

# Towson University

## Student Bereavement Procedure

**Purpose:**

To promote the general mental health of Towson University students by allowing them the opportunity to grieve and be available for their families during times of death and grief.

**Excused Academic Days:**

All students who opt to use the Bereavement Procedure should be given *five (5)* academic days off to mourn the loss of an individual with a significant relationship. Unexcused absences already prescribed in the course syllabus should not be used in congruence with the Bereavement Procedure. Significant relationship can include, but is not limited to, individuals with the following legal titles:

- Uncle(s) or Aunt(s)
- Cousin(s)
- Niece(s) or Nephew(s)
- Legal In-Law(s)
- Grandparent(s)
- Step-Relation Individual(s)
- Child(ren) or Individual(s) in which the Mourner has Legal Guardianship Over
- Parent(s) or Legal Guardian(s)
- Sibling(s)
- Spouse or Legal Civil Union Partner

**Traveling Day(s) System:**

- Students should be allotted two days, in addition to the five mourning days, to travel to and from their respective locations. These locations include the home of the deceased, the home of the student grieving or the location of the funeral/services.
- Travel days will be calendar days, not academic days. Students opting to use the Bereavement Procedure can appeal to the professor and/or Division of Student Affairs if more travel days are needed. These requests will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

**Missed Academic Work:**

The Towson University Student Government Association and Graduate Student Association suggest that the student who is mourning be given a reasonable amount of days to make up any academic work that will not be completed as they mourn and/or travel.

- The allowance of days given for missed academic work should be equal to the number of days excused from class.

- The assignments missed should not be subject to deduction in scoring, as long as they are completed in the reasonable extended period of allotted time. The student is responsible for working with the professor to make up these assignments.
- Per the Towson University Class Attendance/Absence Policy, under Section II; Article IV, if compelling verifiable circumstances are beyond the control of the student, and the nature of the assignment makes it impossible for missed work to be completed, faculty members should attempt to make a reasonable adjustment of the assignment.

**Proof of Death:**

Any students who wish to use the Bereavement Procedure should have proof of the death of the individual(s) who is/are being mourned. Proof of the individual(s) death(s) should be submitted to Towson University's Division of Student Affairs by the end of the allotted days. Documentation of the death or funeral service attended should suffice as evidence of the death.

- This could include, but is not limited to: an obituary, copy of death certificate, program from the funeral service, or a signed letter of funeral service from the funeral home.

**Final Suggestions:**

The Towson University Student Government Association and Graduate Student Association have developed the aforementioned guidelines to serve as a foundation, not a barrier, for students to mourn a loss.

It is encouraged that students who opt to use this procedure be in constant communication with their professor(s) about the missed assignments and potential for extra excused, missed days.

If students opt to use the procedure, the information submitted by the student will be sent to the Division of Student Affairs' Counseling Center. The student will then have the voluntary option to continue with counseling services, if so desired.

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