



Encouraging Student Attendance

Student attendance is vital to success in college courses. Ideally, students would attend class because they view their presence as essential to the learning process. However, even in the best of scenarios instructors may face challenges regarding student attendance. Teaching and learning during a pandemic has proven to further complicate the issue.

While instructors may choose to require student attendance during the upcoming semester, we encourage you to consider implementing strategies that illuminate the value of in-person class time. Rather than creating a policy that punishes students for lack of attendance, such as loss of points or a letter grade, consider utilizing the following strategies that promote attendance in positive and authentic ways.

- **Implement in-class activities or assignments that can only be completed by students who attend class.** Credit earned by completing these in-class activities can go toward the participation or attendance portion of students' grades. Offer students the opportunity to drop a certain number of the lowest scores, which encourages more student responsibility for self-monitoring their own unexcused absences.
- **Prepare class sessions that foster student interest and mastery of content.** Students are more engaged when class sessions offer experiences that enhance the reading or viewing of course materials/videos. Capture your students' attention with engaging stories, scenarios, or problem-solving activities, and provide opportunities for students to practice and apply the concepts they are learning while you are there to support their efforts.
- **Give frequent low-stakes assignments or quizzes that offer timely feedback.** Frequent assignments and/or quizzes with instructor feedback regarding students' progress promote deep learning of important concepts and skills. If students feel that their presence in class helps prepare them for successful completion of these activities, then attendance will become a priority.
- **Create opportunities for students to make connections with you and their peers.** Students who feel connected to their instructors and peers are more likely to attend class in person. Dedicate time each semester to learning your students' names and interests, and relate your course content to their personal and professional goals. Facilitate group discussions that allow students to discuss relevant course topics with their peers. When students are absent, send a message to let them know that you value their presence and contributions to the classroom environment. Solicit student feedback regularly to let students know that you value their views about how and what they are learning.