



After-Degree Bachelor of Education Attendance Procedures

This After-Degree Bachelor of Education Attendance Procedures document is supplementary to Section 5.1.6 of the Undergraduate Calendar which outlines Faculty of Education's Senate approved *Attendance at Class/Debarment Policy* as well as Section 3.1 of the B.Ed. Program Practicum Guide.

Attendance Policy Rationale

The B.Ed. program provides Teacher Candidates with an induction into the teaching profession. As an intense, demanding, and highly participatory program of studies, Teacher Candidates are expected to demonstrate high levels of academic and professional integrity akin to practicing teachers. Such integrity is demonstrated in part by a commitment to and attendance at all classes, program days, and practicum days. It is important that Teacher Candidates understand and value the efforts of all who contribute to their learning (e.g., instructors, field partners, administrators, peers, and staff).

Regular attendance and punctuality are professional commitments and essential to success in becoming a teacher. Absenteeism and tardiness have a negative impact on the breadth and depth of Teacher Candidates' professional learning as well as on the relationships established with others in the program.

If you are absent for extenuating medical or compassionate circumstances, a registered disability with SAS, religious observance, or university representation, your absences will be excused. You are, however, responsible for contacting your instructor in a timely manner. In addition, you are fully accountable for all the learning experiences and content you missed and for completing the learning accommodations that your instructor assigns (e.g., additional reading or make-up assignments). If you are absent for any other reason (e.g., work, vacation, job interview, etc.), you will not be excused and your instructors are not under any obligation to accommodate your learning. You cannot miss practicum days for course-related activities. Note that absences cannot exceed 20% of class time for any reason, excused or unexcused (e.g., 7 hours of a 36-hour course; 8 hours of a 39-hour course).

Teacher Candidates' Responsibilities Regarding Attendance

Be sure that you fully understand the attendance requirements and processes for all courses, including on-campus, school-based, and practicum.

Attend class regularly and contribute to a respectful and supportive learning environment: Regular attendance and respectful contributions to your class learning community is expected. In practice, this means arriving on time to each class, staying in class for the full duration of the class, and actively participating in all learning experiences. It also means restricting your use of digital devices (e.g., cellular phones, laptops) during classes to learning experiences that are a part of the course as facilitated by your instructor.

Professional protocol: Regardless of the nature of your absence, you are expected to follow professional protocol when you need to miss any time from a course or school practicum. This protocol aligns with the expectations of teaching professionals when reporting absences from school.

If you miss one class or 2 to 3 hours in a course (less than 10%): Advise your instructor(s) as soon as you can that you will be absent and provide the reason for your absence. Instructors will not penalize you for excused absences, but you are responsible for any parts of the course you miss and you may be assigned make-up work.

If you accumulate two missed classes in a course or 4-7 hours (less than 20%): Inform the Office of the Associate Dean Undergraduate (ADU) and provide documentation to verify your medical or compassionate circumstance. The ADU's Office will inform the Department Head and all of your instructors so that they can arrange learning accommodations for you. Upon returning to the Faculty, you must speak directly to each instructor about make-up work. Problematic absenteeism is defined as missing 10% or more of course time, and if unexcused, may constitute grounds for debarment.

If you accumulate three missed classes in a course or 8 to 9 hours (20% or more): Contact the Associate Dean Undergraduate for direction, decision, and program planning moving forward. You will be required to meet with the Department Head and/or Associate Dean. Missing 20% or more of course time, excused or unexcused, is considered excessive and normally beyond instructors' abilities to accommodate in ways that maintain the academic integrity of the course. This level of absenteeism may require a Teacher Candidate to withdraw from a course(s) or the program for the term.

If you arrive late or leave early, missed time can accumulate into hours absent.

Manitoba Education and Training mandates the number of days that teacher candidates are required to fulfill in their school practicum courses. Attendance for the total number of days all day every day is required, and therefore, any absences during practicum, excused or unexcused, are recorded on Summative Evaluations and must be made up in consultation with the Faculty Advisor, Cooperating Teacher, and/or School Experiences Office, usually at the end of the practicum block. You may not miss on-campus classes to attend practicum-related activities.

If you are going to miss part or all of a practicum day as an unexcused absence: All unexcused absences of any duration (whether a few hours, half or full day) must be reported to the Director of the School Experiences Office (SEO) immediately. Failure to do so may result in debarment from the practicum course.

Advise your Faculty Advisor, Cooperating Teacher, and practicum school office as soon as you can, but no later than 8:00 a.m. on any day that you will be absent, and provide the reason for your absence.

Additionally, you must follow any other aspects of your practicum school's protocol for reporting teacher absences. All missed practicum days or partial days must be made up in consultation with your Faculty Advisor, Cooperating Teacher, and/or the School Experience Offices. See the current *B.Ed. Program Practicum Guide* for additional information related to absences from practicum and requirements for punctuality.

If you accumulate two or more missed practicum days as excused absences:

Inform your Faculty Advisor, Cooperating Teacher, practicum school office, and the Director of the School Experiences Office as soon as you can, but no later than 8:00 a.m. on any day that you will be absent. You will need to arrange to make up all missed practicum days.

You may need to provide documentation to verify your medical or compassionate circumstance and be required to attend a meeting with the Director of School Experiences Office and Associate Dean Undergraduate. While we will make every effort to accommodate excused absences, the SEO cannot guarantee that it will be possible to make up more than three missed days in a practicum course.

For this reason, three or more missed days may result in failure to complete the practicum course and/or delayed graduation. See the current *B.Ed. Program Practicum Guide* for additional information related to absences from practicum and requirements for punctuality.

Instructor's Responsibilities Regarding Attendance

Provide learning accommodations: Teacher Candidates are not to be penalized for missing a class because of extenuating medical or compassionate circumstances, a registered disability with SAS, religious observance, or university representation. Use your discretion to provide reasonable learning accommodations which will allow the Teacher Candidate to satisfy missed coursework, even if it is not exactly the same as the work completed in class by other Teacher Candidates. Instructors should check that make-up work is completed satisfactorily and returned, but are not obliged to mark it.

Document and consult: Document the attendance of Teacher Candidates in your course. If you become aware that a Teacher Candidate has missed two days of classes or more (*4 to 7 hours, less than 20%*), contact the Teacher Candidate by email expressing your concern, and then inform the relevant Department Head and Office of the Associate Dean Undergraduate for follow-up. In the case of excessive absences from practicum, the Instructor of Record (SEO Director) will consult with the Associate Dean Undergraduate.

FAQs

What if I have a really good reason for being absent?

NO ONE — not your instructors, the Associate Dean Undergraduate, your Cooperating Teacher, Faculty Advisor, or the Director of School Experiences — will excuse you from classes for any reason other than medical or compassionate circumstances, a registered disability with SAS, religious observance, or university representation.

When you are employed as a teacher these are similar reasons that will justify your absence from school.

As a teacher candidate you will find that many instructors, faculty advisors, and cooperating teachers will draw conclusions about your professionalism and commitment to teaching by your attitude towards attendance while completing your B.Ed. Program.

What if I feel I have to be absent and it is not excusable? If at some point during your program you feel you *must* be absent—because of bad weather, for example—or you *choose* to be absent—because you want to work or attend a family wedding, **you must take responsibility for that absence.**

The procedure to follow is this:

- ***before the absence or immediately after, contact your instructors, in person or by e-mail;***
- ***if you accumulated two days of missed classes over the term or more (4 to 7 hours, less than 20%), contact your instructors, the relevant Department Head, and the Office of the Associate Dean Undergraduate;***
- ***if your absence includes practicum, contact your Faculty Advisor, Cooperating Teacher, School Office, and the Director of School Experience; and***
- ***if you accumulated 20% or more of missed time in any course, on-campus, school-based, or practicum that is unexcused, contact the relevant Department Head or Director of the School Experiences Office, and the Office of the Associate Dean.***

Instructors, administrators, faculty advisors, and cooperating teachers are usually understanding and flexible. Nevertheless, none of them is under any obligation to plan learning accommodations for you, and

you must be prepared for the fact that almost any absence (other than for excusable reasons) may be perceived as a lack of commitment on your part.

What if the weather is bad and I live outside the city? Should the weather suddenly turn bad, highways close, and travel is not recommended, your safety comes first. Your absence will be excused and accommodated on compassionate grounds. Missed practicum days for snow or school closure also have to be made up. Additional information is available in the *B.Ed. Program Practicum Guide*. Some of your instructors, administrators, faculty advisors, and cooperating teachers live out of the city, too; they monitor the weather and make special arrangements to be sure they can get where they have to be the next day if bad weather is coming. If you live outside of the city, consider arranging for a place to stay overnight in Winnipeg with a friend, family member, or hotel when weather is a problem. Always carry an overnight bag.

What if I have to go to a medical appointment? When scheduling any personal appointments, including routine medical, dental, or eye care, teacher candidates are expected to make arrangements that do not conflict with scheduled classes or practicum experiences. Excused absences for non-routine appointments for yourself or your children can be negotiated and accommodated.

What if I am arriving late for the start of classes in September or January or after a long weekend? You will be informed well in advance of the start date for your academic year and your weekly schedule of program days, classes, and practicum days. Plan to be on time for the start of academic terms, as well as on days before and after long weekends and holidays. If you must miss, follow the procedures outlined above: *get in touch with your instructors*.

What if my family surprised me with a vacation or I have a destination wedding? Your commitment to your program must outweigh an opportunity for vacation or any other form of elective travel. Make sure your family and friends know your schedule well ahead of time and do not plan travel without your input. Plan your vacations during your scheduled holiday time, as do teachers working in schools. Couples planning destination weddings do so knowing that many of their closest friends and family members will be unable to attend.

What if my practicum school principal needs supervisors for a school trip, a coach for a tournament, or a substitute for a few days, but I have on-campus classes? It is not fair of anyone to ask you to miss classes in your B.Ed. program in order to help them out of a difficult situation, even if the timing is close to the end of your program, and you would love to do it. Your program is your last opportunity to be a learner rather than a teacher with full responsibility for students.

What if I have an interview for a teaching job? Job interviews, including those for teaching positions, is not an excused absence. You cannot miss classes or practicum experiences or for job interviews.

What if I don't have child care? It is expected that you will arrange ongoing, dependable care providers so that you can attend your classes as scheduled. In exceptional circumstances, we recognize that you may be unable to attend a class because of an unavoidable family responsibility, and if so, it will be excused and accommodated on compassionate grounds.

In the end, the decision about whether or not to miss classes on any occasion is yours. You remain responsible for all the work and class activities you miss. You must weigh the importance of your reason for being absent against the potential for negative fall-out for you.

Notes: This document is modelled after one recently developed for initial teacher education at the University of Western Ontario, and was influenced by a review of other related policies from the University of British Columbia, University of Toronto, and the University of Regina.