

## Attendance Policy and Guidelines

Attendance policies at West Virginia University are set at the course level. There is no University- or College-level authority in charge of “excusing” absences. However, there are two University offices with roles referenced in the policy and guidelines below:

1. The Provost or her/his designee may designate an activity as an “Authorized University Activity.” Such designation is normally limited to scholarly competitions, fine arts performances, and intercollegiate athletics competitions in which students are representing West Virginia University. Information regarding students participating in an Authorized University Activity will be communicated to faculty via an official letter or e-mail from a University official (such as the faculty member or unit that is sponsoring the event) and will be posted on a website with a list of Authorized University Activities with the dates.
2. Emergency military service and jury duty are treated in the same way as Authorized University Activities. Students will inform faculty about their participation in such activities via an official letter or document.
  - a. Refer to specific guidelines for absences due to military service at <http://facultysenate.blogs.wvu.edu/r/download/150667>, which was passed in Faculty Senate on February 11, 2013.
3. Students who encounter extreme circumstances that necessitate short-term absence, such as a death in the family or hospitalization, should contact the Office of Campus and Community Life at 304-293-5611. The Office of Campus and Community Life will notify instructors of imminent absence in situations in which the student is unable to do so. Please note that the Office of Campus and Community Life does *not* “excuse” absences.
4. Students with chronic illness may wish to consult with the Office of Accessibility Services at 304-293-6700.

## GUIDELINES AND POLICIES FOR STUDENTS:

- **Importance of Class Attendance**
  - At West Virginia University, class attendance contributes significantly to academic success. Students who attend classes regularly tend to earn higher grades and have higher passing rates. Excessive absences may jeopardize students’ grades or even their ability to continue in their courses. There is a strong correlation between regular class attendance and academic success.
- **Class Absences**
  - Students are responsible for making faculty members aware of anticipated absences due to Authorized University Activities as soon as possible to help facilitate the make-up process. Students **must** provide instructors a copy of the University documentation for the anticipated absences from class. Students are also encouraged to meet with their instructors at the beginning of the semester to discuss these anticipated absences. Students who fail to inform their instructors of their absence due to participation in a University Authorized Activity shall not be excused for that absence by the instructor.

- Students who are absent from class for any reason are responsible for all missed work and for contacting each of their instructors promptly, unless an instructor's policies require otherwise. Instructors cannot require documentation of student illness from any medical provider as medical conditions are confidential. Instructors are permitted to review medical documentation if the student voluntarily provides it. However, medical documentation does not constitute an "excused absence."
- Students who know that they will be absent for more than 15% of class time are strongly encouraged to take the course at a time when they will not be absent to this degree. (NB. It is the faculty member's prerogative to set a benchmark that is higher or lower as appropriate to the course.) During a regular semester, this equates to 2 absences for classes that meet once a week, 4 absences for classes that meet twice a week, and 6 absences for classes that meet three times a week. In some classes, collaborative work is completed in class and cannot be duplicated outside the classroom, or, particular competencies must be achieved to pass or achieve a particular grade in the course.
- For students who are absent more than 15% of classes, the opportunity to make up missed or incomplete work shall be determined by the instructor.
- **Appeals Process**
  - If the student and instructor cannot agree on make-up work and make-up exams within the parameters set forth by these policies and guidelines, the student may appeal the consequences due to the absences by contacting the Chair or Director of the program. Further appeals will be forwarded to the Dean's office in the College in which the course is being taken.

#### **GUIDELINES AND POLICIES FOR FACULTY:**

- **Attendance Policies**
  - All attendance policies that affect students' grades must be announced in writing within the first week of class, typically in the syllabus. Instructors are responsible for keeping accurate enrollment records, and for keeping accurate attendance records when attendance is used in grading. Instructors are strongly encouraged to require attendance in all 100-level and 200-level classes.
- **Class Absences**
  - Instructors who require attendance should accommodate at least 5% of absences for any reason. Authorized University Activities are counted among the allowed absences. This equates to at least 1 absence for classes that meet once a week, 2 absences for classes that meet twice a week, and 3 absences for classes that meet three times a week.
  - If a student knows that he/she will be absent more than 15% of the time, the faculty member may advise the student that he/she take the course at another time or semester.
  - Absences due to participation in Authorized University Activities with proper documentation will not directly affect a student's participation grade; however, they will count toward the total absences.

- Students absent for participation in Authorized University Activities are responsible for presenting the instructor with written notification from a University official prior to the proposed absence. For confirmation, the Authorized University Activities will be posted on a central webpage that included information about the activity, the dates, and the participating students.
- Students who are absent from class for any reason are responsible for all missed work and for contacting each of their instructors promptly, unless an instructor's policies require otherwise. Instructors cannot require documentation of student illness from any medical provider as part of an attendance policy, since medical conditions are confidential and frequently not verifiable. Instructors are permitted to review medical documentation if the student voluntarily provides it. However, medical documentation does not constitute an "excused absence."
- Instructors should provide, within reason, opportunity to make up work for students who miss classes for Authorized University Activities and other legitimate and unavoidable reasons. Legitimate, unavoidable reasons are those such as illness, injury, or family emergency. However, it is not unreasonable to adopt a broad attendance policy that allows 10% absences for any reason and does not require justification for a particular cause or purpose. Absence for religious observance is covered under the University policy regarding Days of Special Concern.
  - Suggested syllabus language:
 

*Attendance Policy:* Active participation and regular attendance are expected. You are allowed [three] [or other number] "free" absences, for this class that meets [twice] a week. Each subsequent absence from all or part of a class will result in a reduction of your final grade by 5% (one half of a letter grade). If you have on your schedule an Authorized University Activity that conflicts with class sometime during the semester, you are expected to apply your "free" absences to meeting that commitment. If you encounter a genuine crisis you should talk to me as soon as possible.
- Instructors may also consider including language such as the following in their syllabi:
  - For extreme circumstances that necessitate your short-term absence, such as a death in the family or hospitalization, contact the Office of Campus and Community Life at 304-293-5611. The Office of Campus and Community Life will notify your instructors of imminent absence in situations if you are unable to do so. Please note that the Office of Campus and Community Life does *not* "excuse" absences.
- **Policy on Make-up Examinations**
  - Students absent from regularly scheduled examinations because of Authorized University Activities will have the opportunity to take them at an alternate time. However, another equitable solution may be proposed by the instructor.
  - Make-up examinations should be of comparable difficulty to the original examination.

- Students in courses with regularly scheduled evening examinations shall have the opportunity to make up these examinations if they miss them in order to attend a regularly scheduled class that meets at the same time. Such make-up examinations should be of comparable difficulty to the original examination.
  - Attendance at a regularly scheduled evening examination will not excuse a student from a regularly scheduled class that meets at the same time as the examination.
  - NOTICE: If the student and the faculty member cannot agree, normal appeal procedures are available to the student and can be followed.
- **Appeals Process**
    - If the student and instructor cannot agree on make up work and make up exams within the parameters set forth by these policies and guidelines, the student may appeal the consequences due to the absences by contacting the Chair or Director of the program. Further appeals will be forwarded to the Dean's office in the College in which the course is being taken.