

# Attendance Policy

## Attendance Policy

Attendance and engagement in each class meeting are essential for student learning and instructor evaluation. The policy statements below detail the nature of the required attendance for courses according to the various modalities of instruction, including on-campus, online, and at residential seminars and intensives.

In addition, if at any time after the first week of class a student is absent from the University for 14 consecutive calendar days, and no contact has been made by the student indicating intent to continue, it is possible that the student be dropped/withdrawn from the course and/or administratively withdrawn from the University.

### Attendance Requirements for Residential Courses:

Students in residential/hybrid courses must attend all campus-based course meetings as scheduled. Students must maintain a minimum of 70% attendance for each course in each quarter. If a student cannot attend a class due to a personal or medical emergency, the student must notify their instructor at the earliest available opportunity and provide a note from a physician to the instructor. The student must make up the seat time by arranging an alternate class attendance and making up any assignments associated with the missed class, as agreed upon with their faculty and program chair.

Students who fail to maintain regular attendance may be terminated from their degree program and/or receive a failing/non-passing grade for the course. Students who receive a non-passing grade will be required to retake the course.

### Attendance for International (F-1 Visa) Students in Residential Courses:

International students should be aware that Sofia University may be required to provide attendance records from the Office of the Registrar to SEVP, USCIS or other regulatory agencies to verify that the student has been correctly maintaining their F-1 status.

As stated above, if the student has a serious illness or medical emergency which prevents them from attending a residential class, they will be required to provide a doctor's note to their instructor. Resources for finding health insurance providers for international students have been listed on the International Student Office webpage. Students may find a primary healthcare physician who can provide a doctor's note through their health insurance.

F-1 students who are approved for Curricular Practical Training should note that they may not cite a work conflict as a reason for absence from residential classes. International students should ensure that they clearly communicate with their CPT employer that their practical training/employment opportunity is part of their academic program and that they cannot be available to work if it conflicts with a scheduled residential class.

Students in violation of the attendance policy may have their CPT authorization canceled or withdrawn.

### Online – Attendance:

Canvas records all student's classwork related activity each quarter. Failure to complete a course will result in a failing grade, and the student will be required to retake the course. If students have not engaged in their online course for two weeks or more, they will receive a failing grade.

Required weekly engagement may vary from course to course, but minimally are the following:

- Weekly discussion post, substantive post, replies to classmates, posted during the week before the due date
- Attending a synchronous video conference
- Assignments such as paper submissions
- Exams and quizzes in Canvas

Students cannot rely on an email outside of Canvas when contacting an instructor—all correspondences with faculty must be in Canvas. Students must refer to the course syllabi for how attendance is defined. Page views are not counted as attendance.

## Seminar and Intensives – Attendance:

Seminars and Intensives are an integral part of the curriculum for Online + Low-residency programs and, therefore, require full attendance for successful completion.

Students should make travel arrangements cognizant of the official beginning and ending of seminar sessions, and plan to attend the full seminar. Students who leave the seminar or intensive early and do not sign-out on the final day will not receive credit for the course. Furthermore, these students will be required to make up the required hours by enrolling in an additional seminar at a later date, as agreed upon with their program chair. Attendance for MACP Intensives both virtual and on-campus is mandatory. An excused absence does not ensure passing an Intensive course.

Valid excuses for not attending, leaving early, or arriving in session late include but not limited to personal and family medical emergencies with a physician's note and other extraordinary circumstances.

## Leave of Absence:

It is the expectation that Sofia University students will maintain continuous enrollment in order to achieve their academic goals. Occasionally, students must interrupt their enrollment for a variety of reasons. Allowing students to take a "leave of absence" (LOA) provides students the opportunity to return to the University under the rules and policies in effect when they left. Reasons for a LOA may include personal/medical, financial, or academic circumstances; military service; career opportunities; or a family obligation.

Students may take a maximum of two consecutive quarters off (including Summer) without penalty during the academic year. Some students take the Summer quarter off, which means that they are not enrolled in any courses for the Summer. If students fail to register after the term off, then their official academic record will be made inactive, and they will need to re-apply to the University to return to their program of study. The maximum allowable time period for a LOA is two quarters in any academic year. LOA begins on the first day of the quarter and ends on the last day of the quarter.

### **Military Leave of Absence (MLOA) Policy**

For purposes of granting an MLOA, military obligation is defined as (a) deployment, (b) mobilization leading to deployment, or (c) attendance at a military school or college.

Students must contact the Office of the Registrar and the School Certifying Official to request the MLOA. Students must submit military orders. Students who have yet to receive orders need to provide a memo from their commanding officer supporting the request for the MLOA.

Students approved for MLOA are eligible for leave from the university for up to four consecutive quarters. Students

currently on MLOA with a limit of four quarters may extend their leave beyond the four quarters by providing military orders supporting the extension. The extension is limited to two consecutive quarters. Students with federal financial aid, federal loan obligations, or military tuition assistance must contact their lenders or the military education office to ascertain their loan repayment status or repayment of tuition assistance during the leave of absence. Students receiving benefits under GI Bills® will have their enrollment certifications terminated for the initial term of the leave of absence and any subsequent terms for which leave has been approved.

## Leave of Absence – Impacts on Financial Aid:

Students receiving Title IV financial aid should be aware that entering LOA status will mean that financial aid awarded for the terms in which the LOA applies will be canceled. Since the student on leave will not be enrolled at least half-time, any previously borrowed federal loans may enter the grace or repayment period. If a LOA is taken after the start of a term, it will be treated as a withdrawal for that term for financial aid purposes and will follow the procedures outlined in the Title IV Withdrawal section of the Catalog. Any student considering requesting a LOA should consult with the Financial Aid Office to determine how financial aid will be affected.

## Administrative Leave:

The University initiates administrative leave. Administrative leave is generally assigned to students who have been placed on Academic Probation and have been unable to resolve the issues due to outside circumstances of short-term duration. The length of the leave and requirements for return to active enrollment will be specified when the student is placed on administrative leave. Students on Administrative Leave are required to pay the quarterly leave fee.

## Units and Calendar System:

Sofia University operates on a quarter system. A quarter consists of 10 weeks. All units associated with courses are quarter units: 1.0 unit generally requires 10 hours of class instruction and 20 hours of work outside class (a total of 30 hours per unit.)

Sofia University's definition of a credit hour is consistent with the federal regulation (CFRs 600.2 and 600.4), which defines the credit hour as "the amount of work represented intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than:

1. One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or
2. At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution, including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours."