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BACHELOR OF EDUCATION ATTENDANCE POLICY (Effective September 2014)¹

The University of Manitoba Faculty of Education has a social mandate to ensure that graduating Teacher Candidates are caring, skilled educators who are worthy of the public trust endowed upon them. In fulfilling this mandate, the Faculty of Education has developed comprehensive programs of education and experience to ensure that graduates meet these high expectations. Unlike non-professional education programs, where students can pick and choose their education and experiences based on personal preferences, the Bachelor of Education degree requires students to attend and participate actively in all components of the program; classes and practicum.

The Faculty of Education, Bachelor of Education Attendance Policy states:

“Regular attendance is expected of all students in all courses, including practicum. An instructor or the Director of School Experiences can initiate proceedings to debar a student from attending classes, practicum, and final examinations where unexcused absences exceed three hours of scheduled classes in any one term.”

Definitions:

- “Unexcused” absence: any absence other than for the reasons listed below as excused absences or any excused absence without appropriate documentation.
- “Excused” absence: considered to be an absence judged by the instructor to be due to:
 - Extenuating medical or compassionate circumstances and largely beyond the control of the student (e.g., illness, surgery, death in the family, or illness of a child);
 - University representation: Students who represent the U of M are expected to be ambassadors for the University and faculties are expected to try to accommodate the need for them to be away occasionally. These students are expected to make arrangements with their instructors in advance of the term commencing by letter indicating the reason for the absence(s), the number of class hours expected to be missed and provide a plan for making up class time and essential learning to be approved by the instructor. It should be noted that missing University of Manitoba classes for practicum related experiences (field trips, coaching, or supervision.) is not considered to be university representation; or
 - As protected by the provisions of the Manitoba Human Rights Code.

¹ Passed by the Faculty of Education Faculty Council on October 22, 2013.

POLICY PROCEDURES

Factors to be considered when enforcing the attendance policy:

- *Judgement:* Instructors/faculty members/faculty advisors shall exercise discretion using the above definitions to determine whether an absence is excused or not.
- *Oversight:* As the Faculty does have a Senate-approved attendance policy, instructors are expected to track student absences, include the Faculty attendance policy in all course outlines, and make it clear at the beginning of the course that all absences from class should be communicated to them ahead of time. **It is the student's responsibility to contact instructors regarding absences.** In the event that the student can only make one phone call or email it is recommended that they contact Students Services to request that all instructors be notified. The student is responsible to follow up with individual instructors.²
Instructors shall inform the student and the department head of instances in which the student has exceeded three contact hours of unexcused absences in a particular course.
- *Privacy:* All medical information about students must be kept in strict confidence.
- *Student Accessibility Services:* Instructors who become aware of a student medical diagnosis or chronic health issue shall refer the student to Student Accessibility Services.

Process for responding to unexcused absences of more than three contact hours in an individual course:

- The instructor shall notify the student with a due process letter indicating that the student has exceeded three contact hours and is at risk of debarment and copy the appropriate Department Head
- The relevant Department Head will contact the student to discuss the absences and the implications of further absences (i.e., possible debarment).

² We recommend that an explanation of the definitions of and distinctions between “excused”, “university representation”, and “unexcused absence” appear in each instructor’s course syllabus.