

Westfield State University Policy

Policy Title: Class Attendance Policy **Policy Number:** AP005 **Effective Date:** 2022-08-15

1.0 Purpose and Overview

Westfield State University is committed to fostering a robust learning environment where students are actively engaged in their academic pursuits. Regular class attendance and participation are critical components of the educational experience, contributing significantly to student success. This policy outlines the university's expectations for class attendance, the responsibilities of both students and instructors, and the procedures for managing absences.

The university believes that interaction with instructors and peers is an integral part of learning and that students who attend classes regularly are more likely to achieve their academic goals. This policy is designed to provide a clear and consistent framework for managing class attendance across all academic programs.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in courses at Westfield State University. It also applies to all instructors, including full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, and teaching assistants, who are responsible for establishing and communicating their specific attendance policies within the framework of this university-wide policy.

3.0 Policy

3.1 General Attendance Expectations

Students are expected to attend all scheduled class meetings, including lectures, seminars, laboratories, and other instructional sessions. Punctuality is also expected, as late arrivals can be disruptive to the learning environment.

3.2 Instructor's Attendance Policy

Instructors are required to establish and communicate a specific attendance policy for each course. This policy must be included in the course syllabus and should specify:

- The instructor's expectations for attendance and participation.
- The method used to record attendance.
- The potential impact of absences on a student's grade.
- Procedures for notifying the instructor of an absence.

3.3 Excused Absences

Excused absences are those that are due to circumstances beyond the student's control. The university recognizes the following as valid reasons for an excused absence:

- **Medical Reasons:** Illness or injury that prevents a student from attending class. Documentation from a healthcare provider may be required.
- **University-Sanctioned Activities:** Participation in official university events, such as athletic competitions, academic conferences, or artistic performances. Proper documentation from the sponsoring department is required.
- **Religious Observances:** Absences for the observance of religious holy days. Students must notify their instructors in advance.
- **Jury Duty or Military Service:** Absences for legally required duties. Official documentation is required.
- **Bereavement:** Absences due to the death of an immediate family member.

3.3.1 Documentation for Excused Absences

All requests for excused absences must be supported by appropriate documentation. For medical absences of three or more consecutive class days, a note from a licensed healthcare provider is required. For university-sanctioned activities, a formal letter from the sponsoring department or organization must be provided in advance. In cases of bereavement, a copy of a funeral program or obituary may be requested. All documentation should be submitted to the instructor in a timely manner. The university respects student privacy, and all submitted documentation will be handled with confidentiality.

3.4 Unexcused Absences

An unexcused absence is any absence that does not meet the criteria for an excused absence. While the university encourages students to attend all classes, the consequences of unexcused absences are determined by the individual instructor's attendance policy.

3.5 Excessive Absences

While individual instructors determine the specific penalties for unexcused absences, the university reserves the right to take action in cases of excessive absenteeism. Excessive absence is defined as missing more than 25% of scheduled class meetings in a single course without official university excuse. In such cases, an instructor may report the student to the Office of Student Affairs, which may result in a formal warning, mandatory academic counseling, or other interventions designed to support student success. In severe cases, and after consultation with the student and instructor, the university may administratively withdraw the student from the course.

3.6 Impact on Grades

The weight of attendance and participation in the final course grade is at the discretion of the instructor, as outlined in the course syllabus. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Direct grading of attendance and/or participation.
- Lowering of a letter grade for excessive absences.
- Inability to make up missed assignments or exams.

4.0 Procedures

4.1 Student Responsibilities

Students are responsible for:

- Familiarizing themselves with the attendance policy for each of their courses.
- Notifying their instructors of any planned or emergency absences in a timely manner.
- Providing required documentation for excused absences.
- Making arrangements with instructors to make up missed work.

4.1.1 Notification of Absence

When a student is aware in advance of a necessary absence, they must notify their instructor in writing (email is acceptable) as soon as possible. For emergency absences, the student should notify their instructor as soon as they are able, and no later than 24 hours after the missed class. The notification should include the reason for the absence and the expected duration. It is the student's responsibility to follow up with the instructor to discuss making up missed work. Failure to provide timely notification may result in the absence being considered unexcused, regardless of the reason.

4.2 Instructor Responsibilities

Instructors are responsible for:

- Clearly stating their attendance policy in the course syllabus.
- Applying their attendance policy consistently to all students.
- Maintaining accurate attendance records.
- Working with students to accommodate excused absences.

4.2.1 Communication with Students

Instructors are expected to maintain open lines of communication with their students regarding attendance. This includes promptly responding to student notifications of

absence and providing clear guidance on how to make up missed work. If an instructor has concerns about a student's attendance, they are encouraged to reach out to the student to discuss the issue and to refer the student to academic support services if necessary. For any student who misses the first two class sessions of a semester without any communication, the instructor is required to report the student to the Office of the Registrar for potential administrative removal from the course.

5.0 Related Policies

- AP001: Academic Integrity Policy
- AP008: Student Code of Conduct
- AP012: Grading Policy

6.0 Contact Information

For questions regarding this policy, please contact:

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7.0 Revision History

Version	Date	Author	Summary of Changes
1.0	2022-08-15	Office of the Provost	Initial version