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General Rules for Leaves

A. Leaves Allowed

- a. Public holidays as allowed under the SIMS-Karachi policy.
- b. Religious holidays for minorities are allowed with prior approval.
- c. Inter-semester breaks as given in the school calendar.
- d. Some situations may require prior departmental approval to avail of inter-semester leaves.
- e. Each department will provide students with its policy regarding leaves.

B. Excused Absence Leave

Definition: An absence from ZA School sanctioned by the SIMS-Karachi administration when approved by the course Instructor.

Student absences from class and examinations, failure to submit assignments on time, or other course requirements, may be excused due to reasons beyond the student's control. Leaves are only approved when supported by verifiable supporting documents. Acceptable reasons for absence include:

- a. Personal illness.
- b. Illness or death of a close family member (parents, siblings, spouse, child, grandparents, and other members of a joint family).
- c. Dangerous weather conditions widely considered unsafe to travel.
- d. Other compelling reasons approved by the course Instructor and the Dean.

C. Excused Absence Approval Process

- a. Students must submit an excused absence request in writing or by email to the Instructor(s) of the course(s) in which absences occur.
- b. When absence is unexpected, the student shall apply for approval as soon as possible after returning to School. The application should clearly explain the reasons for the absence from class.
- c. A student shall submit a request for planned absences to the Instructor(s) as soon as the necessity to take leave becomes known.

D. Excused Absence Approval Documentation

Students are required to submit the following documentation to support requests for excused absences. These are general requirements, and other documents and evidence may be needed when necessary.

- a. If the absence is due to the student's medical condition, a written note or a certificate from the treating physician confirming the student's illness is required.
 - i. The note or the certificate should include the date and time when the student first saw the physician, the period of rest recommended, and the date when the student was to return to classes.
 - ii. The student shall provide copies of laboratory reports and other diagnostic tests with the leave application.
- b. If the student's absence was due to the illness of a close family member, a written note from the treating physician confirming the condition is required.
- c. If the absence was due to the death of an immediate family member, the student should provide a copy of the death notice, obituary, or death certificate.
- d. When absence was due to participation in an extracurricular activity such as a sports activity, an approval letter from the ZA School administrator is required.
- e. If the absence was due to participation in an academic program, the student must provide documentation confirming the presentation of scholarly work and an approval letter from the ZA School administrator.
- f. If the absence was due to participation in a SIMS-Karachi-sponsored activity, approval from an appropriate administrator is required.
- g. There may be other compelling reasons for absence not included in this document. Therefore, administrators and Instructors shall use their best judgment when evaluating student leave requests.
- h. Providing false information or documentation for availing of leaves is unacceptable and subject to disciplinary action.
- i. The disciplinary committee will review misconduct allegations and recommend punitive action(s) if required.

E. Verification and Decision

- a. An Instructor may verify a student's documentation and make a decision or defer verification and determination to the Dean.
- b. The Instructor must provide the student with a decision in writing within three working days of receiving the student's request.
- c. The Dean's office shall provide the student with a decision in writing within ten working days of receiving the student's request from the Instructor.
- d. The student's current grade in the class will not be a consideration in approving or disapproving the request.

F. Appeal

- a. When the Instructor does not approve an excused absence request, the student should, within three working days, submit an appeal to the Dean in writing (email is acceptable). The Dean's office must provide a decision in writing to the student within three working days of receiving the appeal.
- b. Dean's decision is final, and further appeal is not allowed.

G. Makeup Work

- a. Students must realize that excused absence does not relieve a student of the responsibility for the class work missed. Therefore, the student must contact the Instructor(s) concerned and ensure that the missed quizzes/tests or any assignments contributing to the final grade are complete.
- b. The Instructor shall allow the student to make up for the missed work by a date agreed upon by the student.

H. Excused Absences Limit

- a. The maximum number of excused absences in a course is less than 15% of the classes for scheduled for that course. The excused absence limits are:
 - i. Five days for a class that meets three days per week.
 - ii. Three days for a class that meets two days per week.
 - iii. Two days for a class that meets once a week.

I. Unexcused Absence: An absence from School due to reasons not considered permissible for grant of leave. These include absences due to:

- a. Transportation problems
- b. Oversleeping
- c. Personal reasons
- d. Needed at home
- e. All absenteeism without supporting documentation that would establish a valid reason for absence is recognized as unexcused leave.

J. Unexcused Absences and Grade Penalties

The Institute recognizes that sometimes a student may miss classes due to reasons not acceptable by the excused leaves definition given above. For this reason, students are allowed a predetermined number of unexcused leaves in a course. Once absences exceed this number, the unexcused absence will lower the student's grade. The scheme used to assign grades is based on the number of days a class meets weekly.

- a. **Three (1-hour) classes for a course that meets three days per week:** student's final grade may be lowered by one letter for every unexcused absence beyond the three.

- b. **Two (1-hour) classes for a course that meets two days per week:** final grade may be lowered by one letter for every unexcused absence beyond the two.
- c. **One (1-hour) class for a course that meets once a week:** final grade may be lowered by one letter for every hour of unexcused absence beyond one.
- d. **Three clinical practicum sessions of a course held three days per week:** final grade may be lowered by one letter for every unexcused absence beyond the three.
- e. **Two clinical practicum sessions of a course held three days per week:** final grade may be lowered by one letter for every hour of unexcused absence beyond one.
- f. **One clinical practicum session of a course held once a week:** final grade may be lowered by one letter for every hour of unexcused absence beyond one.
- g. **One (6-8 hour) laboratory session of a course held twice a week:** final grade may be lowered by two letters for every hour of unexcused absence beyond one.

K. Extended Absence Alternatives

- a. Students with absences that exceed 15% of coursework may apply for a temporary grade of Incomplete.

L. Excessive Leaves and Student Performance

- a. Students must realize that excessive absences, even up to the number allowed without penalty, cause them to miss essential course elements. Moreover, it is widely accepted that students who regularly miss classes end up with poorer grades.
- b. Students must also understand that when leaves are unexcused, the Instructor is not obligated to allow them to make up missed work or tests. Moreover, the Instructor is not obligated to repeat instructions to a student whose absence is unexcused.

M. Cancellation of Admission and Readmission

- a. Students must understand that absence for five consecutive days or more during a semester without informing the School may lead to disciplinary action, including suspension and cancellation of admission. Readmission is required if admission is canceled.
- b. If a student is unable to continue their studies during the semester, admission to the program shall be treated as canceled. Continuation of studies requires readmission to the program.
- c. If a student's behavior conflicts with SIMS-Karachi policies given below, their admission may be canceled. Furthermore, such a student shall not be admitted to any program offered by SIMS-Karachi.
- d. The maximum time a student can take to complete the course requirements of the four-year program and graduate is six years. Students must meet all course requirements within this period to avoid the cancellation of admission.