

TEMPORARY ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2020-21

This document describes the attendance policy for the entire academic year 2020-21. In the event that conditions allow the law school to return to normal operations for the Spring 2021 semester, then the law school will resume its regular attendance policy for that semester. Otherwise, this policy will be in effect for the entire academic year.

During the 2020-21 academic year, the regular class-attendance policy remains in effect as follows. The law school expects students to make every effort to attend 100 percent of regularly scheduled classes, and students must attend at least 80 percent of regularly-scheduled classes in each course to receive course credit.

Departures from the regular class-attendance policy are as follows. For classes that are conducted exclusively remotely, “attendance” means participating contemporaneously in the class session when it takes place. Students must sign in to the remotely conducted class session when it begins, remain in attendance until the class session is adjourned, and participate in class-session discussions as the instructor requires (unless authorized by the professor to arrive late or depart early).

For hybrid classes, for students able to attend in person, “attendance” retains its traditional meaning of physical presence for the entire class session. For students who are unable to attend in person, “attendance” has the same meaning as for classes conducted exclusively remotely: participating contemporaneously in the class session when it takes place. Students must sign in to the remotely conducted class session when it begins, remain in attendance until the class session is adjourned, and participate in class-session discussions as the instructor requires (unless authorized by the professor to arrive late or depart early).

Student class attendance will be monitored in two ways. First, consistently with regular policy, faculty members will maintain attendance records and may employ, at their discretion, any reasonable method for monitoring student attendance in remotely conducted and hybrid classes. Second, all students taking a final examination will be required to attest by signature that he or she has attended at least 80 percent of the classes regularly scheduled for the course. A student’s false declaration regarding attendance is an act of academic misconduct demonstrating a lack of integrity, subjecting the student to expulsion, suspension, or other discipline, as well as to the reporting of that misconduct to the Texas Board of Legal Examiners or its equivalent in another jurisdiction.

A student who is unable to attend any class session for any reason related to coronavirus may make up the absence by viewing the recording of that session. Coronavirus reasons include coronavirus-related illness of someone in the student’s household or for whom the student has caretaking responsibility; any reason directly related to an employer’s, school’s, or child- or health-care facility’s public health efforts in response to the coronavirus or COVID-19; or some other circumstance directly related to the coronavirus pandemic not of the student’s own making and outside of the student’s control. Although no special authorization is required for such absences, the student must provide the faculty member with notice of and an explanation for the absence by email before the class session takes place or within 24 hours after the session concludes, unless

emergency conditions prevent timely notice. The faculty member may require the student to verify his or her viewing of the recorded class session by any reasonable method, including the use of “Easter eggs” (i.e., a word, message, or image embedded in the class recording that the student viewing the recording can report), a short quiz over the class session, or a brief student summary of the covered material, or an affirmative indication on the student’s honor.

The purpose of this temporary modification of the attendance policy is to promote regular and punctual student participation in both remotely conducted and hybrid class sessions but to avoid having any students dropped from a course on account of absenteeism related to the public-health response to the coronavirus or COVID-19. The law school will continue to treat absenteeism unrelated to the current public-health crisis under the law school’s ordinary attendance policy.