

Attendance Policy Guidance from Academic Affairs to Faculty

In May 2024, Augustana faculty adopted a [class attendance policy](#). The new policy, while similar to the guidelines faculty endorsed in 2016, provides more detailed guidance and introduces a new expectation: faculty, students, and staff will collaborate to minimize absences, allowing for up to approximately 10% missed class meetings; faculty are expected to either provide opportunities for students to make up missed work for full credit or exclude the work from final grade calculations within this limit. The policy also describes the maximum number of class meetings a student can miss before the instructor may seek an administrative withdrawal or assign a failing grade. This being said, faculty retain significant authority and autonomy to grant grace to individual students facing extraordinary circumstances and challenges.

To administer this policy successfully, equitably, and consistently, it is crucial that faculty bear several considerations in mind when designing their syllabi and managing their courses:

- The policy does not distinguish between absences for college-sponsored events, illnesses, or other personal emergencies (i.e. there are no excused or unexcused absences). Absences, including on “mandatory days,” related to documented accommodations from the Office of Disability Services are exempt from this policy; faculty must maintain detailed records of absences for students with accommodations associated with the ADA and Title IX. This policy does not supersede nor supplant the college’s [policy on religious holidays](#).
- The Athletics Director has prepared robust guidance for student-athletes and coaches consistent with the attendance policy. Faculty should expect that student-athletes will communicate any anticipated absences or early departures due to athletic competitions clearly and early in the semester.
- The attendance policy, along with any course-specific guidance, must be clearly outlined in the course syllabus. Faculty should review their attendance policy during the first week of class with students and clearly define what “counts” as attendance (e.g. whether arriving late affects attendance considerations).
- Instructors may designate certain days or activities as “mandatory days,” for which make-up work will not be offered and the credit for these activities will not be excluded from the final grade calculation. Faculty must clearly identify “mandatory days” in the syllabus and are expected to use them judiciously. Please see the policy linked above for a description of “mandatory days.”
- Student attendance must be tracked consistently and accurately throughout the term. The method of attendance tracking is left to instructor discretion, but [Arches](#), [Moodle](#), and [Starfish](#) possess attendance tracking capabilities. Being transparent with students about their attendance record is strongly encouraged and is likely to benefit students in much the same way that clear and frequent grading feedback does, therefore Moodle might be the most effective tool for recording attendance.
- Faculty must promptly and regularly notify students if they have concerns about student attendance; a Starfish Attendance Concern flag is the preferred notification and

documentation method. Comments in the Starfish flag should provide necessary and useful details to assist students and advisors in making informed decisions.

- Faculty should make every possible effort to counsel students in jeopardy of being administratively withdrawn from the course to withdraw of their own volition prior to submitting an [administrative withdrawal request](#). After Friday of week 10 at 4:30 p. m., the withdrawal window will close and an administrative withdrawal can no longer be requested. If a student accumulates absences greater than or equal to 30% of class meetings after the withdrawal deadline, then the instructor must record the grade that the student earns.
- Requests for administrative withdrawal requests are subject to input from the student's academic advisor and require approval from the Office of Academic Affairs. If an administrative withdrawal is sought, accurate and complete documentation regarding physical attendance and student communications (e.g. email, course engagement) will be necessary and required.

Ultimately, clear and timely communication, accurate and consistent documentation, and equitable application of the attendance policy are essential to its successful administration.

Drafted August 2024