

## Attendance Policy Faculty of Education, B.Ed. Program

The B.Ed. program is an intense and demanding program of professional preparation in which Teacher Candidates are expected to demonstrate high levels of both academic and professional integrity. Such integrity is demonstrated in part by commitment to and attendance at all classes, workshops, and practicum activities. Irregular attendance and unexcused absences will result in referral to the Associate Dean (Teacher Education) and placement on conditional status. Chronic absenteeism provides grounds for requiring a Teacher Candidate to withdraw from the program.

If you are absent for illness, bereavement, other compassionate circumstances, or religious observance, you will not be penalized for your absence. You are, however, responsible for all the work and class activities you miss, and for ensuring that you complete enough work to deserve credit for each course. Your instructor will decide whether or not extra readings or make-up assignments are required.

### **Absences due to Illness, Bereavement, or Other Compassionate Circumstances**

**Teacher Candidates' Responsibilities:** The following are guidelines. If your particular situation does not exactly match either of these scenarios, you should err on the side of caution and talk to your instructors.

*If you miss a day or two of classes:* Advise your instructor(s) at the earliest possible opportunity. Instructors will not penalize you for such absences, but you are responsible for any parts of the course you miss and you may be assigned make-up work.

*If you miss three days of classes or more, or if you miss an assignment deadline, test, or exam:* Inform the Teacher Education Office and provide documentation to verify your illness or bereavement. The Teacher Education Office will inform all your instructors and arrange accommodation. Upon returning to the Faculty, you must speak directly to each instructor. You may be assigned make-up work.

**Instructors' Responsibilities:** Teacher Candidates may not be penalized for missing a class because of illness, bereavement, or other compassionate circumstances. Instructors must provide reasonable alternative means for satisfying missed academic requirements.

Western's full policy on Religious Holidays is available at

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_religious.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_religious.pdf)

### **Absences for Other Reasons**

Any absence that is not a result of illness, bereavement, or religious observance is an unexcused absence. Three unexcused absences will result in the Teacher Candidate being referred to the Associate Dean and placed on academic probation. Any further unexcused absence will result in failure of the course and withdrawal from the program.

See the section titled, Can I get permission to be absent if I have a really good reason?

Instructors are encouraged to exercise their own judgement in applying penalties but must do so consistently so that all Teacher Candidates are treated equitably. All Teacher Candidates are responsible for work missed while absent and for any make-up work an instructor may deem necessary.

### **Law Assignments**

Teacher Candidates who cannot meet an assignment deadline must consult with their instructor(s), preferably before the deadline is breached. Teacher Candidates who do not consult appropriately may incur late penalties as described in course outlines. Instructors are encouraged to exercise their own judgement in applying penalties but must do so consistently so that all Teacher Candidates are treated equitably.

## **Irregular Attendance**

If a Teacher Candidate's attendance over several weeks is irregular, an instructor should document the Teacher Candidate's attendance as fully as possible, and take and document any or all of the following steps:

- speak directly to the Teacher Candidate or attempt to contact the Teacher Candidate via e-mail
- assign additional work
- consult with the Teacher Education Office
- inform the Associate Dean who may place the Teacher Candidate on conditional status.

## **Make-up Work**

Make-up work for Teacher Candidates who have missed classes may be assigned at the instructor's discretion. Such work is intended to ensure that a Teacher Candidate completes an appropriate amount of work for a course, even if it is not exactly the same work completed by other Teacher Candidates. Instructors should ensure that make-up work is completed satisfactorily but are not obliged to mark it or return it to the Teacher Candidate.

## **Instructors' Responsibilities**

If you become aware that a Teacher Candidate has missed two consecutive classes in your course and has not contacted you, you should attempt to get in touch with the Teacher Candidate via e-mail. If you are unable to do so within two or three days, or if you continue to be concerned about a Teacher Candidate's attendance, consult the Teacher Education Office.

## **Can I get permission to be absent if I have a really good reason?**

No one—not your instructors, the Teacher Education Office, or the Associate Dean—will excuse you from classes for any reason other than illness, compassionate circumstances, or religious observance. When you are employed as a teacher these are the only reasons that will justify your absence from school. As a Teacher Candidate you will find that many instructors and Associate Teachers will draw conclusions about your integrity and commitment to teaching by your attitude towards attendance this year.

If at some point during your program you feel you must be absent—because of inclement weather, for example—or you choose to be absent—because you're a varsity athlete with a key game to play, or you want to attend your sister's wedding, you must take responsibility yourself 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 your absence extends over four days or more, contact the Teacher Education Office
- if your absence includes practicum, contact your Associate Teacher and the Teacher Education Office

- explain that you will do everything possible to make up for your absence; you will, for example
  - ask someone to pick up handouts for you, share notes, and discuss with you what you missed
  - do extra reading or other make-up work if your Instructor wishes you to do so.

Instructors and Associate Teachers are usually understanding and flexible. Nevertheless, none of them is under any obligation to make special accommodations for you, and you must be prepared for the fact that some of them will see almost any absence (other than for illness, etc.) as a lack of commitment on your part.

*The weather is bad and you have a long commute?* Some of your Instructors and Associate Teachers live out of town, too; they check the weather the day before and make special arrangements to be sure they can get where they have to be the next day. If you are commuting, find a classmate with a place in London where you can stay overnight when weather is a problem.

*You're arriving late for the start of classes in September or January?* Don't just pretend it didn't happen, and don't think your instructors won't notice. Follow the procedures outlined above: get in touch with your instructors, tell them you will do everything possible to make up for your absence, ask for guidance, show them you care.

*Your whole family is vacationing in the Caribbean?* Your commitment to your program must outweigh an opportunity for a vacation. Make sure your family and friends know your schedule well ahead of time.

*A school needs a teacher/coach/leader to teach/assist/fill in for a week/two weeks/a month; it's where you want to get a job and it will be such a good experience for you.* It's not fair of anyone to ask you to miss any part of 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 and would be paid for it. Your program is your last opportunity to be a learner rather than a teacher with full responsibility for students. If a school or school district wants you, and wants to play fair with you, they will wait for you to finish your program.

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