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The impact of class absenteeism on undergraduates' academic performance: evidence from an elite Economics school in Portugal

Aurora A.C. Teixeira

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Abstract

The empirical literature focusing mainly on the USA suggests that class absenteeism undermines students' academic performance and that an enforced mandatory attendance policy may be beneficial. Based on a different cultural and economic context, and using data on 146 second-year management students enrolled in a macroeconomics course at an elite economics school in Portugal, it is shown that even when controlling for potential endogenous factors associated with attendance and

academic performance, absenteeism considerably lowers the students' final grade (about 2 points in a 0–20-point grading scheme). In addition, it is established that a compulsory, though flexible, attendance policy contributes to improving students' academic performance.

Keywords:

absenteeism | academic performance | Economics | management | university | Portugal

Notes

1. The author used a sample of 216 students enrolled at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in the macroeconomic principles course.

2. In the 2012/2013 academic year, FEP recorded the highest average admissions grade in Portugal for the undergraduate Economics degree (162.5 out of 200) and the second highest in the country for the undergraduate Management degree (155).

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