

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 10, 2017
TO: Hunter College Instructional Staff
FROM: Office of the Provost
RE: Class Cancellation Policy

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) requires that all credit-bearing courses meet for fixed number of hours. The decision to cancel classes is always a serious one, whether it is made by the institution, as in the case of inclement weather, or by departments, for compelling personal or professional reasons. Cancellation of classes due to inclement weather is always the option of last resort at Hunter College and entails extensive planning across executive, academic, finance and administrative, and student service areas to ensure that faculty are able to meet their curricular goals and students are not shortchanged. We recommend a variety of options for compensating for missed work due to bad weather, from using Blackboard or email to post missed materials and information, to assigning videos on reserve at the library, to conducting additional online class sessions or assigning additional exercises online.

The decision to cancel a class should never be taken lightly and should be made only when no other options exist. Unexpected health or personal problems and professional conflicts can arise for all of us, but we expect that our full-time and part-time faculty make their classes their highest professional priority. Section 14.8 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement, which applies to adjunct faculty states:

Effective August 25, 2006, adjunct classroom teachers, teachers on multiple position assignments employed for a course, non-teaching adjuncts including full-time instructional staff on non-teaching multiple position assignments and adjunct College Laboratory Technicians including full-time instructional staff in adjunct college laboratory multiple position assignments may be excused for personal illness or personal emergencies including religious observance, death in the immediate family or similar personal needs which cannot be postponed for a period of 1/15 of the total number of clock hours in the particular session or semester. Request for such leave, where possible, must be made in advance, in writing. If it is not possible to make such a request in advance, the department chairperson or supervisor should be informed as soon as possible. The reason provided must be satisfactory to the chairperson or supervisor.

Similarly, whenever possible, full-time faculty must have the advanced approval of their chairs or program heads to miss a scheduled class. In cases in which advanced planning is not possible due to the unexpected nature of the event, the chair or head must be notified of the cancelled class as soon as possible and must approve any substitute arrangements. Every effort must be made to notify students of the cancellation and the substitute arrangements as soon as possible. We expect departments to schedule substitute instructors or require equivalent assignments rather than to reschedule the class on a different day and time.