

Attendance check procedures for faculty

The Student Life Division can provide optional assistance in cases of chronic attendance problems in your classes. Specifically, if you have a student who has missed an abnormal amount of class over an extended period of time (e.g., more than a week, or repeating patterns of spotty attendance, with limited explanation from the student), we can initiate a check of the student's other classes, attempt to contact the student on your behalf, and assist with issues related to the student improving their attendance or dropping the class.

Here are the guidelines for formally requesting an attendance check:

1. When you notice attendance problems with a student, make an initial attempt to address the problem by contacting the student directly, by email or phone.
2. If attendance issues persist, please send us an email at attendance@calvin.edu, or contact Robin Zylstra in the Student Life Office. We will inquire about the student's attendance in other classes, and will then funnel this information to the appropriate dean or resident director.

PLEASE NOTE: The initiation of these attendance checks is optional for faculty. However, if a colleague has requested an attendance check and thus you receive a request from Student Life for information on a student, please reply promptly. The efficiency and effectiveness of the process relies on this input.

After receiving input from the student's other professors, we will attempt to discern the issue, assist or challenge the student (using our campus resources such as SAS or Broene Center when appropriate), and provide the professor who initiated the attendance check with some sort of feedback on how it went—typically within a week of the original request.

Students miss or skip classes for a variety of reasons, and this formal check is not typically warranted when absences are isolated. Illnesses or family emergencies do occur and are typically easy to verify. Sometimes students are simply experimenting with their freedoms, and they know the consequences. When absences become regular, seem out of character, and/or make you wonder about other issues, this Student Life service can be helpful.

Though we are often successful in intervening, we cannot force students back to the classroom, and they must face the impact of their lack of attendance on their course grade according to your classroom policies—as stated in your syllabus. Students are typically instructed to dialogue with their professors as to whether and how classes might be salvaged, but sometimes the best solution is to drop the class. An attendance check is often just one piece of a larger puzzle of issues which a student must address, and thus the time frame and quality of the resolutions vary.

Questions or concerns about this service can be directed to John Witte, Dean of Residence Life, or Bob Crow, Dean of Student Development.