

Responsible Official: Vice President for Academic Affairs

Responsible Office: Academic Affairs

Next Review Date: July 2023

Website Address:

<https://myumo.moc.edu/services/ir/Policies/Public%20Policies/AttendancePolicy.pdf>

ATTENDANCE POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

At the University of Mount Olive, all course instructors are required to keep accurate attendance records for every student on their course roster through their respective learning management system (e.g. Moodle) for all class meetings in all forms of delivery. Attendance must be recorded for the full duration of the course (Course start date through course end date), with no exception.

REASON FOR POLICY/PURPOSE

The University of Mount Olive is a Title IV Institution which allows the University and its students to participate in any of the Title IV student financial assistance programs. For all institutions that take attendance, the institution **must** use its attendance records to determine drop and withdrawal dates for students. Upon withdrawal an institution is required to refund unearned Title IV aid based on the duration of the students' attendance within their respective courses. When a student withdraws, a Title IV credit balance created during the period must be returned to the University's Title IV grant account within 45 days of the withdrawal date (Return of Title IV funds or R2T4). This withdrawal date is determined based on the "last date of attendance" for the student within the University of Mount Olive attendance tables. The Department of Education (ED) requires an independent audit of University of Mount Olive student files and attendance records to ensure compliance with these (and other) regulations. The Department of Education can impose sanctions for failure to comply with regulations up to and including termination of the University's ability to utilize federal student aid.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

The Department of Education rules that define "academic attendance" include, but are not limited to:

- Physically attending a class where there is an opportunity for direct interaction between the instructor and student
- Submission of an academic assignment
- Taking an exam, Interactive tutorial, or computer aided instruction
- Attending an assigned study group
- Initiating contact with the course instructor to ask a question about the academic subject studied in their course

A student logging into an online course is not sufficient of its own accord to award an attendance value. All contact and submissions to qualify attendance must occur between the course start and end dates.

POLICY/PROCEDURES

The University Office of Financial Aid (FA), Registrar's Office (RO), and Office of Academic Affairs (AA) routinely monitor attendance reports from Moodle to determine when students have been absent from all courses for a period of 14 days (14 day attendance lapse). A weekly report of all enrollment confirmation notices (ENCs) is sent to the student's academic advisor, the directors of traditional student and adult programming advising, and appropriate deans.. If the student fails to respond in 7 days from the point an ENC is issued (21 days after their last present value was recorded), the UMO FA office must process a withdrawal and R2T4. If a student never attends a course, the last date of attendance for withdrawal purposes defaults to the last date of attendance for that student at the University, which may be in the previous academic semester. Students may drop a course with no academic or financial penalty within the first 7 days of the course meeting, however a drop may affect a student's financial aid (and credit balance) for the term. As attendance values are typically determined in a weekly fashion for online and seated non-traditional courses, by the time an absent value is recorded and monitored, the ability to clean drop a course has elapsed for students.

Additional Documents/Actions Required for Implementation of this Policy:

- Update of University of Mount Olive Undergraduate, Adult Programs, and Graduate Catalog Statements for Attendance
- "Wednesday Week 1 Attendance and Acceptance of Syllabus" Forum must be added to all University online course shells.
- Missing Attendance Report – Now available in Operations folder on Report Center
- Graduate and Undergraduate Syllabus Supplements

Based on the Department of Education definitions, all Online courses will feature a forum titled "Wednesday Week 1 Attendance and Acceptance of Syllabus", with a due date of no later than 9:00pm on Wednesday of the first week of class. The syllabus attendance statement and policy will direct all students to the fact that they must log into their online course within the first 68 hours, post the following statement "I have read, understand, and accept the terms of the course syllabus, Student Name", and post a relevant question (e.g. regarding the syllabus, course, or course content) to the course instructor in this forum in order to be marked as present (see below). This ensures that students have met ED compliance standards for attendance.

This forum will not be a graded component of an online course, but will be used as a qualifier for attendance. This strategy has the potential to increase student engagement and provide the course instructor with an opportunity to respond to questions their students may have of the syllabus, course, or content prior to it becoming an academic issue for students, or the instructor. Additionally, this allows University offices to make outreach to missing students at a far earlier point in a given course.

Attendance Requirements for all University of Mount Olive Courses:

Traditional Seated Courses: Attendance is recorded for all students at each physical class meeting by 11:59PM on the meeting date (see below for rescheduled course meetings)

Adult and Graduate Seated Courses: Attendance is recorded for all students at each physical class meeting by 11:59PM on the meeting date (see below for rescheduled course meetings)

Online Courses: Biweekly attendance in the first week of the course (due Wednesday evening, and Sunday evening of the first week prior to 11:59PM), and weekly on Sunday evenings prior to 11:59PM for the rest of the course.

Wednesday attendance requires the student to log in to their course and access the “Wednesday Week 1 Attendance and Acceptance of Syllabus”, forum prior to 9:00pm on Wednesday of the first week of class.

1. Students should read their course syllabus, and then insert the following statement into the forum “I have read, understand, and accept the terms of the course syllabus, (followed by the full Student Name)”.
2. The student must then ask a question of the course instructor relative to the course structure, syllabus, assignments, or course content.

Failure to meet the conditions above requires an instructor to mark the student as absent. All future attendance values (Sundays by 11:59pm) are determined by a student having submitted/completed assignment(s) for that week and/or have met other qualifiers for attendance (see above). Students who have logged in and not submitted work, or who have failed to log in must be recorded as Absent (see below).

Hybrid Courses: Hybrid courses typically alternate between physical class meetings and online coursework during intervening periods. During weeks of physical meeting, instructors should default to rules for traditional seated courses and during weeks with online material instructors should default to attendance procedures for online courses.

Rescheduled Course Meetings: Due to a variety of reasons (e.g. inclement weather, class meeting falls on a Holiday, instructor illness, location closure, etc.) some traditional seated courses and Adult and Graduate Program seated courses may be rescheduled for students allowing them to perform alternate assignments for the missed meeting in an online format. **Attendance must still be recorded for the intended class meeting**, and instructors should default to the established rules for marking student attendance during this interval using criterion for Online Courses (see above). Again, students who have logged in and not performed gradable work, or failed to log in must be recorded as Absent (see below based on mode of delivery).

Attendance Values for University of Mount Olive Courses:

Traditional Courses and Adult and Graduate Courses:

Present (P): A student is physically present and participates during the course meeting.

Late (L): A student is physically present and participates during the course meeting, but arrives after the course start time and prior to the listed end time for the course meeting.

Absent (A): A student misses a physical class meeting without pre-approved notice to the instructor.

Excused Absent (EA): When a student has requested and been approved for an absence prior to the course meeting. Excuses absences are at the discretion of the course instructor and may include, but are not limited to cases of personal illness, family emergency, approved representation of the University at an event, etc. The instructor may require written justification and verification for an excused absence. An absence for any reason does not lessen a student’s responsibility to meet the requirements of the course.

Online Courses:

Present (P): A student has logged into the course and completed course work or has initiated contact with a faculty member to ask a question about the academic subject studied in their course.

Late (L): A value of late should never be recorded for a student in an Online course.

Absent (A): A student has not logged into the course during the attendance time window and/or has failed to complete coursework and/or initiated an academic inquiry with an instructor.

Excused Absent (EA): When a student has requested and been approved for an absence prior to the course meeting. If during an attendance time window a student has met the requirements for “present” as defined above, an instructor must record them as such. Excused absences are at the discretion of the course instructor and may include, but are not limited to cases of personal illness, family emergency, approved representation of the University at an event, etc. The instructor may require written justification and verification for an excused absence. An absence for any reason does not lessen a student’s responsibility to meet the requirements of the course.

NOTE: Veterans Administration regulations concerning class attendance, conduct, and rate of progress are in effect at the University <https://myumo.moc.edu/academic/registrar/Veterans%20Affairs/default.aspx>. Withdrawal from or unsatisfactory completion of courses may result in termination of veterans’ benefits and may require return of previously awarded benefits for that term of enrollment. All students eligible for veteran’s benefits should familiarize themselves with the University’s policies on attendance and academic eligibility for continuous enrollment.

Administrative Withdrawal

Students are responsible for contacting their respective course instructors regarding absences. Students will be administratively withdrawn from any class for which they fail to attend and/or have no contact with the instructor for two consecutive weeks (14 calendar days) at any point in the course regardless of class length or delivery mode. If such a withdrawal occurs, the student will be dropped from all future courses for that academic semester. If this occurs after the published last day to withdraw, the grade will be recorded as an F unless an exception is made due to extenuating circumstances by the VPAA or AVPAA. It is important to note that a 14 day lapse may occur between academic semesters (e.g. a student is absent the last week of the preceding semester or session and is also absent the first week of the following semester of session). Instructors should notify their direct supervisor (Department/Division Chair) *and* the Director of Traditional Academic Advising or the Director of Advising for Adult and Graduate Programs when any student is absent from the first week of classes, or for greater than 14 calendar days. In the event of a 14-day lapse, the supervisor should notify the VPAA, AVPAA, and the Director of Financial Aid after verification that attendance has been correctly recorded. Should a student make a request to withdraw to any University employee, the employee should notify the appropriate chain of command (see above) and direct the student to submit either the [University of Mount Olive Drop Form](#) , or [University of Mount Olive Separation Request](#) and submit it to their advisor.

The University Office of Financial Aid (FA), Registrar’s office (RO), and Office of Academic Affairs (AA) routinely monitor attendance reports from Moodle to determine when students have been absent from all courses for a period of 14 days (14 day attendance lapse). At the point where a 14 day attendance lapse is noted, the UMO Financial Aid office issues an enrollment confirmation notice (ENC) to the student, the student’s academic advisor, and appropriate location director/division chair. If the student fails to respond in 7 days from the point an ENC is issued (21 days after their last present value was recorded), the UMO FA office must process a withdrawal and R2T4. If a student never attends a course, the last date of attendance for withdrawal purposes defaults to the last date of attendance for that student at the University, which may be in the previous academic semester.

NOTE: If a student is absent from all classes for a period of 14 consecutive calendar days, the University will contact the student to determine their plan for returning to class. If the student fails to respond in 7 additional days or it is determined that the student will not be returning, the University will process an administrative withdrawal from both the students' current course and all future courses the student is enrolled in. For more information please refer to National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, Federal Register: October 29, 2010; Volume 75, Number 209 pages 55831-566975).

Attendance Tracking Procedures and Sanctions for University Instructors:

The accurate and prompt recording of attendance for all students is the responsibility of the assigned professor and will be monitored via "Attendance Lapse" reports by the deans, advising directors, AVPAA, and VPAA. When an attendance lapse/issue is noted by a school dean or AVPAA will notify the course instructor of the attendance lapse/issue. Instructors have 48 hours to bring their records into compliance. Failure to correct the issue presented will constitute a formal performance issue. Attendance lapses/issues include: attendance values changed after 24 hours from the end of the course meeting, failure to take attendance for student(s) in their course abiding by the above procedures, or inaccurate records for attendance values. Falsification of attendance record by an instructor may result in termination or contract non-renewal.

Using the Attendance Lapse Report in the Report Center, deans, assistant/associate dean, and directors of advising will be able to monitor instructors who fail to record an attendance value for a student on their roster within a 7 day window, and monitor lapses in attendance. Notifications of attendance lapse/issues must be corrected by the instructor within 48 hours, and the violation of procedure will be documented in the office of the Dean (see above). If an instructor fails to record attendance for a two week period or greater (monitored by the Attendance Lapse Report), they will be immediately placed on a Performance Improvement Plan by the appropriate school dean.

Adjunct Instructors that accumulate 3 or more attendance lapses/issues in the same semester, which are not corrected within the 48 hour timeframe will be barred from teaching UMO courses for a period of time determined by the Dean in consultation with Academic Affairs. Such a ban must, at minimum, remain in effect for the remainder of the Academic semester. If the magnitude or frequency of such violations is significant, or if records are falsified, additional sanctions may be imposed including being dropped from the list of adjunct instructors for the University.

Full time, Part Time, Allied, or Staff Instructors with 3 or more attendance lapses/issues in the same semester, in which are not corrected within the 48 hour timeframe will be immediately issued a Performance Improvement Plan from the appropriate Dean. If the instructor continues to violate procedure in the future, this may result in, but is not limited to failure to receive a merit increase, or in extreme cases, non-renewal of contract. If the magnitude or frequency of such violations is significant, or if records are falsified, additional sanctions may be imposed including termination.

CONTACTS

Office of Academic Affairs

APPROVED BY

Offices of Academic Affairs

Executive Council

APPENDICES (INCLUDING ANY FORMS/INSTRUCTIONS)

[University of Mount Olive Drop Form](#)

[University of Mount Olive Separation Request](#)

HISTORY/REVISION DATES

Original adoption date(s): January 1, 2017

Last Amended date: July 2, 2020 (edits to fit current academic structures)

End Date for Policy (if applicable):

RELATED COMPLIANCE STANDARDS/EXTERNAL POLICY DOCUMENTS:

Standard 10.1 Academic Policies