

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Memorandum

Date: January 16, 2026

To: Teresa Cuellar, Secretary of Governance

From: Teresa Mastin, Vice Provost and Associate Vice President for Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs

Subject: Proposed Change to the Student Athlete Missed Class Policy

I am reaching out on behalf of Provost McIntyre with a request to add the following agenda item to the steering committee for assignment to relevant committees.

The request is to have the [Faculty Relationships with Student Athletes policy](#) in the Faculty Handbook updated. In particular, the recommendation is to update the language related to the missed class provision in this policy. Specifically, the current language in the Faculty Handbook does not explicitly address whether student athletes can make up missed exams, quizzes, or assignments in circumstances where a faculty member has a blanket policy in a class where students can drop a grade.

In discussions with other Big Ten institutions, MSU's Faculty Athletic Representative (FAR) has learned that most other Big Ten institutions have similar language for student athletes as they do for missed class attendance related to religious observance, in some cases institutions even address these in the same policy.

Thus, we are recommending a revision to the Faculty Handbook to align MSU with other Big Ten institutions, and to be consistent amongst our own University policy language regarding excused class absences.

More specifically, the recommendation is to revise the Faculty Handbook to align with the following sections of the [Religious Observance Policy](#):

(2) Absences may not be counted as a missed class in any course in which attendance is a measure of academic performance. Some instructors attempt to cover all reasons for student absences from required academic events such as quizzes or exams with a blanket policy, e.g., allowing the student to drop one grade or two quizzes without penalty, or allowing a certain number of "unexcused" absences during the course of a semester. This kind of policy should not be applied to religious observances, as this penalizes religions with more observance days that require absences than others.

(3) Reasonable extensions of time must be given, without academic penalty, for missed assignments; students must be allowed to schedule presentations around such absences. Make-up work should be appropriate and not more difficult than the original assignment.



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(4) It is the responsibility of those students who need to be absent to inform their instructor at least two weeks before the observance day, make arrangements in advance with their instructors, and to catch up on any material discussed and assignments given during that class period. Accommodations must never fundamentally alter an essential requirement of the course or academic program.

To reiterate, the request is to update the Faculty Relationships with Student Athletes policy in the Faculty Handbook to be consistent with other University policies related to missed classes.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have. Additionally, Chris Melde, Ph.D., Faculty Athletics Representative, copied on this request, will attend the meeting to answer any questions you all may have.

Respectfully,

cc: Provost Laura Lee McIntyre
Christopher Melde, Faculty Athletics Representative