

FAQ: Compulsory attendance

What does compulsory attendance mean?

Compulsory attendance can take different forms. It can mean that you have to attend all sessions of a seminar or only certain sessions. Compulsory attendance can also mean that you may be absent without excuse up to two times. Your examination regulations specify the conditions under which attendance is compulsory. In most cases, the lecturers will tell you at the beginning of the course exactly what attendance requirements apply in their courses.

How often can I be absent?

At the beginning of the course, your lecturers will tell you how often you are allowed to be absent without an excuse, i.e. without a certificate or sick note (see below). This is usually twice. If you are absent more often, you will unfortunately have to attend the course again in the next semester.

What happens if I am absent more often because I am ill?

It's best to talk to your lecturers. You may be able to attend some sessions online or provide substitute work. However, you will need a medical certificate in any case: a medical certificate or a certificate of incapacity for work from your doctor. Sometimes, however, you may be allowed to be absent a maximum of two times or not at all despite a doctor's certificate. In this case, you will unfortunately have to attend the course again in the next semester.

How do I know if a course has compulsory attendance?

You can ask your student council. Compulsory attendance for a course must be applied for in the examination board and there are always student members on the examination board - in most cases from the student council. Therefore, the council also knows in which courses compulsory attendance has been approved. Sometimes it is also stated in the module handbook that attendance is compulsory for a course. If you are still unsure, you can also contact the Department of University Policy and Teaching via the ASTA's compulsory attendance report or by e-mail.

What does the NRW Higher Education Act say about compulsory attendance?

The NRW Higher Education Act states that compulsory attendance is possible: “the ordering of compulsory student participation in courses as a prerequisite for attendance” (Section 64 (1) HG NRW) has been permitted again since 2019.

What's so bad about compulsory attendance?

Students who are less flexible in terms of time because they have to work, have children, care for relatives or have a disability may be disadvantaged by compulsory attendance. If you are affected by one of the last three points, you can try to get a place on a course directly via the hardship regulation. You can obtain information about this from your faculty(ies). Another argument against compulsory attendance is that the aim of every lecturer must be to teach so well that students participate voluntarily. If students are forced to attend courses because attendance is compulsory, some lecturers will see no incentive to improve their teaching. Unfortunately, the quality of teaching essentially depends on how interested lecturers are in teaching.