

## **Grief Absence Policy**

### **College of Social Science**

The College of Social Science follows the official MSU (Michigan State University) grief absence policy, which can be found [here](#). Students will need to complete the [grief absence form](#) in their StuInfo portal, and email supporting documentation to [SSC.GriefAbsence@msu.edu](mailto:SSC.GriefAbsence@msu.edu).

Students may request a grief absence to support their academic success when faced with a significant interpersonal loss that may require time away from the classroom to attend to matters related to the loss and to afford time for grieving. Examples of losses include the death or grave illness of a family member or close loved one. Documentation is requested so that the absence's timing can be determined and provided to instructional faculty. Requests for grief absences to address other serious stressors will also be considered, with approval dependent upon the circumstances and the suitability of the grief absence mechanism for addressing the impacts of the stressor on academic progress.

For requests related to interpersonal losses, documentation can include official notification of a death (e.g., funeral home verification, published obituary, funeral program). For other types of requests, students may submit other forms of documentation pertinent to the circumstances that prompted the request. Documentation should be emailed to [SSC.GriefAbsence@msu.edu](mailto:SSC.GriefAbsence@msu.edu).

Most grief absences are valid for a few days, with the maximum approval being two academic weeks (that is, 10 business days). Shorter absences typically support maintaining academic progress; therefore, shorter absences are recommended unless the circumstances do not make a shorter duration feasible. Absences requested for more than 5 business days must be supported by the rationale and documentation provided by the student. Duration determination will consider circumstances such as whether extended travel is required, if the student has documented responsibilities created by the loss, and other relevant considerations. The timing of the absence must be consistent with the documentation and rationale provided. For example, if travel is involved, the timing of the absence should include the dates of travel.

If you anticipate needing 10 business days away from your coursework, you may need to consider a longer term pause on or change to your academic program, such as a withdrawal or drop of one or all courses. If this is possible, please contact your academic advisor to discuss the requirements and consequences of these different options.

Students must submit the request for a grief absence as close as possible to the date of the absence, typically within 2 days of the student learning of the circumstances that prompted the request for the absence. Except under extenuating circumstances, students should submit their request prior to being absent; retroactive grief absences are not guaranteed approval. The rationale for this is that after-the-fact requests complicate the process of working with instructors to manage the impact of the absence on academic work. Absences will be denied if the College requests additional documentation and the student fails to provide it.

When grief absences are granted, the College will contact the student's instructors informing them that the student has been approved for an absence and its length. **The student will be copied on the emails so they can follow up directly with their instructors.** Students are responsible for making direct contact with each instructor to work out the details of the absence as it impacts any assignments or assessments that are scheduled during the period of the approved absence. Different forms of accommodation may be appropriate for different classes depending on the course. It is within the instructor's right to suggest accommodations that fit with their course. Instructors are expected to adjust due dates for assignments and/or exams that fall within the approved absence period but are not expected to eliminate any exams or assignments. Timely contact by students allows for students and instructors to come to a mutual understanding of how exams, assignments, and other class matters will be handled.

Students undergoing a significant loss or stressor should review additional support on campus that might also be useful. Working with advisors to identify and connect with these support systems is highly recommended. The Associate Dean's Office for Undergraduate Studies can also meet with students to help navigate this process.

If the student needs any assistance with their request or has questions, they can call (517) 432-3598 or email [SSC.GriefAbsence@msu.edu](mailto:SSC.GriefAbsence@msu.edu).