

Flexibility with Attendance/Assignments

Students are expected and encouraged to attend class and meet deadlines for assignments and tests. Faculty have the right to establish attendance and late work policies. However, if a student has a disability with random or cyclical acute episodes that may occasionally impact her/his ability to attend class and complete tests or assignments at the scheduled time, flexibility in attendance/assignments may be considered an appropriate accommodation. The number of allowable absences and length of assignment extensions depends on the interactive or participatory nature of a course, or is based on department, college or accrediting agency rules.

Student Accessibility Services (SAS) has created guidelines for COCC students & faculty to help navigate this accommodation. Please see the detailed policy below.

Disability Related Flexibility in Attendance/Assignments Policy and Guidelines

Attendance and Assignments Deadlines:

Students are expected and encouraged to attend classes on a regular basis. Faculty have the right to establish attendance policies. The number of allowable absences depends on the interactive or participatory nature of a course, or is based on department, college or accrediting agency rules.

Therefore, attendance policies are set by faculty at the college or departmental level.

Students are expected and encouraged to meet all deadlines for assignments and tests. Faculty have the right to establish late work policies.

What does Flexibility in Attendance/Assignments mean?

Students who may not adhere to an attendance policy or may miss an assignment deadline or test due to circumstances directly related to a disability may seek an accommodation. The process for requesting this accommodation is through Services for Students with Disabilities (SAS). All requests are considered individually.

When are Flexibility in Attendance/Assignment Deadlines Appropriate?

Some disabilities are episodic in nature with random or cyclical acute episodes and as a result the disability may occasionally impact the students' ability to attend class, complete an assignment or take an exam at the scheduled time. In cases such as these, flexibility in attendance/assignments may be considered an appropriate accommodation.

If you are contacted by SAS via a Letter of Accommodation about possible flexibility in your attendance/assignments as a possible accommodation, we will seek an understanding in the role attendance plays in the design of your course. As well a basic understanding of the impact or role timing of assignments and exams play in the interactive or participatory nature of a course.

Specifically, we will be exploring:

- What is the course attendance policy? What do the course description and syllabus say?
- What method is used to calculate the final grade? (attendance, assignments, exams, etc.)
- Is the attendance policy and late work or missed exams policy applied consistently? Are there exceptions to the policy made for extenuating circumstances, such as athletic travel or religious observation?
- How much interaction is there between the instructor and students and among students?
- Do student contributions constitute a significant component of the learning process?
- Does the design of the course rely on student participation as a significant method for learning? Attendance and/or their assignment (project) contributions.
- Is there content only offered in class?
- To what degree does a student's failure to attend class or do an assignment on time compromise the educational experience of other students in the class?

If an accommodation is determined to be reasonable, SAS will work with you and your student if necessary to clearly specify:

- How and when your student should inform you he/she will miss class
- How your student will make up missed assignments and/or exams
- The number of absences (beyond what any student is allowed) that would be reasonable
- If it is reasonable for online discussion expectations to be modified due to disability related reasons and under what conditions
- If it is reasonable to extend the window for completing online exams or assignments
- Whether a drop, withdraw or incomplete may be appropriate based on your students' situation

What is the process?

1. The SAS Office determines that the accommodation is reasonable. We explain to students that this does not mean that they can miss as many classes as they want. Also, the student is responsible for completing all coursework.
2. SAS will have a link to the Disability Related Flexibility in Attendance/Assignments Agreement to faculty with guidance for faculty to fill out the agreement. Any questions should be directed to SAS (541-383-7743). The faculty member and student should sign the agreement early in the term, and prior to any absences.

Tip: A general rule to consider for determining a reasonable timeframe for a makeup or postponement of an assignment, paper, exam or quiz is the time equivalent to that, which was missed. In certain courses, it may be appropriate to consider an alternative assignment, reading or project to make up for missed class discussions or projects. Other examples of how disability absences might be accommodated may include the ability to turn in assignment/papers late without a grade penalty or the ability to make up any assignments, quizzes or exams that have been missed without a grade penalty.

3. If the student has concerns or questions regarding what the faculty has indicated in the agreement, SAS will help to resolve these issues with conversations between faculty and/or students.

Important Information:

- This accommodation is not a blanket reason to miss class.
- Faculty are still responsible for this accommodation even if they delay in responding to SAS. DO NOT WAIT!
- Some students register late in the term and some wait to respond to the need to sign the agreement. In these cases, faculty are not expected to provide retroactive accommodations. However, it may still be helpful to have this information, even at a late point in the term.
- At no time is the student required to present the faculty member with medical documentation verifying his/her disability related absence for this accommodation.
- If the absences meet or exceed 50% of those agreed upon in the Flexibility in Attendance/Assignments Agreement, SAS should be informed. This will allow SAS to be of assistance in answering questions about the accommodations from both the student and the faculty member.
- Absences that are not related to the effects of a disability are not included in this accommodation (i.e. absences due to a common illness, car trouble, etc.) and should be addressed according to the syllabus stated attendance/absence policy. The student is responsible for following the faculty member's syllabus regarding absences due to non-disability related issues.
- An accommodation in attendance is not reasonable if regular attendance is essential to the course and/or curriculum.
- Faculty are not obligated to re-teach material missed due to not attending class.
- Not every course component can be provided an extension.
- Students have the responsibility for completing all class work and should be held to the same standard as all other students.