

Title: Attendance and Participation in Class

Category: Academic Affairs

Responsible Cabinet Member: Provost

Purpose

Governs attendance, participation, completion of coursework and the handling of excused and unexcused absences in all credit-bearing courses offered by the University.

Scope

The policy applies to all undergraduate, graduate and professional students and to all Instructors of Record for University courses, unless otherwise specified by an academic program with accrediting or licensure requirements.

Definitions:

- **Instructor of Record:** All faculty persons teaching University credit-bearing courses have either appropriate academic credentials or alternative qualifications such as documented competencies, capacities and work experiences in the teaching discipline.
- **Excused Absence:** An absence approved under this policy for which a student may not be academically penalized.
- **Required Interactions:** Course activities that are graded or required for course completion and that occur at specified dates and times.
- **Appropriate Verification:** Documentation sufficient to confirm the basis for an excused absence.

Attendance and Completion of Required Work

For each course in which the student is enrolled, the student shall be expected to complete all required work, including laboratories and studios, and examinations at the times designated by the Instructor of Record.

Each Instructor of Record shall establish and communicate, in writing, course policies regarding attendance, completion of assigned work, examinations and the handling of absences, consistent with the guidance provided in this policy. The course syllabus must identify the total number of required interactions for the course and specify which activities constitute required interactions, including, as applicable, class meetings, laboratories, studios, synchronous online sessions, required discussions or other graded interactions. Each required interaction shall count once toward course expectations unless otherwise stated in the syllabus. Instructors do not have authority to impose or require a course withdrawal; withdrawal decisions are initiated by the student under University withdrawal policies. Instructors retain authority to assign grades in accordance with University policy.

These policies must be provided to students in the course syllabus no later than the first or second class meeting. Students' failure to comply with the announced policy may result in appropriate reductions in grade as determined by the Instructor of Record.

Excused Absences

A student shall not be academically penalized for an excused absence. An excused absence shall not, by itself, result in a grade reduction or other punitive academic consequence. When excused absences accumulate to the point that a student may be unable to complete course requirements in accordance with University policy, the Instructor of Record may determine that alternative academic arrangements are no longer feasible and may take appropriate action as provided elsewhere in this policy.

The Instructor of Record may require appropriate verification, applied consistently across all categories of excused absences.

Excused absences include, but are not limited to:

- Significant physical or mental illness of the student or a member of the student's immediate family or household
 - University- or government-directed quarantine or isolation
 - Death of an immediate family or household member
 - Participation in University-sponsored academic, athletic or co-curricular activities
 - Observance of major religious holidays
 - Interviews for post-graduation employment or graduate/professional school
 - Military obligations
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- Significant illness of the student or serious illness of a member of the student's household (permanent or campus) or immediate family. This includes excusing a student from required interactions if the student has been directed to quarantine by the University, a medical professional, public health professional or government official. The Instructor of Record shall have the right to request appropriate verification.*
 - The death of a member of the student's household (permanent or campus) or immediate family. The Instructor of Record shall have the right to request appropriate verification. For the purpose of this rule, immediate family is defined as spouse, child, parent (guardian), sibling (all of the previous include steps, halves and in-laws of the same relationship) and grandchild or grandparent.
 - Trips for members of student organizations sponsored by an educational unit, trips for University classes and trips for participation in intercollegiate athletic events, including club sports registered with the University and varsity sports. When feasible, the student must notify the Instructor of Record prior to the occurrence of such absences, but in no case shall such notification occur more than five (5) business days after the absence.
 - Major Religious Holidays. Students are responsible for notifying the Instructor of Record in writing of anticipated absences due to their observance of such holidays. Faculty shall give students the opportunity to make up work (e.g., exams or assignments) when students notify them that religious observances prevent the students from doing their work at its scheduled time. Faculty should indicate in their syllabus how much advance notice they require from a student requesting accommodation. The Office for Student Success and the Academic Ombud are available for consultation.
 - Interviews for full-time job opportunities after graduation and interviews for graduate or professional school. The student must notify the Instructor of Record prior to the occurrence of such absences. Instructors of Record have the right to request appropriate verification.
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- * "Appropriate verification" may include evidence that the student had little or no control over the date and time of the interview and that the student is not able to reschedule the interview to a nonconflicting time close to the originally scheduled time.
 - * Programs with learning activities mandated by accreditation or licensure agencies may establish, as a matter of policy, educational consequences for students who have so many excused absences that they cannot complete the mandated learning activities. The published program policies and individual course syllabi must describe these consequences, which may include the student being moved to a different graduation cohort.
- Any other circumstances in which the Instructor of Record finds reasonable cause for absence.

*Verification standards must be applied consistently for all types of absences. Documentation from University Health Services, the Counseling Center, Triage, Referral, Assistance and Crisis Support (TRACS) or the Violence Intervention and Prevention (VIP) Center shall be accepted when verification of a significant illness is required. Falsified attendance verification documents should be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

Unscheduled Closing

When the University announces an unscheduled closure:

- All in-person activities during the closure period are cancelled.
- Asynchronous activities may continue or replace scheduled synchronous activities if equivalent in time.
- Synchronous activities may occur only during the scheduled time and only if an asynchronous alternative is provided.

Please note that some programs where there are minimum clinical hours expectations for students may require cancelled clinical activities due to a closure to be made up. See individual program handbook for guidance.

Making Up Graded Work

Except where prior notification is required in “Excused Absences”, students missing any graded work due to an excused absence are responsible for notifying the Instructor of Record within five (5) business days following the excused absence and for arranging to complete the missed work. The instructor shall provide accommodations and time frames so the student can make up missed assignments, quizzes and tests in a mutually agreed upon manner, if feasible, during the semester in which the absence occurred.

The instructor shall provide the student with an opportunity to make up the graded work (e.g., quiz, exam, homework, etc.) and may not simply calculate the student's grade based on the other course requirements, unless the student agrees in writing. This includes students who add a class after the first day of classes and miss graded work.

Effect of Absences on the Graded Interactions

If the course syllabus does not require students to interact with other students, an instructor or an instructor’s proxy, and if such interactions are not a criterion for a grade in the course, then the Instructor of Record shall not take any account of a student’s excused or unexcused absence from such interactions when assigning a grade.

If the course syllabus requires students to interact with other students, an instructor or an instructor’s proxy, or if such required interactions are a criterion for a grade in the course, the following rules apply:

- **Excused Absences from Required Interactions**

If the Instructor of Record determines that excused absences have prevented the student from meaningfully participating in required interactions or completing essential learning activities, the instructor shall notify the student in writing that the student may be unable to meet course requirements. The student shall have the right to elect a “W.”

If the student declines to receive a “W,” the Instructor of Record may award an “I” only when the instructor determines that the remaining course requirements can be completed without compromising course standards and without imposing an unreasonable burden on the student or the instructional unit.

When an “I” is awarded under this provision, the Instructor of Record and the student must document, in writing, the remaining requirements, deadlines for completion and the basis for determining the final grade, in accordance with University policy on Incomplete grades (for more information please refer to the *Grading Policy*).

The student must communicate their decision to accept or decline a “W” within a reasonable period specified by the Instructor of Record, not to exceed five (5) business days from notification. The student must indicate their decision to pursue or decline a withdrawal in accordance with the University’s hardship (formerly permissive) withdrawal policy and procedures. The student is responsible for completing the required steps within the applicable University deadlines for the withdrawal to be considered and processed.

Excused Absences for Military Activities

If a student is required to be absent due to military duties for a period that may affect the student’s ability to complete required course interactions, the following procedure shall apply:

- Once a student is aware of a call to duty, the student shall provide a copy of the military orders to the Veterans Resource Center (VRC) within the Office for Student Success. The student shall also provide the VRC with a list of their courses and instructors.
- The VRC will verify the orders with the appropriate military authority and, on behalf of the military student, notify each Instructor of Record via department letterhead as to the known extent of the absence.
- The Instructor of Record shall not penalize the student’s absence in any way. The instructor shall provide accommodations and time frames so the student can make up missed assignments, quizzes and tests in a mutually agreed upon manner.

Unexcused Absences

The Instructor of Record shall define any course policy relating to unexcused absences in the course syllabus. If no policy regarding unexcused absences is stated in the course syllabus, or if the stated policy does not permit a penalty, the Instructor of Record shall not penalize the student for the unexcused absence.

*With respect to non-attendance for reason of an employment-related schedule conflict, a student who is a UK employee has the same standing as a student who is working for some other employer.

Acceptable Standards in Written and Spoken English in All Courses

A student’s writing and speaking in all courses is expected to meet acceptable college-level English standards. Instructors may require revision of work that does not meet college-level standards and may include college-level English standards as a grading factor. Instructors are encouraged to refer students to appropriate campus writing and presentation support resources.

Unsatisfactory Scholarship and Attendance

A student whose academic performance or attendance raises concern in any course shall be referred through the University’s academic alert system. An academic alert is an early intervention initiated by the Instructor of Record to identify concerns and to activate advising, coaching and other student support resources designed to assist the student in addressing academic challenges.

Academic alerts are intended to promote communication, timely support and student success and do not constitute a punitive or disciplinary action.