instructor/administrator, who shall have ten (10) working days to respond in writing.
2. If further action is necessary, the student will next direct the grievance to the Dean of Students. The Dean of Students will convene a meeting involving the faculty member/administrator, the student, and a neutral mediator. The mediator will be designated to hear the case and help the parties communicate. The Dean of Students will provide guidelines for this mediation to all parties.
3. If the mediation does not resolve the matter to the satisfaction of both parties, the written grievance and supporting documentation will be forwarded by the Dean of Students within ten (10) working days of the mediation to the Provost/Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, who shall have twenty (20) working days to act upon the complaint and/or assign the case to a campus committee for a recommendation. The assigned committee shall have twenty (20) working days to reach their conclusion(s) and recommend suitable action to the Chancellor.

The Chancellor may refer the matter to the Affirmative Action Committee for review and recommendation. If the complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, he/she will be advised of the right to file with the appropriate federal and/or state investigatory agency.

**IV. AUTHORITY**

**V. RESPONSIBILITY**

Provost/Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Faculty, Dean of Students, Chancellor, Affirmative Action Committee