

BETHUNE-COOKMAN UNIVERSITY

University Student Class Attendance Policy



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Policy: UNIVERSITY STUDENT CLASS ATTENDANCE

Date Revised: July 2026

Policy #: ACAD-2025-01

Office Responsible:
Office of the Provost

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes the standards and procedures for student class attendance at Bethune-Cookman University. Regular attendance is essential to academic success and creates an environment conducive to learning. This policy applies to all undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in credit-bearing courses unless otherwise specified by program accreditation requirements or clinical/laboratory settings.

2. ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS

2.1 General Attendance Requirements

Students are expected to attend all scheduled class sessions, including lectures, laboratories, discussion sections, and other required academic activities. Instructors have the authority to establish specific attendance requirements for their courses, provided these requirements are clearly stated in the course syllabus and do not conflict with this university policy.

2.2 First Week Attendance

Students must attend all class sessions during the first week of the semester to maintain their enrollment. Failure to attend may result in administrative withdrawal from the course. Students who anticipate missing the first week due to legitimate reasons must contact their instructor and the Office of the Registrar before the start of classes.

3. EXCUSED ABSENCES

The following absences are considered excused when accompanied by appropriate documentation:

- Illness or medical emergency: Documented medical condition requiring absence

from class

- Family emergency: Death or serious illness of an immediate family member
- Religious observances: Observance of religious holidays recognized by the University
- University-sponsored activities: Athletic competitions, academic conferences, performing arts events, and other officially sanctioned activities
- Military service: Required military training or deployment for active duty, National Guard, or Reserve members
- Civic or Legal Responsibilities: Jury service, court appearances, or other required legal proceedings.
- Disability accommodations: Absences related to documented disabilities as approved by Student Accessibility Services

4. DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Students requesting excused absences must provide appropriate documentation to the Office of the Dean of Students as soon as reasonably possible. Documentation requirements vary by absence type:

Absence Type	Required Documentation
Medical	Note from healthcare provider on official Letterhead
Family Emergency	Obituary or death certificate
Religious Observance	Advance notification (minimum 2 weeks) to instructor
University Activity	Coach, advisor, faculty or staff lead of the activity must make the request
Civic or Legal Obligation	Jury summons, subpoena, or court documentation

5. LATE ARRIVAL AND EARLY DEPARTURE

Instructors may establish policies regarding late arrival and early departure from class. Students arriving more than 10 minutes late or leaving more than 10 minutes early may be marked absent at the instructor discretion. Repeated tardiness may be considered equivalent to an absence. Students with legitimate reasons for late arrival or early departure should notify their instructor in advance whenever possible.

Instructors should make reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities or extenuating circumstances that affect timely attendance.

6. MAKE-UP WORK AND ASSIGNMENTS

6.1 Excused Absences

Students with excused absences are entitled to make up missed work without penalty.

Students must:

1. Contact the instructor within 24 hours of returning to class
2. Provide required documentation for the absence
3. Complete make-up work within the timeframe established by the instructor

Instructors will provide reasonable opportunities for students to make up exams, quizzes, presentations, and other graded work. In cases where the nature of the coursework makes make-up work impractical, instructors may provide alternative assignments of equivalent value.

6.2 Unexcused Absences

Students with unexcused absences are not guaranteed the opportunity to make up missed work. Instructors have discretion to determine whether make-up work will be permitted for unexcused absences and may apply grade penalties as specified in the course syllabus.

7. IMPACT ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

7.1 Grade Penalties

The number of unexcused absences permitted per semester is equal to the number of days the class meets per week. For example, a Monday, Wednesday, Friday course would allow 3 unexcused absences per semester. After meeting the excessive absence threshold of four absences, the grade can be reduced a letter grade for each additional absence.

7.2 Excessive Absences

Instructors must notify students in writing when they approach the excessive absence threshold and provide information about potential consequences and available resources.

8. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Students are responsible for:

- Reviewing the attendance policy for each course as stated in the syllabus
- Notifying instructors of anticipated absences as early as possible
- Providing appropriate documentation for excused absences
- Arranging to obtain missed class materials, notes, and announcements
- Completing make-up work within established timeframes
- Maintaining communication with instructors regarding attendance issues

9. INSTRUCTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Instructors are responsible for:

- Clearly stating course-specific attendance policies in the syllabus
- Maintaining accurate attendance records throughout the semester
- Notifying students when they approach the excessive absence threshold
- Providing reasonable accommodations for excused absences
- Responding to student absence notifications in a timely manner
- Referring students with chronic excessive attendance problems to appropriate support services

10. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

10.1 Extended Absences

Students anticipating extended absences (more than three consecutive class sessions) due to serious illness, family emergency, or other extraordinary circumstances should contact the Office of Student Success and Retention as soon as possible. The office will work with the student to coordinate communication with instructors and develop a plan for continued academic progress.

10.2 Online and Hybrid Courses

For online and hybrid courses, attendance expectations may differ from traditional face-to-face courses. Instructors of online courses must specify how attendance will be determined, which may include participation in discussion forums, completion of assignments by deadlines, or synchronous session attendance. The same excused absence categories and documentation requirements apply to online courses.

10.3 Study Abroad and Off-Campus Programs

Students participating in university-approved study abroad or off-campus programs are subject to the attendance policies of their host institution or program. These policies must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate academic department prior to the student's departure.

10.4 Accreditor-Specific Standards

Clinical, practicum, or field placements may follow attendance standards mandated by external accreditors (ACEN, CACREP, CAATE, etc.) to ensure compliance across accredited programs

11. APPEALS PROCESS

Students who believe they have been treated unfairly regarding attendance matters may appeal through the following process:

1. **Informal resolution:** Student discusses the issue with the instructor within five business days of the disputed action
 2. **Department level:** If informal resolution fails, student submits written appeal to the department chair within five business days of the informal resolution
 3. **College level:** If department decision is unsatisfactory, student may appeal to the college dean within five business days of the department level decision
 4. **University level:** Final appeal may be made to the Provost or designated representative within five business days of the college decision
- All appeals must be submitted in writing and include relevant documentation. Decisions at each level will be provided in writing within 5 business days of receipt of the appeal.

12. RECORD RETENTION

Instructors must maintain attendance records for all courses for a minimum of one academic year following the conclusion of the course. Records should be sufficiently detailed to support grade assignments and respond to any appeals or inquiries.

13. RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

This attendance policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Academic Honesty Policy
- Student Code of Conduct
- Disability Services Accommodation Policy
- Religious Observance Policy
- Student-Athlete Academic Support Policy

14. POLICY REVIEW AND UPDATES

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Office of the Provost.

Date: November 10, 2025

Effective Date: January 1, 2026

Last Revised: July 2026

Next Review: November 2026