

Class Attendance Guidelines

The following statements elaborate upon the University of Mississippi's general attendance policy state in the Catalog and apply to courses that are delivered in the traditional instructional mode. This policy is based on the position that students who attend class learn more than those who do not attend regularly and that grades are a reflection of learning. Furthermore, this policy affirms that faculty and students share important responsibilities for the quality of the overall in-class learning experience.

Responsibilities of Instructors

It is the responsibility of the instructor to determine the attendance guidelines that best promote learning in a particular course. The instructor is expected to articulate and inform students in writing via a course syllabus, on or before the first meeting of each course, about specific class attendance requirements.

The following list gives procedural information and suggested practices for constructing course attendance policies.

1. Better class attendance policies distinguish between anticipated and unanticipated absences. Anticipated absences might be associated with civic responsibilities (e.g., jury duty or military service); official University competitions, performances, or travel; religious observations; or certain scheduled medical procedures. Unanticipated absences might occur due to inclement weather, accidents, illnesses besetting the student or immediate family members, or death of a family member or close friend.
2. Better class attendance policies describe under what conditions and the way in which accommodations will be made for missed major exams and assessments by offering replacement activities. An accommodation may involve making up, in a timely manner, missed assignments or tests/quizzes. In some courses, however, the learning missed cannot be approximated through replacement activities and instructors will use their academic judgment in determining whether to provide an accommodation.
3. Better class attendance policies will recognize that students may have legal, civic, or military duties external to the university. Students often have no control over these duties and may be legally compelled to miss classes. Students should not be penalized for these absences.
4. Better class attendance policies allow students to request an accommodation associated with observation of a recognized religious day. A list of recognized religious days is maintained by the Dean of Students Office.
5. Better class attendance policies usually do not include excessive course grade penalties that are based on a number of absences. If, however, the instructor articulates in the syllabus the role of daily class participation in the learning process, reasonable grade deductions can be made for absences.
6. Better class attendance practices recognize that some students represent the university in a variety of ways and that this can lead to conflicts with scheduled classes.
7. Schools or the College may establish more restrictive absence guidelines, provided that students are adequately informed about such guidelines.

Responsibilities of Students

It is the responsibility of the student to comply with the class attendance guidelines/policies and complete assignments, including those that involve out-of-class or online participation. Students are responsible for

informing instructors in advance about anticipated absences. Students should recognize that individual sections of a course may be taught differently and that the attendance policy for individual sections of a course may not be the same.

Aside from the learning opportunities missed due to absences from class, there are cases when a class absence or multiple absences may result in a student being dropped from a course or dismissed from the University. Specifically,

1. Students must attend the first meeting of every course for which they are registered, unless they obtain prior departmental approval. Without such approval, a student who is absent from the first class meeting may be dropped from that class by the dean of the school or college with the responsibility for the course.
2. A student who incurs excessive absences in a given course may receive a grade of F for the course, and, in addition, may be dismissed from the class upon recommendation of the instructor and approval by the student's academic dean. When it appears to an instructor that a student has discontinued a class without officially dropping the course, the instructor will report this fact to the student's academic dean. The university reserves the right to dismiss from the university any student who has been excessively absent from multiple courses.

Faculty and staff who supervise student organizations and teams, including NCAA sports teams, are expected to schedule competitions and performances in such a way as to minimize the number of classes that students will miss. Names of participating students and the dates of class conflicts should be provided to the students' instructors prior to participation. Students and instructors should attempt to resolve potential conflicts regarding class attendance before the semester course withdrawal deadline. In cases where absence from class results from travel delays or the unanticipated continuation of participation in a competition, the student or supervisor should inform the instructor within one business day so that reasonable accommodations for absences due to university-sponsored activities can be made.

If a student informs an instructor in advance about an anticipated absence and the instructor decides not to provide an accommodation for a major exam or assessment, the student may appeal to the department chair or program director (or dean, when the instructor is chair or program director) who oversees the course. An appeal must be based on (a) failure of the instructor to articulate a policy, (b) failure of the instructor to follow the articulated policy, or (c) failure by the instructor to offer a reasonable accommodation for a documented absence that caused a student to miss an assessment that is worth 20% or more of the course grade.