

WSU Access Center's Flexible Attendance Guidelines for Students with Disabilities

Some students have medical conditions of an episodic nature that may require flexibility regarding attendance. The Access Center (AC) recognizes that in some cases, allowing absences beyond those normally allowed in a course is a reasonable accommodation. However, we also recognize there are courses in which a specified standard of attendance may be an essential part of the course.

Procedure: AC has established the following procedure for considering requests for flexibility in classroom attendance policies:

1. Students with disabilities request accommodations prior to the beginning of each semester (or when first diagnosed) and provide medical documentation in accordance with AC's standard procedures.
2. If AC makes an initial determination that flexible attendance may be a reasonable accommodation, AC provides the student with a Letter of Accommodation and/or a Flexible Attendance Guideline and Flexible Attendance Agreement (Agreement) for each course.
3. The student then schedules an appointment with each faculty member to discuss and complete the Agreement. The Agreement and the Letter of Accommodation must be signed by both the student and the faculty member. Both should retain copies, and the student must provide a copy of both forms to the AC within two weeks of meeting with the Access Advisor. AC will review the Agreement and contact the student and/or faculty member if there are concerns.
4. If a disagreement arises on one or more points of the Agreement, then the student and/or faculty member must contact AC immediately. In consultation with the student and the faculty member, AC will then determine the appropriate level of flexible attendance to be granted, if any. Factors considered include, but are not limited to, the student's individual circumstances as well as the importance of attendance/participation to the curricular integrity, including:
 - a. Is there regular classroom interaction between the instructor and students and among the students themselves?
 - b. Do student contributions in class constitute a significant component of the learning process?
 - c. Does the fundamental nature of the course rely upon student participation as an essential method of learning?
 - d. To what degree does a student's failure to attend class constitute a significant loss of the educational experience of other students in the class?
 - e. What does the course description and syllabus say regarding attendance?
 - f. What is the method by which the final course grade is calculated?
5. AC's determination will be communicated in writing to the student and the faculty member.

Faculty Member Responsibilities:

1. As in all instances of students with disabilities, faculty members should not ask about the specifics of the disability and its limitations, but if the student divulges that information, faculty should keep it confidential.
2. Faculty members should never deny an accommodation approved by AC without first contacting AC.
3. If, at any time, the faculty member has concerns about a requested accommodation, s/he should contact the AC AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
4. Faculty members should be available to discuss the accommodation with the student and be clear in their expectations in completing the forms discussed above, as those agreements will guide the terms of the accommodation.

Student Responsibilities:

1. Students must schedule an appointment with the faculty member to complete the forms described above. The student should be clear in completing these forms, as they will guide the terms of the accommodation.
2. 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 contact the faculty member themselves, they should have someone in mind to contact the faculty member on their behalf.
3. This accommodation potentially provides relief from requirements for physical attendance in classes. The student is responsible for all course material, including materials covered or work done during such disability-necessitated absences. Student should be aware that they are still required to meet all of the course's core learning objectives and curricular outcomes. Neither extension of deadlines for assignments due, nor arrangements for making up tests and exams missed during such absence are included in this assigned accommodation and must be negotiated individually with faculty as need arises.
4. If, at any time, the student feels that the terms of the Agreement are not being met, the student should contact AC AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. AC will then contact the faculty member and discuss available options.