

Modified Attendance Policy

Purdue University Fort Wayne Disability Access Center views that in most cases, class attendance is critical to a student's mastery of the knowledge and skills that are taught in a specific course. However, some students with disabilities may be approved for an accommodation of modified attendance due to a disability which may require the development of a Modified Attendance Agreement for a student in a specific course. Generally these students have disabilities which are chronic or episodic in nature which may cause difficulties with regular class attendance. If the student or instructor needs assistance with implementing this accommodation, please contact the Disability Access Center.

Determining How Many Disability-Related Absences Are Reasonable

When determining the appropriateness of a Modified Attendance Agreement consider the following:

- Statements in the syllabus and course description regarding attendance grading methods.
- Whether student participation is an essential method for learning.
- The need or lack thereof for classroom interaction.
- The impact, if any, which non-attendance will have on the educational experience of other students.

The accommodation should be provided unless the accommodation poses a fundamental alteration of the course as offered. It is important that the student and course instructor discuss the issue so that the student can then make an informed decision regarding options. Requests for accommodations for absences due to a disability should be considered on an individual and course-by-course basis.

Accommodating Class Absences

When a class is missed due to a disability related absence, a general rule for determining a reasonable timeframe for a makeup or postponement of an assignment (such as a 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 discussion or projects. Other examples of how disability related absences may be accommodated may include the ability to submit or make up missed assignments or assessments that have been impacted by the disability-related absence without grade penalty. To help facilitate the discussion, and set parameters between an instructor and a student a Modified Attendance Agreement should be completed by the student and instructor for each course to clarify expectations and set guidelines.

- The Modified Attendance Agreement should be completed at the beginning of the semester or as soon as the student presents the Course Accessibility Letter to the instructor.
- This agreement should be established before absences have become an issue. Instructors are only required to provide approved disability-related accommodations after receiving a Course Accessibility Letter.
- The method and timing of notification of absences and making up any materials, exams, assignments, etc. missed due to the absence should be mutually agreed upon and detailed in the Modified Attendance Agreement.
- Modification of the attendance policy does not mean that unlimited absences will be permitted.

- When a student is absent due to their disability, they are responsible for the course content, lecture notes and information presented that day. The student needs to arrange how they will obtain this information.
- When a student is absent due to their disability, they are responsible for any assignments or assessments for that day. The student needs to arrange how they will complete these course elements.
- The student is not required to present the instructor with medical documentation verifying their disability-related absences, but may be required to document other non-disability related absences as per the syllabus requirements. Absences for non-disability related reasons will not be excused by the Modified Attendance Agreement.
- In most instances, communication with the Disability Access Center and the provision of additional documentation is not needed to verify the student's absence(s). However, if the absences meets or exceeds the number of absences agreed upon in the Modified Attendance Agreement, the Disability Access Center should be informed. This will allow the Disability Access Center to be of assistance in answering questions about the accommodations from both the student and the instructor.
- If the student requests a change to the number of absences initially agreed upon due to a change in their disability, the student should be referred to the Disability Access Center to discuss. Additional documentation or an update from the student's treating physician may be needed by the Disability Access Center to determine if a modification to the agreement or other accommodation may be appropriate.
- If a student finds that they are not doing well in the course due to extended absences, the student is urged to consider options (e.g. withdraw, incomplete). It is important for the student not to abuse the Modified Attendance Agreement.

(Adapted from Purdue University, Texas A&M University and Northern Arizona University, Disability Related Absences Agreement and similar agreements from other colleges and universities)