

Guidelines on the topic of

Class Attendance

as part of the Handbook for Study, Teaching and Learning

Please note that the English version of the present guideline is for your convenience only and is not legally binding. Only the German version is legally binding.

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a) Legal Basis

Due to the Right to Freedom of Study pursuant to Section 4(2) Sentence 3 NRW Higher Education Act (HG), from a legal point of view, students cannot be obligated to regularly attend classes in an unrestricted way.

Freedom to study means that the individual student must have a certain leeway in approaching their studies, i.e. in choosing whether to learn the course material by attending lectures or through self-study. For this reason, lecture attendance cannot be defined as a requirement for an assessment of the student.

For certain class formats, however, attendance can be required as an exception, i.e. when the learning objectives cannot be achieved without the active participation of the students in the class. This is the case for e.g. lab internships, excursions and field trips, colloquia, projects, tutorials and seminars.

b) Implementation

To require the student to attend certain classes, there has to be a sound legal basis – it is not possible for instructors to introduce such a requirement whenever they deem it necessary. The legal basis is provided by the Examination Regulations of the faculty or the course of study in question.

If the student's attendance shall be mandatory for a certain class, in accordance with the above stated principles, this has to be laid down in the Examination Regulations. A definition of how many class hours may be missed by the student and, if applicable, rules about how a student can make up for missed lessons, are to be provided. The number of classes a student is allowed to miss depends on the number of class sessions in the term. Depending on the course content, missing 10 to 30 percent of the classes may be acceptable (including missed classes for which the student has a medical certificate). Taking into account the type and scope of the class and whether the learning objectives of the class can be attained, the instructor defines the number of classes a student may miss during the term. The instructor publishes this number in the CAMPUS system and also announces it at the beginning of the course. He or she also announces at the beginning of the course whether it is possible to make up for any further missed class sessions by completing certain additional tasks, so that the learning objectives can be met.

Furthermore, in the class description in the module catalogue, class attendance requirements are to be listed in the "Voraussetzungen" (course requirements) section.

As long as the legal basis for mandatory class attendance is not provided by the Examination Regulations, students cannot be required to regularly attend classes, regardless of the type of class. If a student is debarred from taking a final class exam due to irregular attendance, this decision on the part of the faculty could become the subject of legal action.