

# West Chester University Attendance Verification Policy and Procedures

The below policy was recently approved and should be used to guide the upcoming attendance verification process.

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## Title IV Federal Financial Aid Compliance Policy

The administration of federal financial student aid under Title IV of the Higher Education Act requires universities to determine whether or not financial aid must be returned for Title IV recipients who withdraw (officially or unofficially) during the term. Proper calculation for the return of Title IV funds is dependent upon verifying attendance in academically related activities.

Attendance under Title IV regulations is defined more broadly than physically attending a class, and must be verified independent of an instructor's individual course attendance policy. That is, even if an instructor does not require students to physically attend class, active participation in the course must be verified. This verification will be captured at two points during the semester, once at the end of the add/drop period, and again at the point when 60 percent of the term is completed.

Students who stop attending a course and fail to officially withdraw from it will receive a grade of Z, which indicates that the student was not engaged in academically related activities in the course. This also represents an unofficial withdrawal from the course. Students with unofficial course withdrawals may no longer be eligible for the full amount of Title IV funds that the student was originally scheduled to receive. The withdrawal date is set as the last date of an academically related activity in which the student participated.

Faculty will utilize their attendance verification roster in myWCU to electronically report whether their students are in good attendance. During the two attendance periods, faculty need to consider whether a student has been engaged in academically related activities for their course. A student's absence from class on the attendance day is not the only factor to consider when noting attendance. The following guidelines have been developed to assist faculty and students in understanding what types of academically related activities should be considered when determining whether a student is in good attendance for the course. In the event that the student fails a course, faculty will be asked to report the date of last attendance.

Academically related activities include but are not limited to:

- Physically attending a class where there is an opportunity for direct interaction between the instructor and students;
- Submitting an academic assignment;
- Taking an exam, an interactive tutorial, or computer-assisted instruction;
- Attending a study group that is assigned by the instructor;
- Participating in an online discussion about academic matters;
- Initiating contact with a faculty member to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course; and,
- Reporting to internship, practicum, or field experience site.

Academically related activities do **not** include activities where a student may be present but not academically engaged, such as:

- Living in institutional housing;
- Participating in the university's meal plan;
- Logging into an online class without active participation; or,
- Participating in academic counseling or advisement.

**Academically related activity for distance education courses:** In a distance education context, documenting that a student has logged into an online class is not sufficient, by itself, to demonstrate academic attendance by the student. The faculty member must determine whether a student participated in class or was otherwise engaged in an academically related activity. Academically related activities in a distance education course include but are not limited to:

- Student submission of an academic assignment;
  - Student submission of an exam;
  - Documented student participation in an interactive tutorial or computer-assisted instruction;
  - A posting by the student showing the student's participation in an online study group that is assigned by the instructor;
  - A posting by the student in a discussion forum showing the student's participation in an online discussion about academic matters; and,
  - An email from the student or other documentation showing the student initiated contact with a faculty member to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course.
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