REGISTRATION POLICIES

Registration for Classes

Students may create or make changes to class schedules during registration periods published online. Students are expected to contact an academic advisor for assistance in selection of courses before using the online web registration system. Students are not officially registered for classes until all fees are paid. Students are responsible for dropping any classes they do not plan to attend by the add/drop deadline. Not following the official drop procedure may result in a grade of F or F$ at the end of the course. Although a rare occurrence, the Registrar's Office may change a student's schedule when it is deemed necessary.

Course Load

Students who enroll for twelve or more hours are considered full-time students. Students who wish to take more than eighteen hours and who have demonstrated exceptional academic achievement may apply to the Provost's office for approval for an overload. This approval must be granted prior to the completion of the registration process.

Schedule Changes After the Drop-Add Period

In order to swap sections students must fill out a Change Course Sections After Add/Drop form (https://sites.highlands.edu/registrar/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2025/04/Change-Course-Sections-After-AddDrop-041025.pdf). To request reinstatement after a drop for non-payment students must fill out a Reinstatement After Drop for Non-Payment Request form. Completed forms should be submitted by the reinstatement deadline on the academic calendar. Students requesting a change after being dropped for non-payment should have financial aid or payment in place at the time of reinstatement. After the reinstatement deadline, students with extenuating circumstances must request additional permission to make schedule changes from the Provost or the Registrar.

Class Attendance

Students may make changes in class schedules during registration periods published online. Students who do not need an advisor's assistance may make changes using the online web registration system. Students who need an academic advisor's assistance or approval for schedule changes should see an advisor before making any changes.

Georgia Highlands College is committed to excellence in the learning environment; as such, students are expected to attend class regularly, on time, and for the full duration of each class period. To meet this standard of excellence, there are requirements for both attendance verification and for establishing ongoing attendance policies in each class.

Attendance Verification

At the beginning of each semester, instructors will report students who have never attended class to the Registrar's Office who will administratively drop the student from the class for the term. Any difference in fees paid will be refunded to the student by the Business Office.

Attendance verification for each class must follow the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) guidelines which require institutions to be able to demonstrate that federal financial aid recipients established their eligibility for such aid by participating in academic engagement. At GHC, a student's academic engagement constitutes attendance for the purpose of attendance verification. Academic engagement includes, but is not limited to:

1. Attending a synchronous class, lecture, recitation, or field or laboratory activity, physically or online, where there is an opportunity for interaction between the instructor and students;

2. Submitting an academic assignment;

3. Taking an assessment or an exam;

4. Participating in a study group, group project, or an online discussion that is assigned by the instructor; or

5. Interacting with an instructor about academic matters.

Academic engagement does not include, for example:

1. Logging into an online class without any further participation; or

2. Participating in academic advisement.

Instructors should only report a student as attending in the initial verification process if they have participated in actions which the USDOE recognizes as academic engagement.

Ongoing Attendance

It is the responsibility of instructors to formulate attendance policies for the courses they teach and to ensure that the policies are communicated in the course syllabus. When designing absence policies, instructors are encouraged to consider GHC's shared values of access, caring, inclusivity, engagement, and excellence.
The decision to excuse an absence or allow accommodations following an absence is at the discretion of each instructor according to the instructor's stated syllabus policy. All stated syllabus policies must align with GHC attendance policies and values. Individual schools at GHC may specify additional attendance policies, but these may not contradict this institution-wide policy.

Non-Penalized Absences

There shall be no academic penalty for students who are absent from academic activities because of observances of major religious holy days in their faith. Students will not be penalized for absence due to civic responsibilities such as jury duty or the requirements of armed service.

GHC student athletes, and students who work with the athletic teams such as managers, videographers, and those performing other support functions, will not be penalized for their required participation in athletic events. GHC coaches will be responsible for providing a list of the athletes and athletic support staff to instructors.

The student shall be responsible for the material covered in his/her absence and shall be granted a reasonable amount of time to make up any coursework for non-penalized absences.

Documentation

Instructors may require students to provide documentation of absences. This may include, but is not limited to, doctor's excuses, funeral notices, and/or jury summons. Students are not obligated to share documentation with instructors if it would violate a student's right to privacy in health care.

Extended Absences

Students who have circumstances that prevent them from attending class over an extended period may petition the instructor for permission to complete assignments in absentia. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor and provide any requested documentation. The decision to accept work in absentia rests with the instructor.

If the absences will constitute more than 15% of the class meeting time for the term, then written permission from the Division Chair is required before assigning a final grade for the course. The Office of Academic Retention and Resources should be notified of the extended absence arrangement. All approved coursework must be completed by the end of the semester in which the course began.

Repetitive or extended absences may interfere with the student's ability to be successful in coursework. With that in mind, students who expect that they may have repetitive absences for an on-going medical issue should consider registering with GHC Disability Access (https://sites.highlands.edu/student-support-services/student-support-services-home/disability-access/) for accommodations.

Early Alert Program

Faculty members report their students' progress during the semester as part of the Early Alert Program. The program supports academic success by providing early indicators of student progress and plays a pivotal role in identifying students who may benefit from additional resources and support during these crucial initial weeks of the semester. Faculty members provide academic reports of each student enrolled in their course(s) at two checkpoints during the semester. The following success factors are reported at their corresponding checkpoint:

- Never Attended: 13% of the semester session
- Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory Progress: 40% of the semester session

Students are administratively withdrawn from classes if reported as having never attended the class during the first checkpoint. At the second checkpoint, students receive an automated message if faculty members raise an alert (attending, completing assignments, needs tutoring). Each automated email that is sent when an alert is raised gives students next steps and connects them to appropriate resources on campus. The tutoring alert also opens a case with the Tutorial Center, with tutors following up with the student to schedule an appointment. Students are encouraged to act upon receiving the early alert notification in order to get back on track to satisfactorily complete the course.