Campus Compass – Episode 03 – Compulsory attendance at courses



Welcome to Campus Compass – your guide to university life! Welcome to episode 3 of Campus Compass. Today we're exploring a topic that is a constant source of questions and discussions: compulsory attendance in courses. This is regulated in §14 section 4 and 5 of the APO.

I'm your host Paulina and together we'll take a look at when compulsory attendance is permitted according to the General Examination Regulations (APO) and what substitute coursework and its requirements are all about.

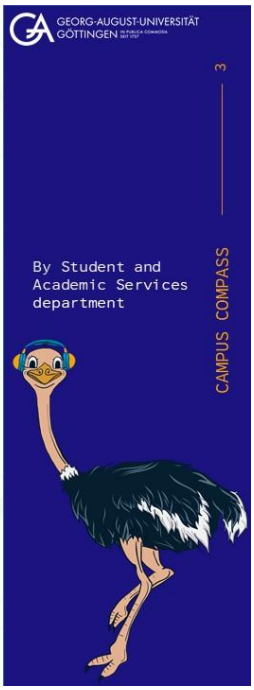


Before we get started, a quick note: The information I present here relates to the University of Göttingen and applies to Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes for which the General Examination Regulations (APO) are relevant.

If you want to look at the content on the slide in your own time, just press pause! To get to the APO, you can enter the link or scan the QR code.

Conditions for compulsory attendance

- §14 section 4 and 5 APO
- No compulsory attendance in lectures
- Compulsory attendance is only permitted if it is specified in the module description
- 'Regular/active participation' must be defined as a preliminary examination requirement
- Lectures may not be declared as seminars in order to enforce compulsory attendance



And here we go: When is compulsory attendance even allowed and how is it checked?

Compulsory attendance is regulated in § 14 sections 4 and 5 of the APO. It states that compulsory attendance in lectures is generally not permitted and also that compulsory attendance may only be required if this is also bindingly regulated in the module description for the respective course. If attendance is compulsory, it will say 'active participation' under 'examination prerequisite'. I'll explain where you can find the module description in a moment.

Firstly, one more thing that is not allowed: Lectures must not be declared as 'seminars' just to enforce compulsory attendance. Seminars and lectures must be clearly distinguished from each other – and this is also regulated in the module descriptions.

Attendance check and participation lists

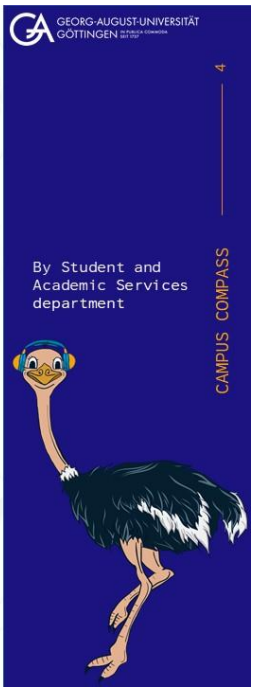
- Attendance lists are not permitted if there is no 'regular/active participation' in the module description
- Exception: Lecturers may keep lists to document the number of participants
- If unsure: Check the module description or ask for clarification

Attendance list:

- Checking attendance
- Ensuring the participation of persons

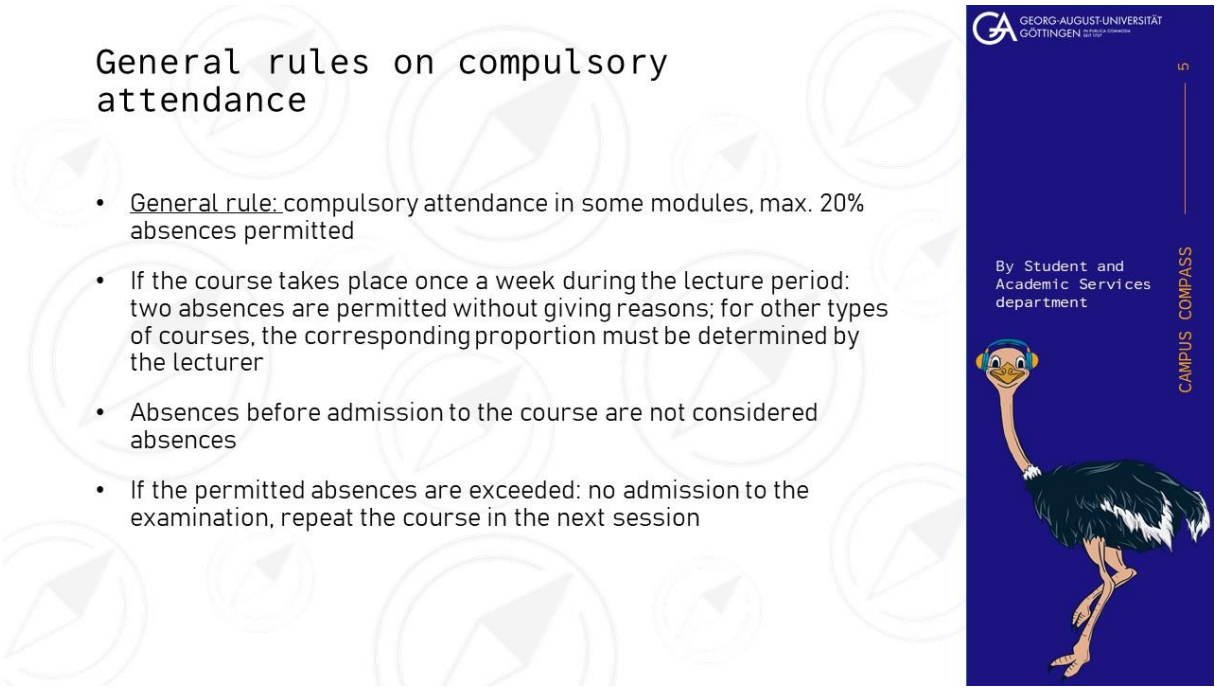
List for lecturers:

- Proof of the number of participants



And a few words about checking attendance: The usual procedure is probably to use attendance lists, which you can sign yourself. However, lecturers can also keep attendance lists themselves if they know you by name. Normally, such lists are only permitted if attendance is compulsory for the

course, but there is one exception: lecturers, i.e. external lecturers who only offer one or two courses per semester at the university and have received a so-called teaching assignment, may and sometimes must also keep attendance lists in order to prove that a certain number of students have attended their course. Confusing? Yes, a little. If you want to know whether a list is used to check attendance or just to document the number of participants, just ask or have a look at the module description.



Let's take a closer look at the general regulations on compulsory attendance in courses:

As a general rule, attendance is only compulsory in certain modules. Generally, a maximum of 20% absences are permitted. For example, if a course takes place once a week during the lecture period, this means that you can have two absences without having to give a reason. For other types of courses, such as block seminars or excursions, the permitted proportion of absences is calculated individually by the teacher.

An important point: Missed appointments before your admission to the course do not count as absences. This means that if you only get a place on a course later, you will not be “punished” for missing appointments before your official start date.

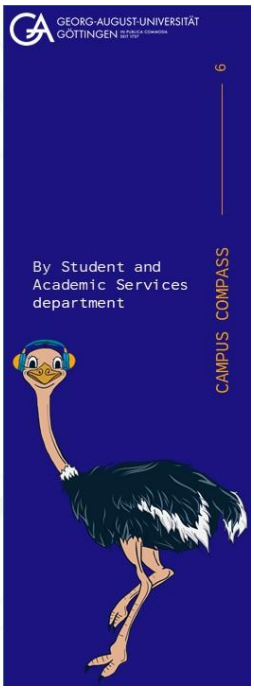
However, if you exceed the permitted period of absence, you may be excluded from the examination. This means that you will have to attend the course again in the next session.

We've talked a lot about module descriptions, but I haven't yet explained how to find them. But I'm going to do that now. I'm going to show you two alternatives: One is how to find the module descriptions via FlexNow and the other is how to do it with eCampus.

Wo kann man Modulbeschreibungen finden? Via FlexNow

FlexNow → Search for and select exam → click on the PDF button at step 2 of 4 → Download the module description as a PDF document

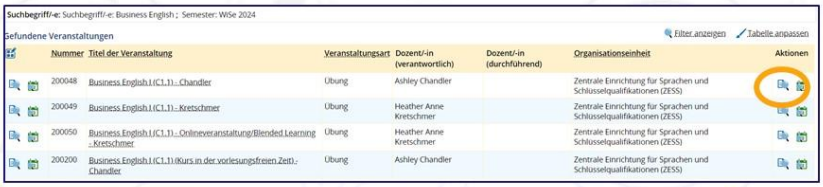


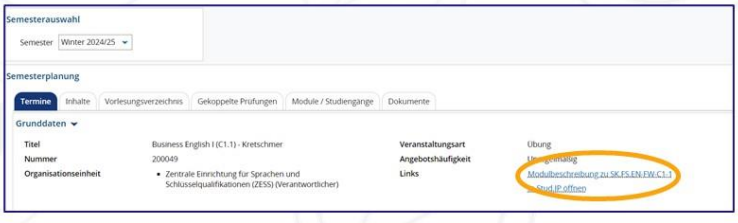


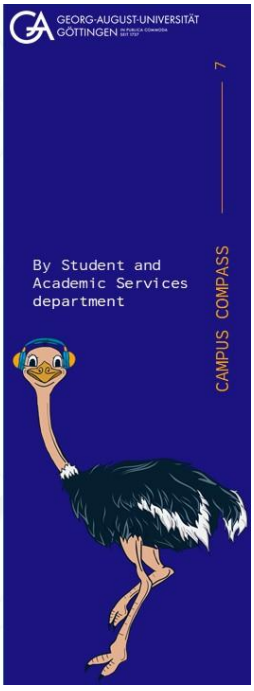
Firstly, I'll explain how to do this with FlexNow: You log in to eCampus as normal, then you go to FlexNow, then you go to Search and select exam on the left. There you enter the course as normal and then click on a PDF button on the right in step 2 of 4. Once you have clicked on the blue PDF button, the module description will be downloaded to your laptop or mobile device. The module description will then be in this PDF document.

Where can I find module descriptions? Via eCampus

ecampus.uni-goettingen.de → click on Search courses on the start page → Course → click on a symbol with a zoom lens or the title of the course on the right → Select and download module description on the right







You can also access module descriptions via eCampus. Go in as normal via eCampus, i.e. ecampus.uni-goettingen.de, log in with your login data and on the start page there is a button 'Search for course', click on it, then enter the course. Pay attention to the spelling, otherwise the event cannot be found. Once you have entered it, you can search for it and see the module by clicking on the zoom lens icon on the right or you can click directly on the title of the event. You can then select and download the module description from the links on the far right. There you will find general information about the course, but also whether attendance is compulsory. I will show you exactly what this looks like on the next slide.

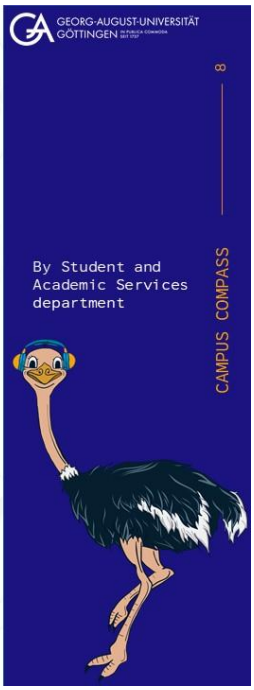
What does this look like in the module description?

Modul SK.FS.EN-FW-C1-2 - Version 6

Hörverstehen, Leseverstehen, Schriftl. Ausdruck und Mündl. Ausdruck (jeweils 25 % der Gesamtnote)
SK.FS.EN-FW-C1-2.Mp: Business English II
Prüfungsvorleistungen:
regelmäßige und aktive Teilnahme
Prüfungsanforderungen:
Das Fremdsprachenportfolio umfasst separate oder integrierte Arbeitsaufträge zur Überprüfung der Kommunikationsmodi „Rezeption", „Produktion", „Interaktion" und

Using the example of the module description of Business English II (ZESS)

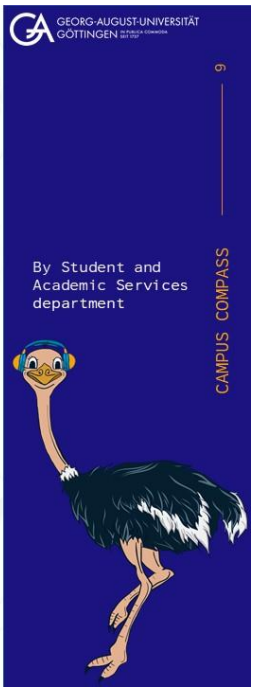
Explicit prerequisites for the admission to the exam: regular and active participation, i.e. compulsory attendance



I'm just going to assume that you've done all this, downloaded the module description and are now scrolling through it. I have illustrated this here using a screenshot on the slide. This is the module description for Business English II, which is of course offered by ZESS. However, it doesn't matter whether it's offered by the ZESS or by a faculty, because if attendance is compulsory, it will be listed under 'Prüfungsvorleistungen' (prerequisites for the admission to an examination). It will then say 'regular and active attendance', which is actually a synonym for compulsory attendance and this is a preliminary examination requirement that must be met in order to be allowed to take the examination.

Substitute coursework

- Alternative tasks/pre-examination work for absences through no fault of the student (next slide)
- Purpose: Proof of engagement with course content and achievement of learning objectives/competences despite absence
- Examples: homework/presentation
- Effort: Not higher than the effort for participation incl. preparation and follow-up
- Preparation: familiarisation with the relevant content before the course
- Follow-up: Deepening and reflecting on the content after the course



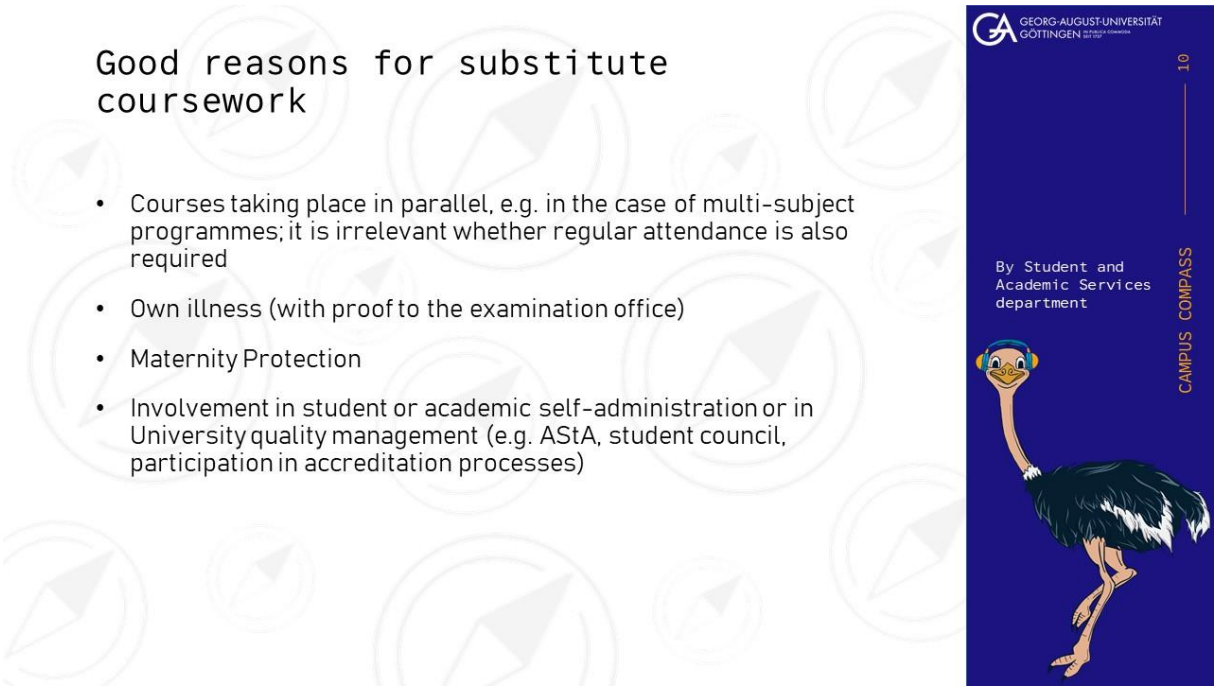
Now we come to the substitute coursework. This serves as an alternative if you are unable to attend a course without being responsible for it. I'll show you what 'without being responsible' can mean on the next slide.

What is substitute coursework? It allows you to prove that you have dealt with the course content and acquired the required competences despite absences.

What could such coursework be? Common examples are written term papers or presentations.

How much effort is involved? The workload for substitute coursework must not exceed the regular attendance of the course, including the usual preparation and follow-up work. This preparation and follow-up work can vary in length and effort, depending on the module or subject.

It is important that the substitute coursework remains fair and that no one is punished for absences.



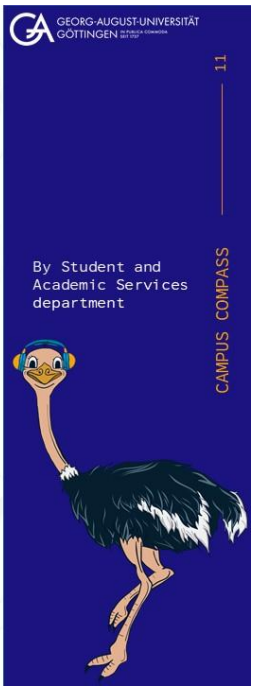
Substitute coursework may become necessary for various reasons, including

- Courses taking place in parallel: This particularly affects students with multi-subject programmes. It does not matter whether regular attendance is also required for the parallel course.
- Personal illness: If students are unable to attend a course due to illness, it is possible to apply for substitute coursework. Proof of illness must be provided to the Examinations Office, e.g. in the form of a medical certificate.
- Maternity leave: Students who go on maternity leave are usually offered a substituting coursework, as it is not possible to attend courses during this time.
- Involvement in self-administration or quality management

Courses without substitute coursework

- Exceptions: Internships, language courses, laboratory practicals, etc.
- Reason: Learning objectives cannot be achieved without participation
- Consequence: Course must be attended again

Note: Ultimately, the teacher decides whether the learning objectives are still achievable. Early contact is recommended.



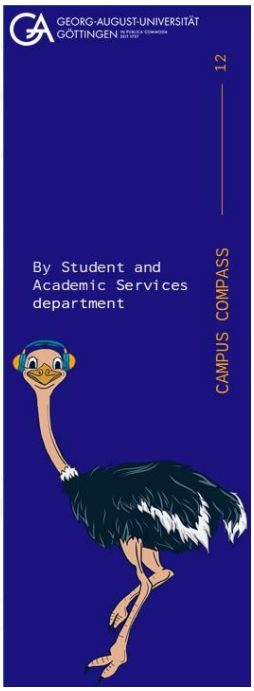
In some cases, such as internships, language courses or laboratory practicals, it is generally difficult to offer substitute coursework. This is because the learning objectives of these courses are difficult or impossible to achieve without active participation.

However, this does not necessarily mean that substitute coursework is excluded in these cases – it is always considered on a case-by-case basis. Ultimately, the teacher decides whether and how the learning objectives can still be achieved.

It is therefore advisable to contact the teacher at an early stage if you have difficulties attending such events. In this way, a solution can be found together or it can be checked whether substitute coursework is possible after all.

Compensation for disadvantages and compulsory attendance

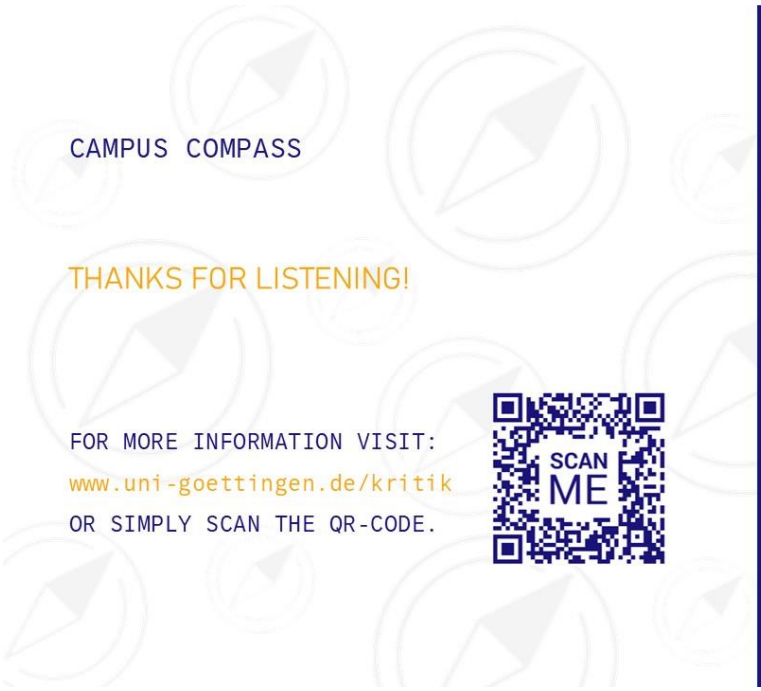
- General exemption from compulsory attendance: Possible as part of compensation for disadvantages
- Decision: Examination board suspends compulsory attendance
- Implementation: Module coordinators implement decision
- Further information: Campus Compass episode 2, §21 APO

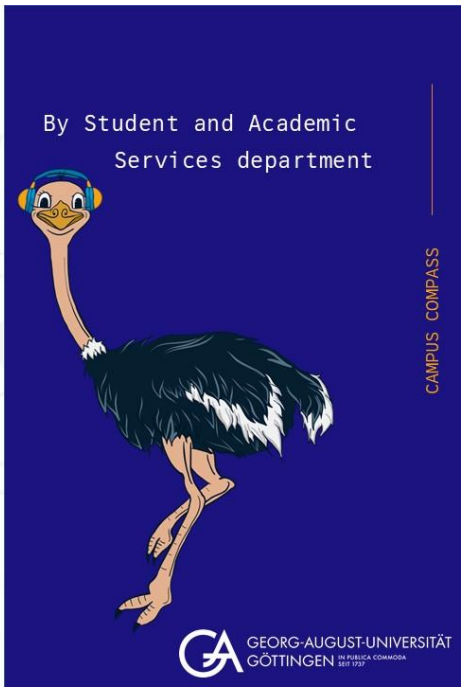


A general exception to the compulsory attendance requirement is possible as part of compensation for disadvantages. The Examination Board decides whether and how the attendance requirement can be suspended.

This decision is then implemented by the module coordinators, who follow the regulation in the respective course.

If you need more information on compensation for disadvantages, just listen to episode 2 of Campus Compass or take a look at §21 of the APO.





At this point, I would like to thank you for listening. I hope this episode was helpful to you. Campus Compass was set up by Silja-Katharina Haufe, the Ombudsperson for students and responsible for Complaint Management at Göttingen University. If you would like to find out more about her counselling and her work, simply listen to our episode no. 1 or visit the website. Simply scan the QR code or enter www.uni-goettingen.de/kritik. See you next time – at Campus Compass – your guide to university life.