

UMKC School of Law Attendance Policy

Preamble

All ABA-accredited law schools are required to abide by the Standards for Approval of Law Schools of the American Bar Association, including the rule that, "A law school shall require regular and punctual class attendance"*. This provision carries with it a clear, affirmative duty on the part of each institution:

- A law school shall demonstrate that it has adopted and enforces policies insuring that individual students satisfy the requirements of this Standard, including the implementation of policies relating to class scheduling, attendance, and limitation on employment**.

Consistent with these directives, the UMKC School of Law faculty believes that dependability is an essential characteristic of a good lawyer. The Law School's objective is not only to ensure academic success, of which attendance is a major component, but also the development of good professional habits.

Over the years the Law School faculty has experimented with different attendance policies and has found that, without such a policy, attendance becomes noticeably lax, which in turn can contribute to poor performance on the bar examination.

Moreover, the faculty recognizes that sound academic reasons exist for adopting a uniform attendance policy that allows some classes to require even more stringent attendance requirements.

Finally, the faculty recognizes that, if it imposes a mandatory attendance policy on students, the faculty also needs to impose compulsory attendance-taking on itself, using a standardized system, to ensure uniformity, fairness and predictability in the implementation of its attendance policy.

* Standard 304(d), Standards for Approval of Law Schools of the American Bar Association.

** Interpretation 304-6, Standards for Approval of Law Schools of the American Bar Association.

Procedures

1. Every faculty member shall take attendance each day of class by distributing a sign-in sheet consisting of a current class roster, or a suitable alternative. If a sign-in sheet is used, each student in attendance must sign the roster next to his or her name. The faculty member or her administrative assistant shall deliver completed attendance sheets or the results of the suitable alternative method of taking attendance to the Director of Student Services promptly.
2. Each student shall be allowed absences up to, but not exceeding, two times the number of credit hours in a course. (For example, a student in a three-hour class that meets in two 75-minute sessions each week may miss a total of four such sessions. A student in a three-hour class that meets in three 50-minute sessions may miss a total of six such sessions.) In their discretion, faculty members may require fewer, but may not allow more, absences. If a faculty member intends to impose a more stringent attendance policy, she must notify students of the policy by announcement in class or in writing or by electronic posting during the first week of the semester.
3. Each absence exceeding the limitation imposed by paragraph 2, above, shall result in a one-step letter grade reduction for the course to be assessed by the Dean's Office, e.g.,

from "B" to "B-" or from "A-" to "B+". (For example, a student who misses five classes in a three hour class that meets in two 75-minute sessions will be assessed a one-step grade penalty. If that student misses a sixth class, he or she will be assessed an additional one-step grade penalty.) A faculty member may in his or her discretion in consultation with the Associate Dean impose other academic requirements in lieu of the grade reduction.

4. Accumulated absences exceeding three times the number of credit hours in a course shall result in the student's administrative withdrawal from the course provided the student is in good standing at that time, i.e., provided the student has not earned the grade of "F" for work completed at the time of withdrawal. Students who are not in good standing will receive a grade of "WF" for the course.
5. Students may appeal a grade-assessment or involuntary course withdrawal to the Associate Dean in writing within one week of notification of the assessment/withdrawal.
6. This policy does not affect a faculty member's guidelines for the turning in of out-of-class assignments and papers. The individual faculty member, not the Dean's office, has the sole discretion to award late penalties for failing to turn in an assignment or paper on time or to excuse the late handing in of assignments and papers. For this reason, the Dean's office only oversees student absences from class.
7. Students and faculty will be responsible for monitoring their own compliance with this policy.
8. Falsification of attendance records constitutes a violation of the UMKC School of Law Honor Code.