

Should college  
attendance be  
mandatory



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Mandatory attendance in college has always been a highly debated subject. Professors want students to attend all of their classes so they can teach them directly, but many students want to be given the freedom to decide which classes to attend. Due to the difficulty of regulating a school-wide attendance policy, most colleges and universities give professors the authority to set their own attendance rules. Sam Artley, a senior studying social relations and policy at Michigan State University, said she does not agree with mandatory attendance policies except in the case of lab work because it is usually completed in class with very little work outside of the classroom.

Artley noted that many professors say regular attendance is necessary to do well in a course and agrees that attendance and course performance are positively correlated. “ That being said, there would be no need for mandatory attendance as students seeking high grades will quickly learn that they need to attend the course regularly,” she said. Inflating grades with 10-20 percent of your score coming from attendance is a poor judgment of an individual’s competency in the course. ” Professor Kelli Marshall teaches media and film classes at DePaul University and does not implement a mandatory attendance policy. Instead, she gives her students the opportunity to earn participation points via weekly quizzes and discussion questions.

“ Since most students want to earn their participation points, they generally come to class, even though attendance is not mandatory,” Marshall said. This policy works well for Marshall and saves her a lot of time and hassle. “ It’s beneficial to me because I don’t have to worry about marking who’s

there, who's not, who's late, who leaves early," she said. " Additionally, I don't have to haggle with students over any grades associated with ' excused' and ' unexcused' absences. " While Marshall's non-mandatory attendance policy makes her job easier, she's not sure if it is beneficial to her students. " I would hope it is since it suggests I'm treating them as adults," she said.

A common argument brought up by students regarding mandatory attendance is that, as tuition payers, they shouldn't be punished for missing something they are paying for anyway. " As students paying to enroll in these courses, the attendance should be up to us and not roped into course grading in any way shape or form," Artley said. An additional aspect of mandatory attendance that must be taken into consideration is the possible distraction caused by students who show up to class only to earn points yet distract other students as they do everything under the sun except listen to the professor. For instance, it is not uncommon to go into a college lecture and see many students doing one of the following: sleeping, Facebook chatting, online shopping, watching funny animal videos on YouTube, streaming live sporting events (boys) and pinning wedding dresses on Pinterest (girls). Sarah Griffin, a sophomore at Indiana University, does not believe professors should allow students to get away with missing a large number of classes. However, she also thinks a policy that requires attendance to every class is too limiting.

Instead, Griffin thinks professors should have mandatory attendance with a few absences allowed. " I don't think attendance should be mandatory unless a few ' free days' are provided, because I think by the university level, <https://assignbuster.com/should-college-attendance-be-mandatory/>

students have the right and responsibility to prioritize their own time,” Griffin said. “ I think it would be unfair for a student to be penalized if they, for instance, chose to forgo a lecture in favor of working on a semester project. ” Griffin said most of her professors either don’t have an attendance policy or, if one is in place, students are allowed to miss a certain number of days in the semester without being penalized. “ I think this is preferable to a more strict attendance policy, as it allows students appropriate control of their own schedules,” she said. While Griffin does not mind professors who have attendance requirements, she recognizes that not all of her peers share her opinion.

She said she tries to regularly attend her classes to learn from the lectures, but she knows there are many students who do not share her learning style and would prefer to learn the material on their own. “ For them, a strict attendance policy seems detrimental,” she said. In the end, Griffin believes attendance policies must balance both sides and find a happy medium. “ We’re adults, but still college students at the same time,” Griffin said. “ Universities should have some regulation, but we should be primarily responsible for our own education and I think attendance policies should reflect that. ”