From: Faculty Development
To: KU Lawrence Faculty and Staff; KU Graduate Teaching Assistants
Subject: Guidance on grading attendance for fall 2020
Date: Wednesday, August 5, 2020 2:08:15 PM
Attachments: image001.png
image003.png

Colleagues,
Class attendance policies can increase student engagement and many of us use attendance points in calculating the final grades in our courses. ***This fall, using attendance as part of grading will be complicated by a number of factors that make synchronous participation in lectures, activities and exams difficult for some students.*** These factors include:

- Some students' limited access to adequate technology.
- Time zone differences for students participating remotely, especially international students.
- Inability to attend classes in-person because of public health directives (quarantine).

University Senate Regulations are clear that instructors control attendance and grading policies for their courses. ***This semester, however, students are facing many unique challenges and we encourage you to take attendance not for grading, but as a way to monitor student engagement so you can reach out and help students who might be struggling.*** Consistent class attendance, whether in-person or online, is an important indication of engagement and student success. However, we do not want to penalize students who are facing health, technology or other challenges to synchronous participation.
Students who are ill or who are taking steps to protect their own health or the health of others should be given an excused absence (no doctor's note required) from in-person class activities if they have COVID-19 symptoms or are following state or local quarantine guidelines. I encourage you to include clear health and attendance guidance for students in your syllabi. I have included some suggested language you can use or adapt.

The following is suggested language you can add to your course syllabus to communicate COVID-related attendance guidance:

> *Please use the CVKey app for self-screening to help determine if you should attend in-person class activities. If you choose not to use the app or do not have a compatible device, please use the paper health assessment form. The app and the paper form are available at cvkey.ku.edu.*
>
> *You will be given an excused absence from in-person class activities (no doctor's note required) if you answer yes to any of the questions in the app or on the paper form. Symptoms and other guidance in the app and on the paper form may change based on new federal, state and local health recommendations and requirements.*
>
> *It is important that you spend the necessary time working in this course to achieve the expected outcomes by the end of the term. If you face challenges to fully participating at any time during the semester, please let me know, and please contact me if you expect to miss class. I am available and ready to support your success. Additionally, if you need to report an extended illness or serious accident, please contact Student Support and Case Management at course-adapt@ku.edu or 785-864-4060. A case manager will send email notifications to your instructor(s) on your behalf. When you are able, you will need to follow up with your professors to coordinate a temporary arrangement regarding missed instruction and coursework.*

Faculty colleagues at the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) and staff at the Center for Online and Distance Learning (CODL) can assist you in strategizing ways to adjust the way you measure your engagement with students away from the traditional taking of attendance for a grade in class. KU's new FlexTeaching website also

has information on attendance and student engagement.

Qwickly Attendance Tool

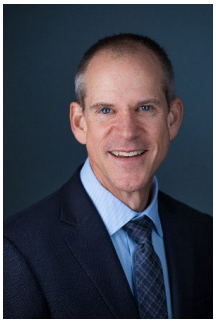
With a mix of in-person, hybrid and online classes, knowing who is showing up and engaged is harder than ever. KU is expanding the capabilities of Qwickly Attendance, a tool you may have used in the past to manually take attendance in Blackboard. Now with Qwickly Attendance, you can allow students to check in themselves, whether they are attending a class in-person or online. Qwickly Attendance keeps track of attendance throughout the semester and provides a dashboard where you can see information at a glance. Students can also track their own attendance in each class.
More information about Qwickly Attendance is available on KU's Blackboard website.

Responsibilities of Students

Students should contact their instructor(s) directly to report an absence. However, students who need to report an extended illness or serious accident should contact Student Support and Case Management at course-adapt@ku.edu or 785-864-4060. A case manager will send email notifications to the student's instructor(s) on the student's behalf. When they are able, the student will need to follow up with professors to coordinate a temporary arrangement regarding missed instruction and coursework. Please see studentaffairs.ku.edu/student-emergencies.

A Collaborative Effort

The guidance I've included here on attendance and student engagement was developed following input from a number of different groups that were asked in early July what guidance the University should provide instructors when dealing with the challenges they will face regarding attendance in fall 2020. Groups included the Faculty Rights, Privileges and Responsibilities committee of Faculty Senate; the Teaching and Learning Design Team; the Faculty Success Design Team; Academic Success; CTE and CODL.
Thank you for your attention and input.
Sincerely,
Chris



J. Christopher Brown
Vice Provost for Faculty Development
Jcbrown2@ku.edu