

Modification of Course Attendance Policy Guidance

Federal law requires colleges and universities to consider reasonable modification of attendance policies if needed to accommodate a student's disability that impacts attendance. The disabilities covered under this accommodation are typically chronic or episodic in nature and may impact class participation as well as the ability to complete assignments, exams and quizzes. A disability-related absence as defined by the Office of Disability Access (ODA) is when a student is absent due to the symptoms associated with the student's documented disability. This accommodation does not apply to absences for other reasons. The student is not required to present the professor with medical documentation verifying his/her disability-related absence. Please communicate with ODA if there is a concern.

The Office of Disability Access (ODA) requires that students with a disability-related need for a modification in a course attendance policy meet with their instructors to discuss the extent to which a modification may be reasonable for a particular class. Following this meeting, the student and instructor should have a clear understanding of what accommodations can be made for disability-related absences.

To facilitate this discussion, the ODA has created a form, Memorandum of Understanding and responsibilities (MOU), for guidance as well as an understanding of how this accommodation would work in individual courses. This MOU should be reviewed and completed to clearly set out expectations. ODA staff are available to consult with instructors and students on issues concerning disability and attendance. ***Students can request their ODA Coordinators assistance in facilitating the completion of this MOU.*** For more information about what should be considered prior to completing this MOU, contact the ODA.

This accommodation allows for a reasonable amount of additional absences and the ability to make up missed assignments, exams and quizzes within a specified timeframe.

Limitations of this accommodation assert the following:

- Unlimited and excessive absences are unreasonable.
- Use of this accommodation is not permitted for seasonal illness and disabilities not documented by the ODA.
- This accommodation may not alter the essential component of the course. Therefore, this accommodation may not be permissible where class attendance or participation is considered to be an essential component of the course.

Assessing Whether Class Attendance is Essential

Professors may also review the guidelines provided by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) to assess if attendance is an essential component of their course:

- Is there classroom interaction between the instructor and students and among students?
- Do student contributions in class constitute a significant component of the learning process?
- Does the fundamental nature of the course rely on student participation as an essential method for learning?
- To what degree does a student's failure to attend constitute a significant loss to the educational experience of other students in the class?



- What do the course description and syllabus say?
- What method is used to calculate the final grade?
- What are the classroom practices and policies regarding attendance?

Evaluating the Role of Class Participation

Our focus in this accommodation is on the essential element of participation. With that in mind please review the following questions below, as ODA may need this information. These questions are designed to help identify the role in-class participation has toward students meeting course outcomes/objectives. If concerns come up, or agreements are not able to be reached, contact ODA:

- What does the syllabus state regarding attendance, participation, and deadlines? Have exceptions been made in the past? What is the role of these policies as it relates to the course?
- What stated learning outcomes/objectives require participation?
- Is attendance factored in as part of the final course grade? If yes, how? What is the percentage of the grade? Is this a course, department, or college policy?
- Is there classroom interaction between the instructor and students, and/or among students?
- Is the format of instruction primarily lecture or interactive? Does instruction and learning rely on specific elements from the previous session or assignment?
- Does the course rely on student participation as a method for learning?
- What is the impact on the educational experience of other students in the class?
- Is there content only offered in class?
- Do student contributions constitute a significant component of the learning process? (e.g. discussion, presentations, role play)? What is the impact on the educational experience of other students in the class if a student is absent or misses a deadline? Are assignments used as class content when they are due? (e.g. problem sets reviewed as the first lecture on that content)

If attendance can be justified as an integral part of how the course is taught and/or how learning is to be demonstrated and measured, there can be a point at which disability-related absences cannot be reasonably accommodated. If at any point, the instructor and/or the student have any questions or concerns about this process, the **Attendance Policy Modification Agreement**, and/or the provision of this accommodation, the Office of Disability Access should be notified as soon as possible so they can address the concerns and work to resolve them.

If the maximum number of allowed absences is exceeded during the semester, the student and instructor must meet to discuss an appropriate course of action (such as: student will be granted an incomplete; student will be advised to withdraw from the course; the number of absences allowed will be reviewed, etc.; penalties outlined in syllabus will apply). The Office of Disability Access should be informed as soon as possible so they can work with the instructor and student to come to a reasonable solution.



**Modification of Course Attendance Policy Agreement
Understanding and Responsibilities
for**

Course: _____

Semester: _____

After reviewing the guidance materials and engaging in discussion about the course requirements, below are the agreed upon course parameters for the implementation of disability-related absences in this specific class. If any concerns come up, please engage the ODA. Professors should determine how many absences are reasonable for their course by completing sections A, B, and C of this form.

A. Disability Related Absences

If in-class participation is essential to the course, instructor must state below the percentage or number of absences that can be permitted according to attendance policy in course syllabus.

- 2 absences
- 4 absences
- 6 absences
- Percentage or Other _____
- I have no attendance policy and/or class attendance is not monitored. (If chosen, please skip to Section B)

Instructor, using the OCR Guidelines, please detail the **maximum** amount absences allowable in this course. (For example, if your syllabus permits 6 absences in your attendance policy; and based on your analysis using OCR guidelines you determine that the student can miss an additional 3 absences, please enter 9 absences below.)

Student will be allotted a maximum of _____ absences in this course.

- Notification of Absences

Student will be responsible for notifying the instructor of a disability related absence.

- Within 8 hours of the missed class
- Within 24 hours of the missed class
- Within 48 hours of the missed class
- Other _____

Detail how the student should be responsible to notify the instructor of a disability related absence.

- Email _____
- Phone _____
- Other: _____

B. Assignments/Examinations

A disability related absence can impact the student's ability to turn in homework, assignments, or projects due the day of a disability related absence. The disability may also impact the student's ability to complete exams or quizzes at the designated time. The section below will help detail a reasonable plan of action to submit/make-up missed assignments or exams within a specified timeframe.

(Please note: Disability related absences are not intended to be used to provide extensions on long-term assignments. For short-term assignments (assignment with a 3-day turnaround or less) students experiencing a disability related absence should be permitted to turn in work late without grade penalty. In these situations, a general rule to consider for determining a reasonable make-up timeframe would be the amount of time equivalent to that which was missed. In some courses, it may be appropriate to consider an alternative assignment, reading or project to make up for missed class discussions or projects.)

If due to a disability related absence, Student is responsible for submitting **missed assignments, homework, or projects** to instructor.

- Within 48 hours of the missed deadline
- Other _____

How should the student submit the assignment?

- Bring assignment to the instructor's office
- Bring assignment to the next scheduled class
- Email assignment to the instructor
- Other _____

If due to a disability related absence, Student is responsible for contacting the instructor to make up **missed exam/quiz**.

- Within 4 hours of the missed exam/quiz
- Within 8 hours of the missed exam/quiz
- Other _____

Detail how the student should be responsible to notify the instructor of a **missed exam/quiz**.

- Email _____
- Phone _____
- Other _____

C. Attendance Points/ Participation Points/ Group Discussion Points

Instructors are asked to consider points and assignments connected to attendance. If applicable, detail the following:

Procedure for making up attendance points missed due to a disability related absence.

Procedure for making up participation points missed due to a disability related absence.

Procedure for making up group discussion points missed due to a disability related absence.

This is a **Memorandum of Understanding** between the student and instructor regarding the expectations of the attendance flexibility accommodation in this class. The student and/or instructor **should contact the ODA at 940-565-4323** to request the student's ODA Coordinator if:

- Terms of agreement are not being met
- Questions or further guidance is needed
- Absences meet or exceed 50% of those agreed upon

Please send the completed form back to the Office of Disability Access (Apply.ODA@unt.edu) and keeping copies for each person.

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Instructor Signature _____ Date _____

ODA Use

ODA Coordinator's Signature _____ Date _____

Coordinator Notes: