

Flexibility with Attendance

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

Faculty have the right to establish their own attendance policies.

Flexibility with Attendance refers to exceptions to absence policies when academically feasible. A student with this accommodation who misses class is still responsible for the material covered in that class. This may apply 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 argue and think critically, or to participate in group projects. In other instances, faculty may determine that students can master course content despite some or many absences.

If points are awarded for attendance, flexibility with attendance means that subtracting points for an absence should be waived. The implementation of the accommodation is not required if it is deemed to be a fundamental alteration to a course.

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 can 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 the classroom practices and policies regarding attendance?
- Is the attendance policy consistently applied?
- Is there classroom interaction between the instructor and students, or 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 Memorandum of Accommodation (MOA) and initiate a conversation with the instructor before missing class when possible. Students should contact their assigned counselor if they have concerns with the instructor's response.

- Request to meet with instructors early in the term to discuss if and/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 the student will not be able to turn in a homework assignment or misses a quiz/exam, it will be the student's responsibility to contact the professor to coordinate new due dates.
- Notify instructors regarding an expected and necessary absence or an unexpected, missed class due to a disability-related reason.

Instructor Responsibilities

Instructors who have questions about how to best implement flexibility with attendance or who have concerns regarding fundamental alterations should consult the Accommodations and Accessibility Services Counselor who issued the student's MOA.

- Accommodations are not meant to be retroactive. Absences that occur before receiving the accommodation letter should be handled in accordance with the class attendance policy.
- Provide reasonable time frames for making up missed assignments or assessments due the day of a disability-related absence.
- Confirm receipt of the student's email notification regarding a disability-related absence.

Written Follow-Up and Feedback

Instructors are advised to send an email to the student with a summary of what was discussed and agreed to regarding flexibility with attendance.

- The email information gives each person a chance to address any concerns and helps to ensure that everyone is operating from the same point of view.
- Students and instructors are welcome to include the Accommodations and Accessibility Services Counselor on email exchanges for documentation purposes.