

SCHOOL POLICY

Section Title: Academic Matters

Policy Name: Student Attendance and Course Engagement

Responsible Executive: Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

Responsible Office: Office of the Registrar

Originally Adopted: 11/18/2025

Revisions:

I. PURPOSE

This policy defines the expectations for student attendance and participation across all instructional modalities at the Rutgers School of Public Health. The policy also defines allowable absences and corresponding responsibilities of students and instructors.

II. ACCOUNTABILITY

The Office of the Registrar is responsible for implementing this policy under the general direction of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs with additional support from the Office of Student Experiences, Public Health Practice, and Alumni Affairs. Instructors are responsible for clearly communicating attendance and participation expectations and for applying them consistently. Students are responsible for meeting attendance and participation requirements and for notifying instructors promptly about absences or barriers to engagement.

III. APPLICABILITY

Regular engagement—whether through live attendance or consistent participation in online learning—supports academic success, professional responsibility, and the integrity of the learning experience.

A. General Expectations

In-Person, Hybrid, Converged and Remote (Synchronous) Courses:

Students are expected to attend scheduled class sessions held either in person (on campus) or remotely (e.g., via Zoom) at the designated class meeting time and through the designated instructional modality. Students are responsible for work missed during any absence from class.

Online (Asynchronous) Courses:

Students enrolled in online asynchronous courses are expected to log in to Canvas, the learning management system, weekly; engage meaningfully with course materials; and complete assigned activities and assessments according to the posted schedule. Consistent engagement serves as the attendance equivalent for these courses.

At the beginning of each semester, instructors must provide written attendance and participation expectations in the course syllabus, including any grading implications or penalties for lack of attendance or engagement. These expectations may vary by course but are subject to the conditions below.

B. Excused Absences

Approved Accommodations:

Absences or modified participation related to documented accommodations through the Rutgers Office of Disability Services (ODS) will be honored in accordance with university policy.

Religious Observances:

Absences due to religious beliefs or observances are excused consistent with Rutgers University policy. Students must inform instructors in advance and make alternative arrangements for meeting course requirements. (For a list of Major Religious Holy Days and Observances, visit <https://diversity.rutgers.edu/RespectFaithPractices>; however, this list is not exhaustive.)

Health or Family Emergencies:

Students who miss class due to a family or individual health emergency shall be excused with medical documentation (e.g., doctor's note). (Instructors may consider allowing one excused absence without medical documentation.) If the emergency is prolonged or the student is incapacitated, the student or a family member/legal guardian should notify the Assistant Dean for Student Experiences and Alumni Affairs. Students missing a significant portion of coursework shall consider options such as a leave of absence or course withdrawal, in accordance with School policies.

C. Student Additional Responsibilities

- Students are expected to register for courses that align with their personal and professional schedules, ensuring they can attend for the full duration of each class session without consistent late arrival or early departure.
- Students must ensure that their course registration complies with applicable visa, scholarship, or sponsorship requirements, as relevant.
- Students are expected to follow the instructor's attendance and participation policies as stated in the course syllabus.
- Students must notify their instructors as soon as possible regarding any anticipated or unexpected absences.
- Students are responsible for arranging to make up missed work, if permitted for the course, within a reasonable time frame as determined by the instructor.
- Students are expected to participate in remote (live) classes from a safe and appropriate environment; they may not attend or engage in class while driving or operating a vehicle.
- Students enrolled in online asynchronous courses must log in and participate regularly to remain engaged in the course.
- Students who register for a course and do not attend or stop attending or participating in the course, must officially drop or withdraw from the course within the announced deadlines, or they will receive an "F".
- All students are expected to meet course attendance and participation requirements in accordance with federal financial aid and university engagement reporting standards.
- Students enrolled in remote (live) courses are expected to have their cameras turned on during class to support engagement, foster course community, and encourage focused attention. Instructors may exercise discretion in applying this expectation and may allow camera-off exceptions when appropriate. Students are

encouraged to use a neutral or professional virtual background when needed (the School provides several virtual background options).

D. Instructor Discretion and Responsibility

- Instructors are expected to clearly outline their attendance and engagement policy in the course syllabus.
- At the beginning of each semester, instructors must confirm student attendance in accordance with federal financial aid requirements. The Office of the Registrar distributes attendance rosters for this purpose.
- Instructors may assess a grade penalty for unexcused absences if such penalties are explicitly stated in the syllabus.
- Instructors may count excessive tardiness or early departures as absences, as described in their course policy.
- Except for absences due to religious beliefs, instructors have the authority to determine whether the number or duration of a student's absences is excessive based on the nature of the course and the stated attendance expectations.
- Instructors may, at their discretion, establish procedures to allow students with valid absences to make up missed class work.
- Instructors are expected to report patterns of non-attendance or non-engagement—such as repeated missed classes, failure to participate in online activities, or absence from required synchronous sessions—to the Office of Student Experiences, Public Health Practice, and Alumni Affairs.
- If participation is included as part of the course grade, instructors must clearly define the criteria and expectations in the syllabus. Class participation should constitute no more than 10% of the total course grade. Instructors should provide an explanation of how participation grades will be assigned.
- Instructor discretion in applying attendance and participation policies for their course must be exercised consistently, equitably, and in alignment with School and University policies.