

MEMORANDUM OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS POLICY

SECTION: Faculty Curriculum and Instruction

AREA: Academic Affairs

Number: MAP 06.A.11.AP

SUBJECT: Faculty Presence, Availability, and Engagement Policy

I. POLICY INFORMATION

The University of Houston-Clear Lake is committed to creating a strong campus community that values collaboration, interaction, and excellence in student instruction and mentoring, university, college, and departmental service, and research, scholarship, and creative activity. For this reason, it is essential to the vitality of the university for faculty to maintain an on-campus presence so that they may participate in and contribute to campus life.

II. DEFINITIONS

1. Campus Presence - the active and visible involvement of faculty within the physical campus environment. Examples include but are not limited to: holding regular office hours (in-person and virtual), mentoring students, participating in institutional affairs, contributing to the sense of campus community, and creating a learning environment that supports student success.

III. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy has been established to comply with the University of Houston-System [SAM 02.A.20. Texas Government Code, Section 658.007](#) has set provisions regarding the working hours for full-time salaried state employees that apply to faculty and staff. [Texas Government Code, Section 658.010](#) has provisions regarding where work can be performed by state employees that also apply to faculty and staff.

Failure to meet the campus presence and engagement expectations is considered a dereliction of duty and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination (Faculty Misconduct Policy UHCL 08.A.01 AP) and may be reflected in the annual evaluation score.

This policy does not apply to faculty while they are on a formally granted leave of absence, such as leave covered by the Family and Medical Leave Act ([FMLA](#)) or Faculty Development Leave.

These provisions apply to all full-time faculty.

IV. PROCEDURE

1. **When campus presence is required.** Full-time faculty members (hereafter, faculty) shall maintain campus presence to fulfill their professional obligations to students, colleagues, and the University for the duration of any term in which they are employed by UHCL, except for when UHCL is closed or during student holidays (e.g., Spring Break). Faculty employed on nine-month contracts are expected to

maintain campus presence beginning, in the fall semester, at least one week before the start of classes through fall commencement, and in the spring semester, at least one week before the start of classes through spring commencement.

Faculty employed to teach summer courses in any modality (e.g., face-to-face, online, hybrid, hyflex) shall discuss with their chair the departmental expectations to maintain campus presence during the summer session(s) in which they teach.

2. **Face-to-face meetings.** To encourage campus presence, colleges and departments are expected to conduct University-related business in person, including, but not limited to, faculty meetings, committee/council meetings, and face-to-face community or recruiting events.

3. **Office Hours:** Full-time faculty are expected to hold at least three in-person office hours spread over at least two different days per week during each long semester, except during student holidays (e.g. Spring Break). Part-time faculty are expected to hold at least one in-person office hour per week for each three hours of credit taught (unless they were hired to teach solely online). Obviously, faculty may choose to offer additional office hours, including virtual office hours, as they see fit. In-person office hour schedules must be posted in course syllabi and submitted to the respective departmental chair by the syllabus approval deadline.

Because UHCL offers courses across multiple sites (e.g. Pearland campus, Texas Medical Center), office hours may be spread across sites proportionally to where classes are located, rather than being held exclusively in the faculty member's assigned office. Office hours may be moved by the faculty with at least 24 hours notice to students and their department chair. If a faculty member must be absent for office hours that have not been rescheduled for any reason, a sign with an expected return should be placed on the office door if only part of office hours will be missed, and notification sent to the class if the entire office hour session will be missed.

4. **E-mails:** Faculty should be responsive to student-initiated contact by returning emails and other messages within a reasonable period. This is true during student holidays (e.g. Spring Break) and summer (see UHCL 05.A.02 AP – Summer Workload Policy – Section 7.1). If faculty are unavailable for extended periods, they should set an out-of-office reply with an expected return date and who to contact in the case of emergency (e.g., the department chair)

5. **Event attendance:** In addition to face-to-face classes and office hours, faculty are expected to attend in person all faculty retreats and/or other campus events at which the president and/or provost have/has specified faculty are required to be present. Ten business days notice should be provided if the event is required. Furthermore, faculty and department chairs are expected to attend at least one commencement ceremony per calendar year. If a faculty member will not be able to attend a required campus meeting/event, they should provide their supervisor with timely written notification and an appropriate reason.

6. **University travel:** Faculty may attend conferences or other professional events and

remain in compliance with this policy. Written notification, including plans for any classes that will be missed during the time away, must be submitted to the Chair for their records prior to their absence (see following paragraph). Concur is satisfactory for written notification. Plans for missed classes should be submitted via e-mail. Students will also need to be notified of any changes in classes via e-mail or the learning management system (e.g. Canvas).

7. **Absences from the university resulting in missing class or other required events:** As classroom instruction and research does not always follow an 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. schedule, work hours will vary depending on the situation. When such a situation arises that a faculty member needs to be absent from the University during a required event, they must inform the department chair in writing, such as via email, of their absence and their plans to meet the requirement of a 40-hour-workweek. If missing an assigned class, they must notify the department chair as early as possible and prior to the class, unless it is impractical to do so (e.g. emergency). Additionally, the faculty member is responsible for arranging course coverage or providing suitable options to the department chair whenever possible. If the absence qualifies for an official leave category, that leave must be used.

If the plans for missing class(es) require changes to the schedule or modality, these must be **approved** by the department chair. In the event of emergency, where advance approval is not possible, changes to schedule or modality must be reported promptly to the department chair. Changes to schedules and modality can result in serious compliance issues for the university, so a failure to report these is nontrivial misconduct.

Department chairs are expected to monitor faculty attendance and intervene when necessary.

8. **Conflicting university events.** Faculty should make every reasonable effort to schedule themselves in ways that do not conflict, such as not scheduling office hours or volunteering for committees that meet during other meetings or scheduled class time. In the event of conflicting events, generally the top priority is (1) classroom obligations, followed by (2) office hours, (3) scheduled required meetings, (4) campus events with required RSVPs, and finally (5) drop-in campus events. If a faculty member misses a lower priority event to attend a higher priority event, no notification is required though they are expected to explain the conflict if asked. If a faculty member misses a higher priority event in favor of a lower priority one, they must notify their Chair.

9. **Common cases when notification is not required.** Notification is not required for missing office hours if they are rescheduled with 24 hours notice and made up within one week. Finally, notification is not required for incidental partial absences, such as ending a class ten minutes early to attend a meeting, or removing a student from office hours briefly to take a phone call, or occasionally being a few minutes late to a meeting. However, habitual partial absences will result in closer time monitoring at the discretion of the department chair or dean.

V. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsible Party: Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

Review Schedule: Every three (3) years on or before the date the policy was last approved.

VI. REVISION LOG

Approved	Changes Made
	Policy Created

VII. REFERENCES

University of Houston-System [SAM 02.A.20](#)

[Texas Government Code, Section 658.002](#)

[Texas Government Code, Section 658.007](#)

[Texas Government Code, Section 658.010](#)

[MAP 02.F.03](#)

[MAP 02.D.04](#)

[MAP 02.D.06](#)

VIII. APPROVAL

Approved:

/Dr. Maynard/

Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost

/Dr. Walker, Ed.D/

President

August 11, 2025

Date