

# ATTENDANCE AND EXCUSED ABSENCES

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Students are expected to attend all scheduled activities for all of the classes for which they are registered during the entire course of the academic semester for which they are enrolled. The [Academic Calendar \(https://registrar.rice.edu/calendars/\)](https://registrar.rice.edu/calendars/) indicates normal class days, recesses, and holidays. Instructors, however, may schedule required activities on other days, including recesses, holidays, and weekends, if required by programmatic needs, such as laboratories or field trips. Such requirements must be clearly stated in the online course description available at registration and on the syllabus, and instructors should try to provide compensatory time off for students.

The university understands that students participating in university-sponsored events, including athletics competitions, will miss some class sessions during the semester. Students will inform their instructors in a timely manner and in advance of absences resulting from participation in such events. In these cases, faculty will give students a reasonable accommodation to make up for the work missed.

Two university-sponsored events, including athletics competitions such as games, matches, or tournaments, may be scheduled for the period beginning with the Monday of the last week of classes and ending with the last day of final exams (a 17-day period). Scheduling additional events requires approval from the [Committee on Examinations and Standing \(https://dou.rice.edu/committee-examinations-and-standing/\)](https://dou.rice.edu/committee-examinations-and-standing/). For the two allowable events, one may be scheduled during the last week of classes, one may be scheduled during the reading period (defined as the day following the last day of classes through the day before finals begin), or one may be scheduled during the Finals Period.

This policy permits flexibility in scheduling; however, the maximum number of allowable events over the three periods is two. For these events, only one night outside of Houston is allowed per period. Events where scheduling is not under the control of the university do not count toward this two-event limit. This rule also applies to cases in which participation is on an individual basis, such as by track student-athletes. All university-sponsored organizations with events during this period must notify the [Office of Academic Advising \(https://oaa.rice.edu/\)](https://oaa.rice.edu/) at least one month prior to the event.

Absences for activities other than university-sponsored events may be negotiated on an informal basis between the student and the faculty member. Alternatively, absences may be formally excused on a case-by-case basis if a petition explaining the nature of the event, accompanied by suitable documentation, is submitted to the Committee on Examinations and Standing at least two weeks before the event.

## Resolving Conflicting Course Obligations Scheduled Outside of Assigned Class Time

Many courses require presentations that cannot reasonably be accommodated within the scheduled class period. Problems occur when faculty schedule these presentations during times that conflict with other regularly scheduled classes.

## Principles

- Generally, faculty should plan their course activities to avoid conflicts with other regularly scheduled classes.
- Generally, all deadlines and schedules will be included in the syllabus or announced, in writing, early in the semester.
- It is the responsibility of faculty members to make appropriate accommodations and adjustments when required class exercises are scheduled outside of assigned class time.
- A student must not be penalized either directly or indirectly.

## Resolution of Scheduling Conflicts

- Class presentations outside of the scheduled class time should be held on evenings and weekends.
- Registrar-assigned class times take priority over activities of other classes.
- When two or more classes require activities outside of class time, the order of priority is determined by the date at which the exercise was announced in writing and scheduled.
- When two or more classes require activities outside of class time, activities which require external reviewers or coordination of multiple schedules have priority over individual exercises that can rescheduled.
- Required exercises outside of assigned class times that are announced at the last minute do not take priority over those announced earlier, even if they require coordination of multiple schedules.

## Roles and Responsibilities

- Ideally, faculty will cooperate with one another when they need to resolve scheduling conflicts.
- If faculty involved are unable to find a solution that does not penalize or unduly disadvantage the student, department chairs will resolve the scheduling conflict.
- If department chairs are unable to resolve the scheduling conflict, the matter will be referred to the dean of undergraduates or the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies, or their designees, who will have final authority for resolution.