



Department of Student
Development

Student Disability Services

Information on Flexible Attendance Procedures

Some students may have chronic disorders which affect the student's ability to attend class. These disorders may be cyclical in nature with only occasional interference with school, or they may interfere with attendance on a constant basis. Adjustments to attendance policies can be reasonable accommodations under certain circumstances depending on the nature of the course. It is important that the student and the faculty discuss attendance issues early in the semester and determine a reasonable adjustment based on the nature of the course.

*****The student is responsible for fulfilling the essential requirements for the course.*****

The Office of Civil Rights has developed the following questions to use as guidelines in determining whether or not attendance is an essential requirement for the course:

1. Is there significant classroom interaction between the instructor and students, and among students?
2. Do student contributions constitute a significant component of the learning process?
3. Does the fundamental nature of the course rely upon student participation as an essential method for learning?
4. To what degree does a student's failure to attend constitute a significant loss to the educational experience of other students in the class?
5. What do the course description and syllabus say?
6. Which method is used to calculate the final grade?
7. What are the classroom practices and policies regarding attendance?

Faculty should review these questions and determine to what extent attendance is an essential requirement in each course and how much flexibility would be reasonable in order to allow a student an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the course. The faculty should be able to demonstrate that an interactive process occurred between student and faculty in determining appropriate adjustments. Students who have "flexible attendance" as a recommended accommodation are expected to meet with each faculty member early in the semester to discuss this accommodation and develop a plan for attendance accommodations for the course. The plan should include the following:

1. Identify adjustments for attendance, which may include identifying a specific number of additional absences permitted before the grade is affected, assignments to substitute for attendance, attending a different section of the course with the same professor, etc.
2. Determine specific timelines for submitting required work and tests. Extensions for deadlines and tests should be discussed and planned in advance.
3. Specify how the student should communicate with the faculty regarding absences (email, D2L, phone, etc.). If medical documentation of absences is available, the student should submit that documentation to the SDS office which will then let the teacher know the absence is excused. In cases where students self-manage their disorder and do not see a doctor for every absence, the student and faculty should decide in advance how determining whether absences are disability-related will be accomplished.
4. Determine how the student will obtain material missed during lecture, e.g. notes from another student, asking another student to audio record lectures, faculty notes/handouts, etc.
5. Accommodations are not retroactive. Students are expected to meet with faculty and make arrangements in advance to address possible attendance issues. The Student Disability Services office is available for consultation if requested by either party.