

FMS Department Attendance Policy Best Practices

In-class attendance is essential to student learning and success. Instructors should set and enforce their own attendance policies for their classes. The attendance policy should be communicated clearly in each course syllabus.

The Department of Film and Media studies recommends as a baseline that students who are absent for more than 20% of class meetings receive a deduction to their final grade, regardless of whether specific absences were excused. Instructors may institute a more strict attendance policy than this. Instructors may decide to allow a set number of total absences for any reason without distinguishing excused or unexcused absences, and then take grade deduction for any additional absences. Attendance-related grade penalties may entail letter grade deductions to final grades above and beyond participation grades. Instructors may also specify an automatic F for students who exceed a specified percentage or number of class meetings. The Department supports enforcement of these policies.

Students who enroll in a course after the term has begun but before the enrollment deadline at the end of week 2 should not be penalized for classes missed before they enrolled.

Students should not be penalized for absences due to observing religious holidays.

In exceptional circumstances, grade penalties may be waived at the instructor's discretion, but the student must communicate with the instructor in a timely manner to make accommodations.

If a student is habitually absent, faculty may encourage the student to [drop](#) or [withdraw](#) from the course. Students may withdraw from a course up to the final day of instruction. A Withdrawal does not impact a student's GPA.

Faculty only should provide a student with an [Incomplete \(I\)](#) under circumstances in which the student has completed the majority of work for the course and is good standing but is unable to complete specific course assignments by the end of the term because of extenuating circumstances, such as serious illness, accident, family emergency, or natural disaster. A plan with clear deadlines must be communicated to the student in the case of an Incomplete.