

Flexible Attendance Procedure

Attendance is recognized as an important component to the learning process in higher education. Some faculty have established strictly enforced policies regarding the number of absences that will be allowed before a student faces sanctions. However, for some students with disabilities have medical-related conditions of an episodic nature or other established reasons that their disability may make it difficult for them to fulfill the typical attendance requirements. The Office of Disability Services (ODS) has established the following procedure for considering/granting leniency in such classroom attendance policies.

1. Students with disabilities must request consideration of this accommodation from ODS at the beginning of the semester in which the accommodation is requested. The determination of the curricular impact and appropriateness of such request will be considered for each class individually. Requests submitted into the semester will only take into account attendance requirements going forward and will not affect absences that may have already occurred.
2. Documentation must be provided that indicates both why the student may need to miss classes and to what extent. While it is understood that the student cannot always predict accurately the number or percent of absences anticipated, the student is asked to provide some indication of the scope of the request.
3. ODS will evaluate the request and the documentation provided to determine whether the student has provided justifiable disability-based reasons for requesting consideration in attendance requirements. Documentation will be held in ODS and will be considered confidential. If it is determined that the reasons provided do not constitute a need for accommodation in this regard, the student will be notified of this decision.
4. If it is determined that the request is justified by the impact of the student's disability, then faculty from each class in which the student is enrolled for that semester will be contacted by ODS to request information on any established attendance policies for the class and the importance of attendance/participation to the curricular integrity and learning process. Class attendance for traditionally offered classes is considered a significant aspect of participatory learning. All requests for leniency in attendance requirements will be evaluated carefully, with due consideration given to the following information to be offered by faculty:
 - a. What does the course description and syllabus say about attendance?
 - b. Is there classroom interaction between the instructor and students, and among students?
 - c. Do student contributions and participation in class constitute a significant component of the learning process (e.g., discussion, presentations, role play, group work)?
 - d. To what degree does a student's failure to attend class compromise the educational experience of other students in the class?

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- e. Does the fundamental nature of the course rely on student participation as an essential method for learning?
 - f. What is the method by which the final course grade is calculated?
 - g. What are the classroom practices and policies regarding attendance?
5. If it is determined that it is not possible to consider leniency regarding attendance policies for a given course, the student will be so informed and will be given the opportunity to discuss other accommodation options.
6. If the accommodation is deemed appropriate, both the student and the faculty member will be provided with a letter explaining both the established boundaries of the accommodation and the responsibilities of both faculty and student in carrying out this accommodation.
- a. Students are responsible for contacting the faculty member as soon as possible when a disability-related absence will occur/has occurred and, as necessary, informing the faculty member as to when the student will return to class. If the student is unable to reach the faculty member directly, the student or someone acting on his/her behalf may contact ODS and the information will be relayed to the faculty member.
 - b. This accommodation potentially provides relief from requirements for physical attendance in classes. The student is responsible for any material covered or work done during such disability-necessitated absences; **NEITHER** extension of deadlines for assignments due, **NOR** arrangements for making up tests and exams missed during such absence are to be assumed in this assigned accommodation. These issues must be negotiated individually with faculty as need arises.
7. If, at any time, the faculty member believes that the student's absences from class threaten the academic integrity of the curriculum or the accomplishment of learning objectives, the faculty member should contact ODS **as soon as possible**. After consulting with the faculty member, ODS staff will contact the student to review available options.