

“Reasonable Flexibility Regarding Attendance and Course Participation” ACCOMMODATION GUIDANCE

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“Flex Plan” Accommodation Overview

Dear Professor,

The student for whom you are receiving this guidance has a documented disability which, under the ADA(AA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, warrants the following accommodation:

“If functionality is severely impaired by an onset of the student's episodic medical condition, employ reasonable flexibility regarding attendance and course participation requirements.”

This accommodation is only authorized for a small number of Dickinson students. It does not allow for unwarranted or unlimited absences or unreasonable extensions on assignments, nor does it require you to lower the essential requirements and learning outcomes of the course.

[See p.3 for clarification and guidance regarding what constitutes “reasonable flexibility.”]

Note that some students with this accommodation may also have additional academic accommodations, whereas for others, this is the sole accommodation they may potentially use for your class.

Students with this accommodation will have been instructed to do the following:

1. Log in to their Access Plan through CLIQ and disclose to faculty their eligibility for this accommodation. (Access Plan guidance for both students and faculty can be found at www.dickinson.edu/accessplan)
2. Email each of their professors to schedule an Access Plan / Accommodation meeting.
3. Meet with each professor to go over the implementation of their accommodation(s) and take part as the professor completes the online [Reasonable Flexibility Regarding Attendance and Course Participation Plan – aka “Flex Plan”](#) (which is linked to from the Access Plan).

The next page will provide guidance on preparing for and completing the “Flex Plan” with your student. This is not to be a negotiation, but rather your documented clarification of the degree to which you may be able (or unable) to be flexible. Some of your plan selections may depend on what the student shares with you (such as past experiences or whether or not an incapacitation is typically anticipated or not).

“Flex Plan” Accommodation Implementation Guidelines

When completing the “Flex Plan” with your student, do not ask such questions as, ~~“What do you have?”~~ or ~~“What’s your diagnosis?”~~ But **do consider asking questions like this:**

- “Is there anything you would like to share with me about how your condition has previously impacted you academically?”
- “How many class meetings have you typically missed in a semester?”
- “Are you usually able to know in advance if you’ll be unable to attend class?”
- (If you require groupwork) “Would you be comfortable letting your group know of your condition?” (If work is to be divided into stages, it’s wise to propose they take an early stage.)

To prepare for your meeting, please be sure to review the [“Flex Plan”](#) in advance, and consider how you’ll implement the following guidelines, which you’ll be indicating on the student’s plan:

- A. You may require students to **contact you** in advance of, or as soon as possible after missing class due to the documented disability.
- B. If you **grade participation**, and there are alternate ways students can demonstrate knowledge (such as having done assigned reading or practice problems), inform the student of this.
- C. You should discuss how the student will obtain **notes** following a disability-related absence. *(Enlisting a note-taker is not advised unless the student has this additional accommodation or has indicated a past history of needing supplemental notes. Otherwise, it would be appropriate to ask, “Are you comfortable getting notes from a classmate?”)*
- D. You **may require that the student meet with you** after missing specific critical classes or more than a designated number of classes.
- E. When feasible, it may be helpful to provide the student with **opportunities to work ahead**.
- F. If the student’s disability impacts his or her ability to complete an assignment by its expected due-date, establish a **reasonable timeline for when the assignment must be turned in**, such as “within ____ days of the student’s return to health” or “____ days from the missed due date.”
- G. If the disability renders the student **unable to take a quiz or test** when scheduled, establish a reasonable plan or a timeline for making it up. Contact proctoring@dickinson.edu if necessary.
- H. If the course requires collaborative in-class groupwork, field trips, labs that cannot be replicated, assignments or exams that must be completed by a certain time, etc., it may be determined that too many or particular absences or insufficient work completed threatens the student’s **capacity to meet the essential requirements and learning outcomes of the course**. If these circumstances occur, the professor is encouraged to contact Marni Jones for assistance in exploring whether there are reasonable alternatives that would meet the essential course demands – or if the degree of flexibility required cannot be considered reasonable.

At the conclusion of your meeting, the professor is to submit to ADS the completed “Flex Plan” and will receive a copy of it via email. ADS will then email a copy to the student for their confirmation of the plan.

Both the professor and student should periodically refer to the completed “Flex Plan,” which will serve to clarify your mutual expectations and possible limitations regarding the accommodation.

“Reasonable Flexibility” Accommodation Clarification

WHAT DOES “REASONABLE FLEXIBILITY” MEAN?

Reasonable flexibility regarding attendance and course participation requirements is defined as occasional exceptions to absentee/tardiness policies and to reading/assignment due dates **when educationally feasible, and when doing so does not lower the essential requirements or learning outcomes of a course.**

WHEN IS THIS AUTHORIZED AS AN ACCOMMODATION?

This accommodation is granted to students who have documented disabilities with symptoms and/or medical necessities that are so severe they may render the student unable to attend class and/or complete assignments or tests at the scheduled time. As with all accommodations, the student must schedule a discussion with the professor prior to the implementation of accommodations.

Most students with chronic, episodic conditions are very diligent about attending class and completing assignments in anticipation of their potential incapacitation. Hopefully, a student’s disability will not interfere with attendance; however, if the student is incapacitated by his or her disability, this accommodation allows for flexibility in attendance policies and make-up work, to the extent that it is reasonable, i.e. doesn’t lower the essential requirements or learning outcomes of a course.

WHAT CONSTITUTES “REASONABLE” WITH REGARD TO ATTENDANCE FLEXIBILITY?

The following questions were created by the Justice Department to help professors assess the degree to which attendance is essential to this course, and what alternative options may be available for students whose disability may impact attendance. These questions should assist you in determining the degree to which you can accommodate this student without lowering the essential requirements for the course:

- *What does the course description and the syllabus say about attendance?*
- *How much classroom interaction occurs between the instructor and students and among the students? (Are students required to actively participate in class discussions/activities?)*
- *Do in-class student contributions constitute a significant component of learning?*
- *Does the fundamental nature of the course rely on student participation as an essential method for learning?*
- *To what degree does a student’s absence constitute a significant loss to the educational experience of 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)?*
- *What policies exist for making up missed classes, exams, pop quizzes? Turning in late work?*
 - *Could missed assignments be turned in via discussion board/e-mail?*
 - *Are tests reviewed by the class, and if so, how soon after the test date?*
 - *Is it possible for students to “work ahead” in this class?*
 - *Does this class include lab work? If so, can it be made up?*
 - *Does this class include in-class group work?*
 - *Are there other sections of the class that the student could attend to catch up on missed material?*
- *Is participation factored in to the final grade? If so, are there alternative ways a student can “participate” (such as sending questions or comments electronically)?*

If you have any questions or concerns about the implementation of this accommodation, please contact ADS Dean and Director Marni Jones at jonesmar@dickinson.edu or by calling 717-245-1136.