

Attendance and Disability

Students need to be aware that exceptions to attendance policies may not always be possible, given the nature of the individual course, curriculum, or program. Students are required to meet with their instructors early in the semester to discuss this accommodation. This accommodation should not interfere with the essential elements or fundamentally alter the essential requirements of a course or program. The student is expected to consult with the instructor when these instances occur. Consultation between the Office of Accessibility, the student, and the instructor to determine what constitutes as reasonable flexibility and what qualifies as the essential elements is encouraged.

Please note, the Flex Plan is not intended to be a negotiation for accommodations, and students are not required to negotiate to use their accommodations. The purpose of the form is to help students and instructors determine appropriate use of the accommodation for each course. The Office of Accessibility requests that students prioritize completing the flex plan once they have discussed accommodations with their instructor, as soon as possible in the semester, even if there is a chance that the student may not end up needing to utilize the accommodation. The use of accommodations is dependent on the impacts of disability, and given that impacts are not always predictable, students should plan as if they might need to use the accommodation at some point and complete the flex plan each semester. However, the student has the right to request their accommodation(s) and request to discuss their accommodations and complete the flex plan, at any point in the semester. If a student delays the completion of the flex plan, they should anticipate that the accommodation may not be applicable or reasonable, depending on the point in the semester in which they decide to work with their instructor to complete the agreement. The Office of Accessibility is always available to assist students in these conversations and is available for consultation when determining reasonable flexibility and use of accommodation(s).

Student Responsibilities Each Semester:

It is critical that the student with an attendance accommodation understand and adhere to the following expectations:

- **Students should anticipate the possibility of a delay in the use of attendance accommodation(s) if they do not adhere to the implementation of policies and procedures of the accommodation(s). The failure of the student to meet with the faculty member could prohibit the ability to provide the requested accommodation.**
- Students are expected to be present for all scheduled class times unless they are unable to attend due to an exacerbation of the symptoms of their disability. The accommodation is not intended to be used for every class period.
- All students, including students who have an attendance accommodation, must meet the fundamental objectives and essential requirements of the class in order to successfully complete the course.
- Students are expected to inform faculty and other affected parties (i.e., clinical supervisor, field instructor, Disability Specialist, etc.) when they miss class and why. If unable to reach the faculty member, the student should contact their Disability Specialist as soon as possible. Students are also expected to copy their Disability Specialist on any request for flexibility in assignment deadlines and/or test dates.

- It is the student's responsibility to work with faculty to determine how best to compensate for any missed classes/course work. Faculty are not obligated to re-teach material missed due to absence.
- Students should familiarize themselves with each individual course attendance policy as stated by the instructor or in the class syllabus.
- Students need to observe deadlines for submission of assignments. Extension of deadlines and making up exams cannot be guaranteed and will be considered on a case-by-case basis with the faculty.
- Flexibility in testing dates and/or assignment deadlines should only be requested in the event students are experiencing an exacerbation in the symptoms of their disability and are not intended to be used for every assignment.
- Students should be aware that not all assignments (e.g., group work) are appropriate for flexibility in assignment deadlines. Additionally, if flexibility in assignment deadlines are granted due to an absence it cannot extend past the end of the current semester. A consideration for an In Progress/Incomplete is at the sole discretion of the academic department and based on the standards in place within the academic department.
- It is the student's responsibility to work with their instructor to determine a reasonable time frame for flexibility in assignment deadlines and/or test dates for each individual assignment or test for which the student has been approved by faculty for an extension.
- Students should understand that flexibility in assignment deadlines and/or test dates are not retroactive and are contingent on discussing the expectations and implementation of the accommodation(s) with the instructor(s) at the beginning of the semester.
- Students should be advised that the duration of an assignment extension, if approved, may vary depending on the semester. For example, during summer sessions, an instructor may offer a shorter assignment extension due to having fewer weeks for students to complete all course requirements.
- Students are required to communicate with their instructors to discuss attendance accommodations for their individual courses. Following the conversation, students are required to complete the online *Flex Plan* each semester within two weeks of the accommodation letter being sent.
 - Upon completing the form, a copy will be sent to the instructor for approval. The instructor will have the opportunity to verify that the completed form accurately reflects the discussion with the student and ensure the agreement includes the details of the attendance accommodation arrangements for the course. In the event the instructor feels the flex plan does not accurately outline the agreed upon terms, they will have the ability to request revisions or further discuss the accommodations with the student.
- At the start of the semester, students are required to develop a basic communication script in conjunction with their instructor and Disability Specialist. This script can be used as a template and sent when the student experiences an exacerbation of their disability-related symptoms. This is intended to keep the lines of communication open, while also providing the student with a clear plan for when they are experiencing an exacerbation in the symptoms of their disability.
- The Office of Accessibility is available for consultation if faculty becomes concerned when the number of absences and/or requests for flexibility in assignment deadlines and test dates begins to fundamentally alter the essential elements of the course. The faculty member, Disability Specialist, and student can discuss what options are available to the student at that time.

Discussion Points for Student, Disability Specialist and Faculty Member:

- Would modification of attendance policies, assignment deadlines, and/or test dates be a fundamental alteration of the course or curriculum?
- Are classroom interactions and dialogue between the instructor and students and among students, a fundamental element of the course?
- Does student participation constitute a significant component of the learning process for the class?

- Does the fundamental nature of the course rely on student participation as an essential method for learning?
- To what degree does a student's failure to attend class constitute a significant loss to the educational experience of the class as a whole?
- Are attendance requirements listed in the course syllabus? What are the classroom practices and policies regarding attendance?
- What method is used to calculate a final grade for the course?
- Are there specific assignments or exams, which have unmovable dates, and would not be permitted for flexibility?
- If an absence occurs on a date that an assignment is due or there is a scheduled exam, will the student be able to submit the assignment via email or turn it in late and/or reschedule the exam?
- How many requests for flexibility in attendance, assignment deadlines, and/or test dates throughout the semester would be considered reasonable for a student to still be able to meet the fundamental objectives and essential requirements of the course?
- What is considered reasonable advanced notice of a student's intention to utilize a request for flexibility in assignment deadlines and/or test dates?