

Ashoka Guidelines on Class Attendance and Accommodations

(OAA, last revision on 2022-01-31)

These guidelines document the practices followed at Ashoka University regarding class attendance. Given the diversity of courses, the varying teaching styles across departments and faculty, and the diversity of requirements students need to meet in various subjects, the overall approach implemented in these guidelines is that individual faculty members are in the best position to take a call on their own attendance policy and that they need to communicate these clearly to students. Students, on the other hand, are required to communicate with faculty members about their absences and are advised to seek help from the *Office of Learning Support (OLS)*, the *Ashoka Center for Well-Being (ACWB)*, and their faculty mentors or academic advisors if and as needed.

1. Promptness and regular class attendance are expected of all students, for consistent attendance offers the most effective opportunity open to all students to gain command of the concepts and materials of their courses of study. The University expects each student to take full responsibility for his or her academic work and academic progress.
2. Some instructors and departments are very strict about class attendance; others do not consider attendance part of their assessment. While attendance policies will thus vary across departments and instructors, for every course, the attendance policy that governs it should be clearly communicated to students at the beginning of classes or before. Where the attendance policy is unclear, students should ask faculty for it (they may choose to do so through the student representatives).
3. As a minimum general attendance policy, in each course and each discussion session, students may miss three sessions of 90 minutes each (or equivalent) without penalty. For such absences, students do not need to submit any supporting evidence such as doctor's notes. Note that this does not apply to sessions during which exams or other assignments are scheduled.
4. Regardless of Art. 3, and unless the instructor's attendance policy specifies otherwise,
 - 4.1 students should inform their instructors of reasons for absence from class – before the class if they plan to be away, after the class if the absence was unexpected.
 - 4.2 students who can foresee that they will miss more than one day of classes due to illness, family emergency or other issues, should email their instructors as soon as possible. Note that unless the student's three free absences have not yet been exhausted, such a notification does not itself lead to an excused absence, but will be treated in accordance with the instructor's attendance policy.

5. Students are responsible for following up with faculty, their peers, and, where available, Teaching Assistants or Fellows to discuss the completion of missed work and for obtaining whatever important course-related information may have been orally conveyed to all students in sessions that they have missed.
6. If a student misses a scheduled exam due to illness, they must inform faculty beforehand. They must also submit a note from the infirmary or a doctor's note. Such a note must clearly specify that the student was too sick to take the exam. Without such a note, students will not be entitled to ask for a make-up exam.
7. Students may represent Ashoka University as athletes or as artists and miss classes as a result. For such cases, the following rules apply:
 - 7.1 Athletes and students representing Ashoka in other capacities must make every effort to keep their absences at a minimum, which means that for sports-related events, they should, wherever possible, use their three excused absences.
 - 7.2 Requests for sports-related absences must be routed through the Sports Director at Ashoka University, who will forward the appropriate requests and confirm the student's participation in the event to all relevant faculty (CC'ing OAA and OSL). Such requests, to be considered, must be sent to the instructor in a timely fashion, i.e. no later than two weeks before the event in question. Instructors are asked to consider such requests and approve them where possible and reasonable. The final decision lies with the faculty member.
 - 7.3 Requests coming from artists will be routed through the OSA, which will forward appropriate requests to faculty (CC'ing OAA). Such requests, to be considered, must be sent to the instructor in a timely fashion, i.e. no later than two weeks before the event. Instructors are asked to consider such requests and approve them where possible and reasonable. The final decision lies with the faculty member.
8. Students whose regular attendance may be affected because of their documented disability or mental health issues should make use of the support structures on campus, such as the ACWB or OLS.
 - 8.1 If appropriate consent has been given by the student, then the OLS may issue suggestions as to what kind of accommodation might benefit such students and forward such suggestions to faculty.
 - 8.2 If appropriate consent has been given by the student, then the ACWB may confirm to the OAA the number and dates of the meetings that the student has had with ACWB. OAA can then confirm to faculty that the student is seeking assistance from ACWB, which may in turn help faculty take decisions about whether or not they are willing and able to make accommodations.
 - 8.3 Instructors are advised to familiarise themselves with the *Academic Policies for Students with Disabilities*, which can be found in the Information and Documents section in **my.ashoka**.

9. If due to extraordinary circumstances not already mentioned in the previous paragraphs, a student is absent, misses a scheduled exam, or cannot submit an assignment on time, they must provide appropriate evidence of such circumstances to the instructor. Although it is entirely up to instructors whether they accept such evidence, instructors are asked to support and accommodate students provided the evidence is credible and accommodating the student is both possible and reasonable. Wherever possible, students should notify instructors of their absence in advance. Students may also seek help from their mentor or advisor to mediate in such situations on their behalf. Extraordinary circumstances include, but need not be limited to
 - 9.1 cases of hardship such as sudden family crises;
 - 9.2 cases in which e.g. a field trip organized by the University, due to circumstances which are not in the hands of the student, has been prolonged;
 - 9.3 cases in which the student represents their academic work at a conference or a similar venue;
 - 9.4 cases in which the student has a job interview or a mandatory admission- or application related event at Ashoka or a different university that cannot be postponed.
10. If the instructor determines that a student has an excessive number of absences, then that student's attendance grade, where available, may be lowered, the final grade may be lowered, or the student may fail the course, in accordance with the instructor's attendance policy.