

FLEXIBILITY WITH ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to complete all class work and tests and to meet all deadlines for outside assignments – homework, projects, etc.

Faculty have the right to establish their own attendance policies.

Flexibility with Attendance: This accommodation refers to exceptions to absence/tardiness policies when academically feasible. A student with this accommodation who misses class is still responsible for the material covered in that class.

This accommodation may be indicated when:

- A student has a chronic medical condition that results in random or cyclical acute episodes.
- Due to the nature and severity of the disability, the student may miss class to receive necessary medical treatment or to recover from a flare up of the condition.
- An unexpected medical or physical episode interferes with the student's ability to attend class.

When Is Flexibility with Attendance Not Reasonable?

Attendance policies are set by faculty at the college, departmental, or individual level. The number of allowable absences depends on the interactive or participatory nature of a course or is based on department, college or accrediting agency rules.

In some cases, attendance is fundamental to course objectives; for example, students may be required to interact with others in the class, to demonstrate the ability to think and argue critically, or to participate in group projects. In other instances, faculty may determine that students can master course content despite some or many absences.

When considering this accommodation, DSS counselors will ask instructors whether or not it would be reasonable for the class in question. The accommodation does not have to be implemented if it becomes a fundamental alteration to the course. **Faculty are required to consult with Disability Support Services before making such a decision.** If points are awarded for attendance, flexibility with attendance means that subtracting points for an absence should be waived.

If regular attendance is essential to the course and/or curriculum or if the number of accommodated absences is preventing the student from meeting course objectives,

then the student will be asked to consider alternatives such as a grade of incomplete or course withdrawal.

Considerations when determining reasonable flexibility with attendance policies:

- What does the course description and syllabus say about attendance?
- Is attendance factored in as part of the final course grade?
- What are classroom practices and policies regarding attendance?
- Is the attendance policy consistently applied?
- Is there classroom interaction between the instructor and students, among students?
- Do student contributions constitute a significant component of the learning process?
- Does the course rely on student participation as a method for learning?

Student Responsibilities

Students are required to present the accommodation letter (MOA) and initiate a conversation with the instructor **before** missing class. Students should contact the Disability Support Services counselor if they have concerns with the instructor's decision.

- Request to meet with instructors early in the term to discuss if or how the attendance policies may be modified for a particular class. Understand that flexible attendance might not be appropriate or reasonable in some classes.
- Keep up with the class and complete all coursework missed due to absence. If you will not be able to turn in a homework assignment or if you miss a quiz/exam, it will be your responsibility to contact your professor to arrange how you can make up the work.
- Notify instructors immediately if you will or do miss class.

Instructor Responsibilities

Instructors who have questions about how to best incorporate this accommodation into a class or who do not believe flexibility with attendance is reasonable should consult with Disability Services before making a final decision.

- Accommodations are not meant to be retroactive. Absences that occur before receiving the accommodation letter are not covered. Those should be handled in accordance with the class attendance policy.
- Provide reasonable time frames for making up missed quizzes/exams and extensions on assignments due the day of a disability-related absence.
- Let the student know how you prefer to be notified of disability-related absences.

Written Follow-Up and Feedback

Students are advised to send an email to the instructor with a summary of what was discussed and agreed to as being reasonable flexibility with attendance.

- Instructors may choose to initiate email rather than wait for the student.
- The email information gives the other person a chance to address any confusion and helps ensure everyone is operating from the same point of view.
- Students and instructors are welcome to include Disability Services on these email exchanges for documentation purposes.