

# New Attendance Policy (for Undergrad Bulletin)

## Class Attendance

Students are obligated to complete all assigned work promptly, to attend class regularly, and to participate in whatever class discussion may occur.

Absence from more than 15 percent of the scheduled class sessions is excessive and the instructor may choose to exact a grade penalty for absences beyond this threshold.

Faculty members are not required to enforce an attendance policy. Generally, faculty members are encouraged to be understanding toward the needs of students beyond the classroom. However, if faculty members choose to enforce an attendance policy and penalize students for excessive absences, they must do so consistently and equitably for all students.

If faculty members choose to enforce an attendance policy in any class, they should notify that class, specifically in the course syllabus, of the policy and the precise penalty for excessive absences. The policy cannot penalize students for absences (of all sorts) that amount to less than 15 percent of scheduled class sessions. (This corresponds to 6 absences for fall and spring semester classes that meet Monday, Wednesday, and Friday; and 4 absences for fall and spring semester classes that meet Tuesday and Thursday.)

Students are expected to be fully honest with faculty members and university staff and administrators when they make requests to excuse absences. Any dishonesty in requesting excused absences or accommodations for the timely completion of work missed due to excused absences is regarded as a violation of the Carolinian Creed and is subject to disciplinary action through the Office of Academic Integrity.

It is recommended that faculty members include in their course syllabi statements that encourage students who anticipate being absent for excusable reasons, to meet with faculty members a reasonable time in advance, to discuss the possibility of having the absence excused, and to arrange accommodations to complete any work missed due to the absence.

It is also recommended that faculty members also include in their course syllabi statements that encourage students who are absent for excusable reasons that cannot be anticipated, to inform faculty members of the reason for their absences as promptly as possible. In cases of such unanticipated absences, students should meet with faculty members soon after their return to class to discuss the possibility of having the absence excused, and to arrange accommodations to complete any work missed due to the absence.

It is recommended that faculty consider the following circumstances as excusing, or potentially excusing, a student's absence:

- participation in an authorized University activity (such as musical performances, academic competitions, or varsity athletic events, in which the student plays a formal role in a University sanctioned event)
- required participation in military duties

- mandatory admission interviews for professional or graduate school which cannot be rescheduled
- participation in legal proceedings or administrative duties that require a student's presence
- death or major illness in a student's immediate family
- illness of a dependent family member
- major religious holy day for a tradition to which the student adheres  
(A calendar of many major and minor religious holy days in various traditions can be found on [www.interfaith-calendar.org](http://www.interfaith-calendar.org); faculty members with questions about the observance of a religious holy day and its impact on class attendance may be able to contact representatives for that religious tradition on campus, either through the chair of a relevant constituent group within the President's Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee, or through the U of SC religious workers council. Faculty members seeking such information should contact the Department of Student Affairs, liaison to the religious workers council.)
- illness that is too severe or contagious for the student to attend class
- weather-related emergencies

The Undergraduate Student Ombudsperson in the Division of Student Affairs is available to assist students with verifying documentation when requested by faculty members.

Faculty members have discretion in the courses that they teach regarding the choice to excuse absences that would otherwise be penalizable, so long as faculty members maintain consistency, and equitability toward all students. Faculty members also have discretion in the courses that they teach to choose the specific accommodations offered to students to complete any work missed due to potentially excusable absences.

## Class Attendance

Students are obligated to complete all assigned work promptly, to attend class regularly, and to participate in whatever class discussion may occur.

Absence from more than 10 percent of the scheduled class sessions, whether excused or unexcused, is excessive and the instructor may choose to exact a grade penalty for such absences. It is of particular importance that a student who anticipates absences in excess of 10 percent of the scheduled class sessions receives prior approval from the instructor before the last day to change schedule as published in the academic and refund calendars on the registrar's Web site (<http://registrar.sc.edu/>).

It must be emphasized that the "10 percent rule" stated above applies to both excused and unexcused absences. Faculty members should notify classes, specifically in the course syllabi, of the attendance policy which they intend to follow in each class, but it cannot be more restrictive than the "10 percent rule". It is also recommended that the faculty include a policy statement in their syllabi requesting students to meet with the instructor early in the semester to discuss the consequences of potential excessive absences due to participation in University-sponsored events.

Faculty should consider the following events or circumstances as potentially excusable absences:

- participation in an authorized University activity (such as musical performances, academic competitions, or varsity athletic events in which the student plays a formal role in a University sanctioned event)
- required participation in military duties
- mandatory admission interviews for professional or graduate school which cannot be rescheduled
- participation in legal proceedings or administrative duties that require a student's presence
- death or major illness in a student's immediate family
- illness of a dependent family member
- religious holy day if listed on [www.interfaithcalendar.org](http://www.interfaithcalendar.org)
- illness that is too severe or contagious for the student to attend class
- weather-related emergencies

The Student Ombudsperson in the Division of Student Affairs is available to assist faculty members with obtaining or verifying documentation when necessary. The faculty member has complete discretion regarding the specific nature of any accommodation offered in the event of an excused absence. Students should notify faculty members at least two weeks prior to the absence when possible. In all cases, students must contact the faculty member to request an accommodation upon return to class.