

Can I get permission to be absent if I have a really good reason?

No one—not your instructors, the Preservice Office, or the Associate Dean—will excuse you from classes for any reason other than illness, compassionate circumstances, or religious observance.

When you are employed as a teacher these are the *only* reasons that will justify your absence from school.

As a Teacher Candidate you will find that many instructors and Associate Teachers will draw conclusions about your integrity and commitment to teaching by your attitude towards attendance this year.

If at some point during your program you feel you *must* be absent—because of inclement weather, for example—or you *choose* to be absent—because you're a varsity athlete with a key game to play, or you want to attend your sister's wedding, you **must take responsibility yourself for that absence**. The procedure to follow is this:

- * before the absence or immediately after, contact your instructors, in person or by e-mail;
- * if your absence extends over four days or more, contact the Preservice Education Office;
- * if your absence includes practicum, contact your Associate Teacher, Faculty Advisor, *and* the Preservice Office;
- * explain that you will do *everything possible* to make up for your absence; you will, for example,
 - ~ ask someone to pick up handouts for you, share notes, and discuss with you what you missed;
 - ~ do extra reading or other make-up work if your Instructor wishes you to do so.

Instructors, Faculty Liaisons, and Associate Teachers are usually understanding and flexible. Nevertheless, none of them is under any obligation to make special accommodations for you, and you must be prepared for the fact that some of them will see almost any absence (other than for illness, etc.) as a lack of commitment on your part.

The weather is bad and you have a long commute? Some of your Instructors, Faculty Liaisons, and Associate Teachers live out of town, too; they check the weather the day before and make special arrangements to be sure they can get where they have to be the next day. If you are commuting, find a classmate with a place in London where you can stay overnight when weather is a problem.

You're arriving late for the start of classes in September or January? Don't just pretend it didn't happen, and don't think your instructors won't notice. Follow the procedures outlined above: *get in touch with* your instructors, tell them you will do *everything possible* to make up for your absence, ask for guidance, show them you care.

Your whole family is vacationing in the Caribbean? Your commitment to your program must outweigh an opportunity for a vacation. Make sure your family and friends know your schedule well ahead of time.

A school needs a teacher/coach/leader to teach/assist/fill in for a week/two weeks/a month; it's where you want to get a job and it will be such a good experience for you. It's not fair of anyone to ask you to miss any part of your B.Ed. or Dip.Ed. program in order to help them out of a difficult situation, even if you would love to do it and would be paid for it. Your program is not very long—it is your last opportunity to be seen and evaluated as a *learner* rather than as a teacher with full responsibility for students. If a school or Board wants you, and wants to play fair with you, they will wait for you.

In the end, the decision about whether or not to miss classes on occasion is yours. You remain responsible for all the work and class activities you miss, and for ensuring that you complete enough work to deserve credit for each course.

You must weigh the importance of your reason for being absent against the potential for negative fall-out for you.