

Guidelines on extra-curricular activities affecting attendance

1. Background to Policy

The University sets an expectation of 25 hours of student work per UoC. For a full-time student (enrolled in 24 UoC per session), the average workload over the 16 weeks of the teaching, study and examination period is approximately 37.5 hours per week.

Attendance at scheduled teaching activities is also governed by the University's requirement that students attend at least 80% of all classes. In general, lectures are not considered compulsory, but most other teaching activities are. Details about attendance requirements for individual SOMS courses are provided in Course Outlines. (N.B. For penalties to apply, records of attendance must be maintained.)

The University acknowledges that students are involved in many extra-curricular activities throughout their studies. The School of Medical Sciences is generally supportive of students' activities but must be confident that these do not significantly impact on attendance at scheduled teaching activities or completion of assessment requirements.

This document relates to the following extra-curricular activities:

1. Employment.
2. Voluntary work.
3. Sport, music or other recreational activities.
4. Student-related activities e.g. conferences, courses
5. Academic activities e.g. conferences, courses.

The Faculty and/or University have existing guidelines and/or policies covering non-attendance relating to Special Consideration, religious holidays, being a member of the Australian Defence Reserves or being part of the Elite Athletes, Performers and Leadership Program.

2. Aims of the guidelines on extra-curricular activities affecting attendance

- Ensure students understand the possible consequences of failing to meet attendance and assessment requirements because of extra-curricular activities.
- Ensure that processes exist which allow the School to support students in extra-curricular activities without adversely affecting academic progress.

- Ensure students understand the process of obtaining permission from the Course Convenor to attend extra-curricular activities during session.
- Ensure that staff understand the circumstances and processes to allow students to attend extra-curricular activities.
- Ensure students are aware that, although the School will assist students in determining whether or not any extra-curricular activity will adversely affect their performance, the final responsibility for achieving satisfactory results in each course remains with students.

3. Guidelines

1. Failure to meet attendance requirements because of extra-curricular activities will not be accepted unless prior approval is obtained.
2. Failure to meet assessment requirements (e.g. failing to submit assignment by deadline, failing to attend an examination) because of extra-curricular activities will not be accepted unless prior approval is obtained.
3. Under no circumstances will external work requirements be accepted for non-attendance. The School understands the need for many students to work part-time but this must be arranged so as it does not affect attendance.
4. Approval for non-attendance will be considered for the following activities:
 - A single, significant activity related to voluntary work. Note that regular voluntary work will not be accepted for recurrent absences.
 - A single, significant activity related to sport, music or other recreational activity being undertaken at an elite or semi-professional level. Note that regular sporting or other recreational activities will not be accepted for recurrent absences.
 - Attendance at student-related conferences/courses organised by student organisations or health professional groups and national or international education meetings.
 - Attendance at conference for academic purposes including presenting papers from Honours projects.
5. Approval to attend an extra-curricular activity must be obtained before the event and will not be taken into consideration retrospectively if a student has failed to meet attendance or assessment requirements.
6. Approval to attend an extra-curricular activity does not exempt a student from meeting attendance or assessment requirements. Approval will depend on:
 - The overall impact on attendance and whether class or other teaching activities can be made up at an alternative time to ensure that the course

requirements have been met. Students requesting long periods of absence will be required to take leave and attempt the course later.

- The nature of the assessment and whether an alternative mechanism is available to meet the assessment requirement. This may include extension of a deadline for submission of an assignment or sitting an examination at a later time. As a rule, additional examinations cannot be held and a student would be required to sit a missed examination when supplementary or later rounds are being conducted. This may delay a student's progress.

Approval will not be granted if alternative arrangements for meeting attendance or assessment requirements cannot be made.

7. Approval will also depend on the student's academic performance and will not be granted if disruption to the student's progress would be considered disadvantageous.

4. Obtaining permission to attend extra-curricular activities

1. Approval to be absent from a course for one week or more, or when the 80% attendance rule may be contravened, must be obtained from the Course Convenor. Students must contact the Course Convenor as early as possible to ensure that alternative arrangements can be made. Late requests are unlikely to be approved, as alternate arrangements cannot be made without sufficient notice.
2. If temporary absence from a course is approved, the student must inform the School of Medical Sciences student administrator (Carmen Robinson).

The School of Medical Sciences will not consider financial consequences to students (e.g. loss of registration fees for conference, loss of grant) if students have already made arrangements to attend extra-curricular activities without approval.