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Abstract

Universities have recently strengthened their class attendance policies along with associated practices that intensify the surveillance of learning: a series of administrative and pedagogic strategies that monitor the extent to which students conform with behavioural expectations associated with learning. Drawing on university policy statements, the paper identifies implicit arguments underpinning attendance requirements for students in higher education. These include demonstrating the accountability of publicly funded higher education, a concern for the pastoral and academic welfare of students and their appropriate preparation for expectations associated with workplace and professional practice. In a critique it is argued that attendance policies promote presenteeism as part of the discourse of learnerism. Such rules further infantilise students rather than developing their capacity to make informed choices as adults thereby failing to respect their academic freedom. (HRK / Abstract

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