



Occasional Extension of Due Dates Guidance

Office of Disability Access

Regardless of a disability, all students are responsible for fulfilling the essential requirements of courses/programs/degrees. However, some students have disabilities that can impact their ability to complete assignments by the due date, including, but not limited to, students whose conditions are (1) episodic in nature, or (2) change and may result in problematic symptoms. One such accommodation is extended deadlines for assignments, which requires communication between the student, the Office of Disability Access, and the faculty member. The following guidelines are provided to assist with that process.

The Office of Disability Access can provide verification that a student has a disability which may address the legitimacy of an extension request, however, the ultimate decision regarding the number of extensions is at the discretion of the instructor. This document is intended to support faculty and students alike in having this conversation regarding the reasonableness of deadline extensions.

Procedures and Responsibilities:

Office of Disability Access Responsibilities:

1. As with all accommodations, through an interactive process with the student, the ODA will determine if an occasional extended deadline accommodation is warranted. If it is, the ODA will approve Occasional Extension of Due Dates (up to 48 hours).
2. If the student requests this accommodation for a specific course, this information will be included in the Letter of Accommodation, which outlines all accommodations for each course. This is sent to the faculty member at the student's request from the Office of Disability Access.
3. Upon request by either the student or the faculty member, the ODA will mediate concerns about implementing the accommodation. This includes questions regarding how the accommodation interacts with essential elements of the course and determining if or what adjustments are educationally feasible. Faculty and students

should not hesitate to involve the Office of Disability Access in these discussions.

Student Responsibilities:

1. Students are required to request letters of accommodation for each class in which they are needed. These will be emailed to faculty members from the ODA upon the student's request.
2. Extensions are not automatically granted for work that is due. It is the student's responsibility to discuss extensions on assignments with the faculty member before the assignments are due unless the student is incapacitated or completely unable to do so due to disability. In these cases, the student should contact the Office of Disability Access as soon as they are medically able.
3. It is recommended that the faculty member and student confirm the details of how this accommodation will be implemented in writing. This is to avoid future miscommunications or confusion. The agreement below is one tool for doing so. Some faculty and students may opt to do so simply over email. If so, the student should save the email to keep a record.
4. The student should adhere to the agreed-upon plan and complete the work within the 48 hours as specified by the accommodation. The faculty member's class policy on late work (e.g., 10 points off a grade for each day late) will remain if the student fails to meet an agreed-upon disability-related extension or misses deadlines for unrelated reasons.
5. If the faculty member says extensions of deadlines are not possible, the student should notify the Office of Disability Access immediately. The Office of Disability Access recognizes the power differential between a faculty member and student and does not want this to interfere with the implementation of an accommodation. However, sometimes extensions are not possible, and the Office of Disability Access Coordinator will assist the student in navigating these situations.

Faculty Member Responsibilities:

1. Upon receiving the letter of accommodation from the Office of Disability Access, the faculty member should be available to discuss the accommodation with the student. The faculty member may assess the degree to which strict adherence to assignment due dates is an essential part of a class by following the questions listed below, which are provided by the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights.
2. When an assignment extension is requested, the faculty member should determine if an extension is reasonable or if it will be necessary to first consult with the Office of Disability Access. The faculty member should respond to the student as soon as possible in writing (preferably by email).
3. It is important to provide the student – in writing and clarified as needed through

further discussion – with clear expectations of how deadline extensions will be handled, as detailed in the agreement below.

If the faculty member believes extending assignment due dates results in a fundamental alteration of the course, the faculty member is required to request a consultation with the Office of Disability Access. Faculty members should never unilaterally deny a student's approved accommodation.

Determining if Deadline Extensions are Reasonable

In general, extensions on assignment due dates may be considered reasonable in an academic setting. However, an extension would not be a reasonable accommodation if it would result in a fundamental alteration to the course (defined as a change that is so significant that it alters the essential nature of the course).

There are some classes or instances in which assignment due dates cannot be adjusted for an individual student without resulting in a fundamental alteration to the course. Such classes might include, but not be limited to, the following:

- those that rely on project-based learning where sequential assignments strictly build upon the material learned from the previous week(s), or
- classes where students are expected to work as a group and failure to complete an assignment or project on time would compromise the educational experience of other students.

The following questions have been provided by the Office of Civil Rights for this discussion:

- What are the essential course requirements?
- Would an extension (or multiple extensions) fundamentally alter the course?
- Does the fundamental nature of the course rely upon timely completion of assignments as an essential method of learning?
- To what degree does a student's failure to submit timely completion of assignments constitute a significant loss of the educational experience for other students in the class?

The accommodation should be provided unless the accommodation threatens the integrity of the course as offered. It is important that the student and course instructor discuss this accommodation. Requests for accommodation for deadline extension should be considered on an individual and course-by-course basis.

Accommodating Deadline Extensions

If a student is approved for an Occasional Extension of Due Dates (up to 48 hours) accommodation due to a disability-related circumstance, the student must work with each professor to determine which assignments will be allowed without compromising the integrity of the course or program. To help facilitate the discussion and set parameters between an instructor and a student, an Occasional Extension of Due Dates Agreement may be completed by the student and instructor for each course to clarify expectations and set guidelines. This document is not required by the Office of Disability Access but may be useful. Additionally, if the student or faculty member wishes for the Office of Disability Access Coordinator to be involved in this conversation, our office would be glad to do so.

The conversation regarding this accommodation should be held at the beginning of the semester or as soon as the student presents the accommodations letter to the instructor. A conversation regarding this accommodation and a mutual understanding of how this accommodation will be provided should be established before late assignments or projects have become an issue. Instructors are only required to provide approved disability-related accommodations after receiving a letter of accommodation and a discussion between the student and professor has taken place. Because this specific accommodation is so complex, if a student opts to not have a conversation with their faculty member regarding this accommodation, it is up to the discretion of the faculty member to honor it.

Clarification:

This accommodation is not intended to cover the following:

- Unlimited acceptance of late work - Extensions should be specific to individual assignments.
- Retroactive requests - Providing an accommodation letter does not reverse any previously missed deadlines. Some students may register with the ODA later in the term or wait to request their letter accommodation for the course. Presenting an accommodation letter mid-semester would not reverse any previously missed deadlines.
- Failure to follow agreed-upon plans for communication and submission of work.
- Personal organization and time management difficulties - Students must factor

in the reality of their own personal situation and use time effectively to complete assignments. Taking a heavy course load, having a job outside of school or other family commitments do not justify allowing an accommodation even if they have a diagnosed disability that may otherwise support this accommodation.



Occasional Extension of Due Dates Agreement

Office of Disability Access

Course: _____ Term: _____

Instructor: _____ Student: _____

After reviewing the guidance materials and engaging in discussion about the course requirements, below are the agreed-upon course parameters for the implementation of occasional extensions of due dates (up to 48 hours) for disability-related reasons. If any concerns arise in the discussions, please engage the ODA. The ODA is always able to support the faculty member and student in these conversations. While this form is not required, it is encouraged to facilitate clear communication and expectations based on the individual course format and instruction.

The following should be considered for each course:

- What are the essential course requirements?
- Would an extension (or multiple extensions) fundamentally alter the course?
- Does the fundamental nature of the course rely upon timely completion of assignments as an essential method of learning?
- To what degree does a student's failure to submit timely completion of assignments constitute a significant loss of the educational experience for other students in the class?
- Is the material being learned in the class sequential? Does each week's material build on the material learned in the previous week(s)?
- Is it possible for students to "work ahead" in this class?

The Office of Disability Access requires that students with a disability-related need for occasional deadline extensions meet with their instructors to discuss the extent to which deadline extension 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 deadline extension.

A. What types of assignments are included in this course?

- Discussion Boards
- Group Projects
- Short-term assignments
- Long-term projects
- Other – Please describe: _____

B. How should the student notify the faculty member of the need for an extension for the specific assignment? Please note: This notification must be sent prior to the assignment deadline unless the student is prevented from doing so due to disability.

- E-mail to Instructor
- Email to TA
- Canvas message to Instructor
- Canvas message to TA
- Notification in person to the instructor
- Notification in person to the TA

C. What is the procedure for turning in homework/assignments/projects due?
(Canvas, email, in-class, etc.).

- Submission via the Canvas submission box
- Submission via Canvas message
- Submission via e-mail
- Submission during class

D. Are there any due dates in which a student's failure to submit timely completion of assignments constitute a significant loss of the educational experience for other students in the class?

- Yes
- No
- Need to discuss with ODA

E. If D was answered “yes”, these assignments may not be reasonable for an extension on. If the faculty member and student are in agreement, please list those specific assignments below.

- Assignments:
- N/A

F. What are the consequences if the student does not meet the extended deadline? (Typically, faculty will treat the missed extended deadline as they treat a missed initial deadline for students without this accommodation.)

G. Are there any additional important items of note regarding this accommodation?

If it is thought that timely completion of an assignment or project 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 extensions cannot be reasonably accommodated. If the faculty member believes this to be the case, UNT Policy 16.001 requires that the faculty member engage with the student's ODA Coordinator to discuss this and if necessary, approve alternative accommodations.

Once this agreement has been completed, the student is encouraged to provide a copy of the completed and signed agreement to the Office of Disability Access. Both the instructor and student should retain copies as well. If assignments are not turned in by the terms of the agreement, the student and instructor must meet to discuss an appropriate course of action (such as the student's grade is given in alignment with how other missing grades in the class are handled.)

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Instructor Signature: _____ Date: _____