

## **Attendance Policy for First Time in College (FTIC) Students in General Education Courses**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Please note that this policy title uses the phrase “General Studies.” The newly adopted term is “General Education,” so the updated term is used in the FAQ to reflect current language. The policy will be revised in the future.**

#### **1. Why did UWF develop an Attendance Policy for FTIC students in General Education courses?**

Students who attend class regularly master the course material better and achieve higher grades than those students who do not. Retention studies demonstrate that students who attend class regularly are both retained by and graduate from a university at higher rates than those who do not. A meta-analysis of 69 peer-reviewed studies reported that class attendance predicted college grades better than other metrics, including scores on the SAT or ACT (Crede et al. 2010). The Board of Governors metrics hold each State University System institution responsible for achieving specific retention and graduation rates, which creates an additional motivation to attend to and make efforts to improve retention and graduation rates. The General Education Course Attendance Policy establishes the expectation that each faculty member records attendance for all FTIC students enrolled in a General Education course and provides the students with a written attendance policy.

#### **2. What is an FTIC student?**

The State University System Board of Governors defines an FTIC student as a student who has earned a standard high school diploma from a Florida public or regionally accredited high school, or its equivalent, and who have earned fewer than twelve (12) semester hours of transferable college credit since receiving a standard high school diploma or its equivalent. UWF tracks each member of this group of students or cohort for a variety of metrics such as retention and four and six year graduation rates.

#### **3. How does this policy relate to Financial Aid?**

For the purposes of compliance with Federal Financial Aid requirements instructors are required to report the last date of attendance for FTIC students who withdraw from General Education courses.

#### **4. Is daily attendance mandatory for FTIC students in all General Education classes?**

FTIC student attendance at **every** class meeting is not mandatory. A written attendance policy for each General Education class is mandatory and must be included in the course syllabus. However, the stated attendance policy cannot excuse students from every class meeting. Faculty members have the prerogative to develop a class attendance policy that is appropriate for their class if the policy conforms to the letter and intention of the General Education Course Attendance Policy (i.e., the class attendance policy cannot be “There is no attendance policy in this class.”)

#### **5. Does this policy supersede or replace the Class Attendance Policy in the catalog?**

No, the General Education Course Attendance Policy is a subset of and acts in concert with the Class Attendance policy as stated in the *UWF Catalog*:

The University expects students to take full responsibility for their academic work and academic progress. To progress satisfactorily, students must meet the requirements of each course for which they are registered. Successful work depends to a large extent on regular class attendance.

Class attendance is regarded as an academic matter. Each faculty member will provide a written attendance policy to each class within the first week of classes. It is the responsibility of students to know the attendance policy of each course they are taking. Students must inform their instructor(s) of absences from classes prior to or as soon as possible after the absence. Instructors have the right to request verification for all excused absences. Students are held accountable for all assignments in each course, whether or not the assignments were announced during an absence. Faculty members must allow each student who is absent due to a reason recognized as an "excused absence," as set forth below, the opportunity to make up work missed without any reduction in the student's final course grade as a direct result of such an absence.

The use of attendance records in grading and handling of any excuses for absences is left to the discretion of the faculty member responsible for the course, subject to the guidelines given below:

- Students will be excused from class to observe religious holidays of their faith. No major test, major class event, or major University activity will be scheduled on a major religious holiday.
- Absences for imposed legal responsibilities (e.g., jury duty, court appearance) and military obligations will be recognized as excused absences.
- Absences resulting from participation in extracurricular activities in which students are official representatives of the University will be recognized as excused absences.
- Absences for serious illness, death or serious illness within the student's immediate family, or other sound reasons offered by the student may be accepted as excused absences.

#### **6. What is the difference between the General Education Course Attendance Policy and the Class Attendance Policy in the catalog?**

The General Education Course Attendance Policy for First Time In College (FTIC) Students applies to a specific set of courses and is designed to encourage engagement and support efforts to improve student retention at UWF. The policy requires the faculty member to record the last day of class attendance for all FTIC students enrolled in a general education course; doing so creates the records that are needed for financial aid or other enrollment processes in the case of withdrawal or chronic absences. More information will be provided regarding the reporting process.

#### **7. Are there reasons for having a General Education Course Attendance Policy for First Time In College (FTIC) Students policy other than improving student retention and overall academic performance?**

The policy supports implementation of the attendance verification process that is required for financial aid disbursement. The policy also augments compliance with Return of Title IV Funds rules. These rules directly impact student athletes, students who are military veterans, and all students who receive financial aid.

#### **8. What do I have to do to make certain that my General Education course and syllabus are in compliance with the policy?**

All General Education course syllabi must contain a clear attendance statement with the following five components:

- A statement that regular attendance for FTIC students is expected and will be documented.
- A statement about the role of attendance for the disbursement and continuation of

financial aid.

- Criteria the instructor uses to define an excused or unexcused absence. (Note: criteria must comply with the university-wide Class Attendance Policy noted above and provide a link to this policy.)
- Describe how attendance affects a student's grade in the course and specific consequences of unexcused absences for the final grade.

All General Education course instructional personnel must maintain records that document FTIC students' attendance in the class.

### **9. What options do I have for taking attendance?**

General Education course instructors are encouraged to adopt one of the following or similar options:

- The Instructor will call roll for each class session.
- The Instructor will circulate a sign-in sheet during class. Signing on another student's behalf is considered academic misconduct.
- The Instructor will verify attendance by checking a seating chart.
- The Instructor will administer a test or quiz to record attendance in class that day.
- Verify attendance by using "clickers" as follows:
  - The student uses a clicker to "check in" for each class meeting. The Instructor or will use the clicker system to record attendance. All students must bring the clicker to class each class meeting and make sure they understand how to use the clicker. Using another student's clicker on his/her behalf is considered academic misconduct.
  - or**
  - The Instructor or creates class activities that require responses with clickers (e.g., offer a quiz or pose questions during class). A record of the student's response serves as attendance verification for that day.
- If the technology is available, attendance can be verified by Nautilus Card Swipe as follows:
  - The Instructor or will use a Nautilus Card swiper to record attendance. Students are required to have their Nautilus Card whenever attending class. Students will swipe their Nautilus card at the beginning of each class.
  - or**
  - Students will swipe their Nautilus card when leaving class. Swiping another student's card on his/her behalf is considered academic misconduct.

### **10. Who will monitor compliance with the policy?**

University College will work with the colleges and departments that offer General Education courses to monitor compliance with the General Education Course Attendance Policy for First Time In College (FTIC) Students.

## EXAMPLES OF LANGUAGE THAT MAY BE USED IN A SYLLABUS

You may draft statements that meet the specific goals of your course provided the statement includes all elements described in this Examples section. Some **suggested** statements for each element are listed below.

### Element 1. General Statement

#### Suggested “default” statement for a General Education course syllabus

This is a General Education course for which regular attendance and participation is required. Classes will include short attendance assignments that may only be turned in during the class meeting time. If you miss class or do not complete the attendance record or task, you are absent. Only those absences that are defined in the University class attendance policy will be considered excused absences (<http://catalog.uwf.edu/undergraduate/academicpolicies/general/>). You are allowed **XX** unexcused absences in this class. If you have more than **XX** unexcused absences, your final grade will be reduced by one step (e.g. B to B-). **Information for students who receive financial aid:** To receive financial aid on the normal distribution timeline, attendance must be confirmed within seven calendar days of the course start date. A student may review confirmed attendance status by using the "My Classes" app in MyUWF. A student who stops attending class for any reason will **not** automatically be withdrawn and will still be responsible for any missed work. A student who stops attending class may be awarded a grade of NF. This grade may affect financial aid eligibility or require repayment of funds awarded.

#### Suggested “default” language for methods of documenting FTIC Student attendance in online courses

Because the institution’s Learning Management System tracks each and every “touch” a student makes in a course, instructors can identify “benchmarks” or “milestones” to track student attendance in their online courses. Suggested syllabus statements for methods of documenting attendance in online courses include:

- I will periodically monitor your progress in this course throughout the semester. You are expected to meet the following attendance targets:
  - Complete 25% of the course material by the end of the 4th week of the term (or date).
  - I will regularly monitor and record your participation in course activities (live chats, quizzes, etc.) as evidence of attendance.
  - Your engagement with the course materials will be monitored for attendance purposes.

### Element 2: Financial Aid

- In compliance with federal regulations, financial aid can only be disbursed to students whose attendance has been confirmed by the Instructor of Record during the designated period. Confirmed attendance is conducted by verifying classroom attendance. If a student has been approved for financial aid, funds will not be released until the instructor confirms attendance. To receive financial aid on the normal distribution timeline, student attendance must be confirmed within seven calendar days of the course start date. A student may review confirmed attendance status by using the "My Classes" app in MyUWF.

- A student who stops attending class for any reason will **not** automatically be withdrawn and will still be responsible for any missed work. A student who stops attending class may be awarded a grade of NF. This grade may affect financial aid eligibility or require repayment of funds awarded.

### **Element 3: Attendance Method**

- I will call roll.
- I will circulate a sign-in sheet during class. Signing on another student's behalf is considered academic misconduct.
- I will use the clicker system to record attendance. Please make sure you understand how to use your clicker and you should bring it with you to each class meeting. Using another student's clicker on his/her behalf is considered academic misconduct.
- I will offer a quiz that will require use of a clicker and will use your response as verification of your attendance that day.
- You must use your clicker to "check in" to each class meeting.
- I will use a Nautilus card swiper to record attendance, so make sure you bring your Nautilus Card to class. The Nautilus card is UWF's official identification card. Swiping another student's card on his/her behalf is considered academic misconduct.
- You will need to swipe your Nautilus card at the beginning of each class.
- You will need to swipe your Nautilus card as you leave class.
- I will verify your attendance by checking an assigned seating chart.

### **Element 4: Criteria**

- An absence is considered an excused absence only if your reason for absence is included in the University class attendance policy. You must make arrangements with me prior to your university-sanctioned excused absence for any missed material, assignments or exams.
- If you miss class or do not complete the attendance record or task, you are absent. Only those absences that are defined in the University class attendance policy will be considered excused absences.
- Tardiness/leaving early (optional, if desired)
  - If you arrive to class **XX** minutes late without prior consultation from me, you will be marked as not attending for that class period.
  - If you leave class early without prior consultation with me, you will be marked as not attending for that class period.
- In the case of serious emergencies: (optional, if desired)
 

If you are absent for a serious incident or emergency, provided that you submit documentation, your absence may be considered an excused absence. You are eligible for up to **XX** excused absences (not including university-sanctioned excused absences). Serious incidents or emergencies include, but are not limited to, your own serious illness, serious illness or death in the family, or military obligations. When possible and prudent, please notify the instructor prior to the regularly scheduled class meeting. You must submit documentation that supports your absence no later than **XX** class meetings OR **XX** days after your return.

### **Element 5: Consequences**

- You are allowed **XX** unexcused absences in this class. Upon your **XX+1** absence, you will incur the following consequence(s): (EXAMPLES)
- Your final grade will be reduced by one step (e.g. B to B-).
- **XX** points will be deducted from attendance/participation grade.
- If you have any more than THREE absences, I will start dropping your final grade by one letter for each subsequent absence
- Missing 0-3 days ... no penalty, missing 4 days ... -10 points Missing 5 days ... -20 points, missing 6 days ...-30 points, missing 7 days ...-40 points, missing 8 days ... -50 points
- Not only is attendance required in this General Education course, it is also part of your grade. The following point structure will be used to calculate the attendance portion of your grade:

*Example A*

If you miss more than three unexcused absences, your overall total will be reduced by 5 points for each absence after the third

*Example B*

- If you attend each and every class, 3 points will be added to your overall point total from which your grade will be derived (and believe me, some of you will need those points).
- If you miss only one (1) class during the term, 1 point will be added to your overall point total.
- If you miss two (2) classes during the term, 0 points will be added to your overall point total.
- If you miss three (3) classes during the term, 2 points will be subtracted from your point total (and believe me, some of you will not be able to spare those points).
- If you miss four (4) classes during the term, 4 points will be subtracted from your overall point total.
- If you miss five or more (5+) classes during the term, 10 points will be subtracted from your overall point total.

*Example C*

0 classes missed	= 50 points extra credit
1 class missed	= 25 points extra credit
2 classes missed	= 10 points extra credit
3 classes or more missed	= 0 points extra credit

Credé, M., Roch, S. G. & Kieszczyka, U. M. (2010). Class attendance in college: a meta-analytic review of the relationship of class attendance with grades and student characteristics. *Review of Educational Research, 80*(2), 272-295.