

## Flexible Attendance Policy and Procedure

Attendance is recognized as an important component to the learning process in higher education. Strict attendance policies allowing a specific number of absences before grades are sanctioned may foster student accountability and intra-class responsibility for many students. However, for some students with conditions of an episodic nature or other established reasons, their disabilities may make it difficult to fulfill the attendance requirements. Disability Services has established a policy for considering/assigning leniency in such classroom attendance policies.

1. Students seeking consideration for leniency in attendance must request this accommodation at the beginning of the semester in which it is being requested. 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. Consideration for leniency in attendance policy is based on the curricular impact and the appropriateness of the request and will be considered for each class individually. In other words, this accommodation, if granted, is determined based on consideration of the course's attendance policy, as determined by the professor, as well as other factors, such as class schedule and time of day.
4. Documentation must be provided that addresses why the condition(s) might limit the student's attendance and to what extent. Disability Services 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. 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.
5. 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 Disability Services 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 as a factor of the course grade?
  - b. What classroom interaction between the instructor and students and/or among students exists that impacts the educational experience?
  - c. Does the fundamental nature of the course rely upon student participation as an essential method of learning?
  - d. Is there content only offered in class?
  - e. Are assignments used as class content when they are due (e.g., problem sets reviewed as the first lecture on that content)?
  - f. How many additional disability-related absences (if any) would the professor be willing to allow before it gets to a point where the student is no longer able to successfully master the material in the class?
6. 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.
  7. 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 Disability Services and the information will be relayed to the faculty member.
  8. 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.
  9. 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 Disability Services AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. After consulting with the faculty member, Disability Services staff will contact the student to review available options.