

## **New Campus Wide Flu Like Illness Classroom Absence Policy**

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This fall we expect to see cases of the H1N1 flu virus appear on campus. At this point, it is impossible to predict the number of cases that will appear, but we want to assure you that as the situation develops the campus community will be regularly updated. We must do everything possible to curtail its spread.

Symptoms of a flu-like illness may include: fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue, and sometimes diarrhea and vomiting. See <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/sick.htm> for more information.

Current expert recommendations regarding the H1N1 flu virus (and all flu-like illnesses) include the following:

1. Students, faculty, and staff should stay home if they have a flu-like illness, and they should not return to class, work, or any other public space until 24 hours after their fever has ended (or longer, if working in a health care setting)
2. The UI Student Health Service does not currently recommend that ill students see a doctor merely for the purpose of confirming an H1N1 diagnosis. Routine testing and visits to health care providers serve to spread the virus and overcrowd facilities so that patients in need of care find it difficult to obtain services.

In light of these recommendations, the usual request for documentation for student absences from the classroom or for incomplete work to be accepted late will be suspended for the Fall 2009 semester. This applies to all colleges in The University of Iowa.

The following universal policy will be followed by all colleges:

- \* Students and faculty working in health care settings should follow the "return to work" guidelines appropriate for health care providers.
- \* For all others, neither students nor instructors should attend class (or other settings like the lab, office hours) if they have a flu-like illness with a fever. They should not return until 24 hours after the fever is over.
- \* Instructors may not require students to present a physician's note to excuse an absence due to flu-like illness.
- \* Instructors may not penalize the grades of students who attest in writing that they missed class due to a flu-like illness. An attestation form, which can be downloaded from web ([http://www.registrar.uiowa.edu/forms/H1N1\\_absence\\_form.pdf](http://www.registrar.uiowa.edu/forms/H1N1_absence_form.pdf)), and instructors are encouraged to use it in order to discourage absences not related to illness

\* All instructors must convey the following information to students on the first week of class, either orally or in writing, explaining to students the rationale for this approach and whether or not students in the course are required to sign the attestation form:

"Public health authorities have recommended that people with flu-like illnesses stay home and not return to public spaces until 24 hours after they have no fever. In order to prevent the spread of disease, please do not come to class, meet with other groups of students, attend office hours, or contact offices in person while you are ill. Based on this recommendation, I will not require you to report to a doctor or to Student Health to verify a flu-like illness if you are ill, please complete an illness-absence form

([http://www.registrar.uiowa.edu/forms/H1N1\\_absence\\_form.pdf](http://www.registrar.uiowa.edu/forms/H1N1_absence_form.pdf)) when you are well enough to do so. Your grade will not be penalized for absences if you are following the recommendations of health authorities."