
Student Attendance and Academic Concessions

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Policy Statement

BCIT expects and strongly encourages regular attendance and participation in all course activities to optimize student learning and experience. BCIT also recognizes that students may encounter life circumstances preventing them from attending all classes, and that post-secondary students are responsible for their own learning.

Further, it is imperative that all learning environments at BCIT maintain the highest level of safety protocols appropriate to the specific learning environment. This entails that some education activities may require student attendance for teaching and training specifically relating to safety.

BCIT provides reasonable accommodations and concessions for circumstances in which an absence is unavoidable. Members of the BCIT community share a duty to provide Academic Accommodations and Concessions to students when required.

Purpose of Policy

The purposes of this policy are to:

- align Attendance Requirements and Accommodations (outside of those covered in Policy 4501, Accommodation for Students with Disabilities) with the BC *Human Rights Code*, the *College & Institute Act*, and leading practices in post-secondary education;
- describe student responsibilities regarding attendance;
- outline the situations in which students may be required to adhere to stated Attendance Requirements; and,
- outline the circumstances in which faculty must grant academic accommodations and should grant concessions for students, outside of those covered in Policy 4501.

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Who This Policy Applies To

This policy applies to BCIT students, faculty, and administrators.

Related Documents and Legislation

Provincial Legislation

College and Institute Act

Human Rights Code

BCIT Policies

Policy 4501 Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

Policy 5103 Student Evaluation

Policy 5201 Recording in the Classroom

Policy 5403 Syllabus & Course Outline

Policy 7507 Prevention of Harassment, Discrimination & Bullying

Definitions

The following definitions apply to this policy and its associated procedures:

Academic Accommodation: a modification or adaptation designed to reduce or remove barriers to participation related to a student’s disability or other Protected Characteristic as specified in the BC Human Rights Code.

Academic Concession: an exception or variance in the timing or nature of a course requirement due to an excused absence.

Assessment: a formalized evaluation of a student’s mastery of theoretical and practical learning outcomes included in the calculation of a final course grade. Includes exams, quizzes, tests, and other evaluations.

Attendance: the time a student is physically present in structured synchronous learning activities, either in person or online, during course (including laboratory) delivery hours identified on the course outline and syllabus.

Attendance Requirements: programs may require students to attend specified class dates or times to ensure a safe learning environment or in programs governed by industry partnerships, regulatory requirements, or standards. In all other circumstances, attendance is strongly encouraged but will not directly affect grading.

Course: a unit of study with defined learning outcomes, approved for inclusion in one or more programs.

Excused Absence: absence from a class or exams due to illness, needs related to protected characteristics, or other approved absence.

Protected Characteristics: personal characteristics protected under the *BC Human Rights Code*. The Code forbids discrimination based on specified personal characteristics, including but not limited to family status, Indigenous identity, mental or physical disability, and religion.

Guiding Principles

This policy and its associated procedures are intended to implement the following principles on how the policy and its associated procedures will be interpreted and applied:

- BCIT recognizes that regular class attendance correlates with student success and strongly encourages regular attendance and participation in all course activities. Regular participation provides access to critical informal learning experiences, including collaboration, professional communication, and unplanned instructional moments, all of which contribute meaningfully to student success and deeper learning. BCIT is committed to applying principles of flexibility, compassion, and equity when addressing student absences, allowing BCIT to respond appropriately and proportionately to unique circumstances students may face
- Attendance Requirements must be explicitly stated in the course outline.
- Although attendance cannot directly affect grading, failure to attend can hamper students' progress in courses that require a safe learning environment. Students failing to meet safety-related attendance requirements may be required to complete equivalent safety training to progress in the course.
- Simply ceasing to attend does not constitute withdrawal from the course. Students will not be withdrawn from a course due to lack of attendance without their explicit, written permission. Students wishing to withdraw must notify the Registrar's Office in writing in accordance with BCIT procedures.
- In cases of Excused Absences where the missed class includes a graded Assessment, every reasonable effort will be made by instructor or Program or Department Head to allow the student to make up that Assessment through alternative means. In cases when the absence is due to a Protected Characteristic, the institution will provide reasonable Accommodation up to the point of undue hardship to BCIT.

Religious or Indigenous cultural days

BCIT recognizes the diversity of the student community and Accommodates students who have mandatory classes or examinations coinciding with religious or Indigenous cultural observances, and in any case allows their absence on those days without penalty. Students should give their instructors timely notice in accordance with Procedure-PR1.

Duties and Responsibilities

Students are responsible for:

- complying with stated Attendance Requirements;
- communicating any absences to their instructor or their Program/Department Head, as soon as reasonably possible;
- communicating any absences to relevant peers when such absence may affect group work;
- seeking and accessing course content missed due to absence when absence is not due to a Protected Characteristic; and,
- regularly checking their BCIT email address for communications from BCIT.

Faculty are responsible for:

- clearly stating any Attendance Requirements in the course outline and reviewing such expectations with students on the first day of each course;
- keeping track of attendance, especially when attendance is a Requirement;
- determining if a student should be granted an Excused Absence, as outlined in the definitions section of this Policy, and notifying the student in writing of their decision;
- providing reasonable Academic Accommodations and Concessions to students for classes or exams missed due to illness, Protected Characteristics, or other Excused Absences;
- safeguarding the confidentiality of student personal information, including medical documentation; and,
- in cases where safety requirements must be met through attendance, notifying a student if they have missed mandatory lessons or activities.

Associate Deans are responsible for:

- ensuring departmental attendance regulations are consistent with this policy;
- resolving escalated matters between instructors and students relating to unsatisfactory attendance and participation in a course; and,
- consulting with campus resources, such as Respect, Diversity, & Inclusion and Student Success, in cases where they believe undue hardship may be reached.

BCIT support units (including RDI, Student Success, and the Registrar's Office) are responsible for:

- providing advice to instructors and academic leadership on complex cases involving requests for Academic Concessions or Accommodations.

Procedures Associated with This Policy

Student Attendance & Academic Concessions Procedure (5110-PR1)

Forms Associated with This Policy

None

Development History

		<u>Approval Date</u>	<u>Status</u>
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Scheduled Review Date

2030 June 04; or earlier if required due to operational or regulatory changes.