

Guidelines for Reasonable Flexibility in Attendance or Deadlines Accommodation

What Does Flexibility in Attendance/Deadlines Mean?

Flexibility in attendance is defined as occasional exceptions to absentee/tardiness policies when educationally feasible.

When is Flexibility in Attendance/Deadlines Authorized as an Accommodation?

Students are expected and encouraged to attend class; the accommodation does not include waiving attendance or participation requirements. Faculty have the right to establish attendance policies. However, if a student has a disability that may occasionally impact their ability to attend class and/or complete assignments and tests at the scheduled time, flexibility in attendance is considered an appropriate accommodation. Hopefully, a student's disability will not interfere with attendance; however, if the student has disability related absences during the semester, the accommodation allows for flexibility in attendance policies and make-up work.

Timing of Request

Students may request the accommodation at any time during the term. However, the accommodation does not apply to any absences or late/missed work prior to the student's request or prior to the student discussing a plan with the instructor, as described below.

Student's Responsibilities

- Student provides appropriate documentation of a disability to Disability Resources (DR)
- Student discusses impact of his/her disability with an Accommodations & Learning Specialist
- If deemed appropriate, flexibility in attendance is added to the student's accommodation letter
- Student checks the box for "Reasonable Flexibility for Attendance or Deadlines" when requesting accommodations in AIMS. *Notification to the instructor must occur before the student can use the accommodation.*
- Student schedules an appointment to meet with the professor to determine a reasonable number of absences for the class and to establish a specific written plan for making up missed work.
- Student will contact the professor (not DR) as soon as possible to inform the professor that the absence was medically necessary.
- Student will adhere to the agreed upon plan and complete make up work within the agreed upon alternate timeline.
- Student will contact DR immediately with any questions or concerns.
- Student is responsible for missed class material and requirements.

Professor's Responsibilities

- Professor meets with student during scheduled appointment to discuss flexibility in attendance and to determine a reasonable number of absences for the class and to establish a specific written plan for making up missed work.
- Professor considers the parameters below in determining the number of acceptable absences and/or late work acceptance.
- Professor will maintain the essential standards/learning outcomes of the class.
- If the student notifies professor of a disability-related absence or need for deadline adjustment, professor will return student's voice mail/e-mail as soon as possible and verify the agreed upon alternate time line for make-up work.
- Professor will contact DR immediately with any questions or concerns.

Disability Resources Responsibilities

- DR discusses accommodation needs with the student and reviews student's documentation. If appropriate, the Accommodations & Learning Specialist determines eligibility for the accommodation.
- DR generates student accommodation letters to faculty when students have made their requests in AIMS.
- DR will, if necessary, help faculty and student develop a plan for completing make-up work.
- DR will address student/faculty questions and concerns regarding accommodations.

Considerations When Determining Parameters Of Flexibility In Attendance

- Policies in the syllabus
 - What does the syllabus say about attendance?
 - If you do have an attendance policy, do you require all students to provide a doctor's note if absent*?
- Is attendance and/or participation factored into the student's final grade?
- Does student participation (whether in discussion or activity) constitute a significant component of the learning process?
- What is the "time in seat" expectation for this class?
- How are students expected to interact with each other (in class, group work outside of class, via Moodle/e-mail)?
- Is the material being learned in the class sequential? Does each week's material build on the material learned in the previous week(s)?
- Are there other sections of the class that the student could attend to catch up on missed material?
- What class guidelines exist for making up missed exams, pop quizzes? Turning in late work? (Mere presence of a stated guideline or policy does not automatically negate the accommodation.)
- Does the class use Moodle?
- Could missed assignments be turned in via discussion board/e-mail?
- Is it possible for students to "work ahead" in this class?

*Students with disabilities that affect attendance often do not go to the doctor when their condition flares up and might not be able to provide a doctor's note for each absence.

Example Scenarios

1. Instructor allows 3 absences and then students' grades drop by a letter grade. A student with flexibility regarding attendance meets with the professor and they determine that the student may be allowed 6 absences and 24 hours to make up any work, provided the student contacts the instructor within 12 hours after a missed class.
2. In a foreign language course, a student is told at the start of the semester that the professor cannot allow much flexibility regarding attendance as much learning depends on classroom interactions. However, the instructor will keep the student's accommodation in mind. Student is hospitalized for a week at the end of the semester and cannot complete a presentation. Instructor allows the student to make the presentation up with only the instructor as this does not essentially alter the course objectives.
3. Instructor gives clicker points for attendance. Instructor allows student to respond to questions via email. However, student must contact instructor and answer questions within 24 hours of class.
4. Student and instructor agree that student can miss class more often than classmates as long as all of the work is completed. However, it is nearing the end of the semester and student has not turned in assignments, has not been in contact with the professor, and has not attended class. In this case, the instructor would not be expected to extend deadlines as student has not taken responsibility for maintaining communication and is not completing coursework.