

# Attendance Policy

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## Fall 2021 Attendance Policy

*(Policy does not apply to Law School)*

Fall semester classes at St. Mary's will be primarily in-person, except for a limited number of approved courses. Students are required to attend classes in person. The University continues to carefully monitor public health conditions and will update the campus community regarding any changes to our current expectation for an in-person fall semester.

### I. In Person Classes

Class attendance is related to academic success, and class participation contributes to the synergism of the educational process. Undergraduate students are expected to attend all classes, including laboratories, practica, and events associated with the course or program.

Faculty members keep the roll, record grades for any work missed due to an unexcused absence, and may make a recommendations to their Dean to drop a student for missing an equivalent of two weeks of classes for unexcused absences. Faculty may not drop a student without the approval of the Dean. One absence in a laboratory will be the equivalent of two 50-minute absences or one 75-minute absence. "Two weeks" are computed as follows:

### Fall and Spring Semesters

- Six unexcused absences in a 50-minute class period
- Four unexcused absences in a 75-minute class period
- Two evening classes which are 165 minutes per meeting

### Summer Sessions

- Four day-class meetings
- Two evening-class meetings

### Three tardies constitute one absence.

Absences incurred during late registration (first week of classes) are considered excused. Absences for reasons other than University-sanctioned events (which must be approved by Deans or the Academic Vice President) will be determined to be "excused" or "not excused" by the Professor. An excessive number of absences, even if they are excused, can severely compromise the quality of the students' learning experience. Therefore, if the Professor judges that the student has missed excessive material due to absences (excused, unexcused or a combination of the two), that Professor may initiate action (by making a recommendation to the Dean) for withdrawal of the student from the class before the published last day to drop. The Professor shall notify a student prior to initiating action for a student's withdrawal. Grades assigned for withdrawals initiated by the Professor or by the student are recorded as a "W" (Withdraw).

It is the responsibility of the student to contact the Professor before an absence, if possible, or, in the case of an emergency, as soon after the absence as possible. It is also the responsibility of the student to make up any missed work to the satisfaction of the Professor on the basis of guidelines stated in that Professor's course syllabus.

Appeals to decisions based on this attendance policy may be brought to the attention of the Dean of Student's office.

If a student must be absent from a class for one of the reasons listed below, the student is required to communicate with the faculty member to provide information on the reason for the absence. Untruthful student claims about absences are considered a violation of the Code of Student Conduct: <https://www.stmarytx.edu/policies/student-development/code-of-student-conduct/>. (<https://www.stmarytx.edu/policies/student-development/code-of-student-conduct/>)

Students will be given the opportunity to make up any missed assignments or their equivalents when their absence is the result of one of the following situations.

- **University-related activities:** Students who are absent from class while participating in a university-sponsored event or who are absent from the campus because they officially represent the University in such sponsored activities as intercollegiate athletics and research activities will be excused from classes.
- **Illness:** Students who are ill or experiencing symptoms that are consistent with COVID-19 should not attend class but should self-report using the University's self-report tool. In cases of severe illness, students may also be excused from synchronous online classes and asynchronous online classes. For all situations, the procedures below should be followed:

- Students with COVID-19 symptoms must adhere to university health and wellness procedures for self-evaluation, reporting, follow-up, and quarantine as necessary. <https://gateway.stmarytx.edu/group/mycampus/illness-reporting> (<https://gateway.stmarytx.edu/group/mycampus/illness-reporting/>)
- Students who experience a family illness-related emergency that interferes with academic performance are expected to contact the Office of the Dean of Students ([deanofstudents@stmarytx.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@stmarytx.edu)).
- Students are reminded of their responsibility to uphold the Code of Conduct and may be subject to academic penalties and university sanctions for falsely reporting an illness or emergency as a reason for missing, or to miss, class; students should work closely with the faculty members, the Office of Student Development, and the Student Health Center to communicate their illness or other circumstances causing an emergency

Failure to attend classes for reasons other than those listed above are considered unexcused absences unless the faculty member, in consultation with the student, approves an absence as excused.

## II. Online or Asynchronous Classes

A limited number of courses will be offered remotely during the Fall 2021 semester. Attendance for these courses should adhere to the guidance below.

### Attendance in synchronous online classes.

Attendance depends on the active participation of students. Students are expected to attend online sessions just as they would in a face-to-face classroom, by avoiding non-course related activities. Appropriate lighting promotes better engagement when the video feature of Zoom is in use.

The syllabus must include the method(s) for determining attendance and participation of students in synchronous online courses. These may (but need not) include participation using the Zoom video feature for the length of the class time or may require a student to activate the video feature when called upon. Attendance may contribute to a student's final grade as long as the syllabus describes specific ways in which students may earn this credit for excused absences and absences caused by technology limitations and failures.

Because students have access to diverse quality in bandwidth, uneven access to appropriate technology, and unique home situations, the syllabus should include a process by which students may contact the instructor to discuss difficulties that might occur with the Zoom video, whether those difficulties occur on an ad hoc basis or may be routinely anticipated. When other course sections and modalities are available, the faculty may suggest that the student explore these options if issues with technology are not resolved within the first three weeks of class.

### Attendance in asynchronous online classes

Asynchronous courses provide students the flexibility to complete coursework at their own pace but within the parameters set by the course syllabus.

A course instructor cannot require students to participate in *any* live, virtual, or face-to-face activity. The syllabus may require students to complete assignments on a particular date but may not require a specific time on that date. If changes to the syllabus or course assignment schedule are required, instructors should provide at least one week's notice to students.

A course instructor must require students to complete asynchronous work according to the course assignment schedule. Failure to complete assignments according to the course assignment schedule may constitute non-attendance. The syllabus should define the method(s) of tracking attendance.

Examples of ensuring attendance include weekly asynchronous assignments equivalent to in-class experience, e.g., watch a taped lecture followed by a brief essay or quiz; weekly posts to discussion boards in response to other students' posts or in response to a prompt; student participation in an interactive tutorial or computer-assisted instruction; weekly quizzes, etc.

### International Students

Fall semester classes at St. Mary's will be primarily in-person, and students are required to attend orientation and classes in person. International students who are not able to arrive on campus for the start of classes due to documented visa delays and/or travel restrictions may request to enroll remotely for a short period of time, which may not extend beyond the 12<sup>th</sup> day of classes (September 1). Students seeking approval for delayed arrival must first discuss their situation and options with the Center for International Programs (CIP), and after their CIP consultation, they must submit a formal request with supporting documentation to Dean of Students Office (DOS), which will approve delayed arrivals on a case-by-case basis. These requests should be submitted to the Dean of Students Office by Wednesday, August 11. All international students who intend to enroll for the Fall 2021 semester (and are approved for delayed arrival in advance by DOS) must be able to attend classes in person no later than Wednesday, September 8.