

School of Architecture
University of Southern California
Approved Attendance Guidelines

Attending classes is a basic responsibility of every USC student who is enrolled in courses at the School of Architecture. Although any student should be evaluated primarily on their demonstrated knowledge through project development, papers, quizzes, and exams, the School believes important skills such as verbal presentation, design discussion and articulation of critical issues within each course are equal additional measures of demonstrated knowledge, particularly for our professional degree programs. In studio courses, the central learning experience is through direct contact between the student and the faculty which advances a student's understanding of architecture through shared exploration. As most all of our enrolled students are completing accredited professional degree programs, regular and punctual class attendance is considered an essential part of satisfying both the NAAB and LAAB accreditation requirements. It is also expected that our faculty will use the majority of valuable contact time with students to cover material that cannot be covered through readings, out-of-class projects and other supplemental learning methods.

As our curriculum is composed of a variety of learning environments, it is important that each instructor has authority over the precise terms of their own attendance policy as outlined in each course syllabus. The following points are to be considered the School of Architecture's collective policy to be referenced in all syllabi, or unless otherwise outlined with individual faculty variation within a particular course syllabus:

The School of Architecture's general attendance policy is to allow a student to miss the equivalent of one week of class sessions (three classes if the course meets three times/week, etc) without directly affecting the student's grade and ability to complete the course. If additional absences are required for a personal illness/family emergency, pre-approved academic reason/religious observance, the situation should be discussed and evaluated with the faculty member and appropriate Chair on a case-by-case basis.

For each absence over that allowed number, the student's letter grade can be lowered up to one full letter grade (some instructors might vary the consequences such as only being worth 1/3 letter grade etc). This policy or any variation of it should be stated clearly in the syllabus of the course.

Each instructor should review his/her attendance and grading policies with the students in the first week of class. If the instructor believes a stricter policy should be followed, and he or she has explicitly called it out as a policy in the syllabus, the School will fully back up the stated penalties for this stricter policy if any grade disputes might occur. Any attendance procedure should not take up more than a few minutes of class time. The policy for late work or for making up missed work due to absence or not due to absence should be explicitly outlined in the syllabus. All students should understand that any false representation of their attendance is grounds to be considered for a violation of ethics before the University in the syllabus.

Any student not in class within the first 10 minutes is considered tardy, and any student absent (in any form including sleep, technological distraction, or by leaving mid class for a long bathroom/water break) for more than 1/3 of the class time can be considered fully absent. If arriving late, a student must be respectful of a class in session and do everything possible to minimize the disruption caused by a late arrival. It is always the student's responsibility to seek means (if possible) to make up work missed due to absences, not the instructor's, although such recourse is not always an option due to the nature of the material covered.

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Being absent on the day a project, quiz, paper or exam is due can lead to an “F” for that project, quiz, paper or exam or portfolio (unless the faculty concedes the reason is due to an excusable absence for personal illness/family emergency/religious observance). A mid term or final review is to be treated the same as a final exam as outlined and expected by the University. Students must understand that days allocated for their studio final in the syllabus are considered an examination period. If they are absent or tardy on any review day and miss their opportunity to present, this is considered equal to missing a final exam.

No instructor can require a student to withdraw from a course even if that student will eventually fail due to numerous absences or poor performance. All faculty members should notify any student who has missed more than the equivalent of one week of class **IN WRITING, COPYING THE STUDENT SERVICE OFFICE**, that their lack of attendance will now begin to have a significant effect on their grade (even if these absences occur at the end of the semester or if the faculty believes the student has withdrawn due to whatever reason). If the student is near the point of failure due to absences, the faculty member should then again notify the student in writing. The majority of grade disputes tend to center around absences (often at the end of the semester), and, thus, it is imperative that a clear attendance guideline is referenced in each provided syllabus and that timely notification is provided by the instructor to any student whose absences begin to exceed that policy.