

GUIDANCE REGARDING COURSE ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT EXPECTATIONS FOR FALL 2020

Approved by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee July 14, 2020

The Faculty Senate Policy on Class Attendance, updated in April 2018, can be found at <https://registrar.unl.edu/academic-standards/policies/class-attendance/>. While that policy remains fully in effect, the Faculty Senate endorses the following interpretation and guidance for it for the Fall 2020 semester.

We know that, especially in the face of a pandemic, it is crucial that individuals who are sick stay home. At the same time, we know that regular engagement with a course is key to students' abilities to be successful in that course. Therefore, for the Fall 2020 semester, "attendance" should be interpreted to mean "physical attendance in the classroom, remote synchronous attendance, or engagement with the course in ways specified by the instructor in the course syllabus." Moreover, instructors are encouraged to use the phrase "attendance and engagement" in lieu of "attendance" when setting policies and expectations in their syllabi on this topic.

Faculty are encouraged to specify in their syllabi what assessments and activities, some of which may be in person or synchronous when essential and safe, must be met throughout the term. There are many ways that students can meaningfully engage with course material that can be used towards student assessment, and instructors may include this engagement in the determination of a student's final course grade as appropriate. Attendance and engagement expectations should recognize the need for flexibility and empathy to allow for following community health-related policies.

Students who are sick or who are engaging in self-quarantine in accordance with guidance from the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department or their health care professional should not physically attend in-person classes. They must notify the instructor of their absence and must still meet the stated engagement expectations of the course, and they must adhere to the usual codes of conduct and rules of academic integrity that remain in place. For students who are absent for these reasons, we ask instructors to be flexible with any attendance policies they may have for their courses. Again, students in this situation must still fulfill the engagement expectations of their classes and should follow the stated guidelines for their courses in communicating with their instructors and staying current in the coursework. If the majority of the course work is completed but the absence makes it impossible for the student to adequately complete all course requirements, a grade of incomplete may be an appropriate option. Note, however, that if the student has not already completed most of the graded work for the course, then a late withdrawal would be more appropriate than an incomplete.