



## Flexible Attendance and Due Dates Reasonable Accommodation Guide

### Background

The ACCESS Center would like to provide faculty some general guidance in determining the number of absences a student could be granted due to a disability related reason. *It is suggested that at a minimum a student with this accommodation receive 10% of instructional time to miss classes for disability-related reasons. For a 3-credit course, this equates to roughly 4 hours of class per semester. Lab and studio courses likely require individualized consideration.*

The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse's (UWL) ACCESS Center approves Flexible Attendance/Due Date accommodations for students with documented chronic or episodic disabilities. Students may need to miss class due to a disability related reason and require some flexibility when accessing courses at UWL.

The Flexible Attendance/Due Date Accommodation is meant to provide reasonable flexibility and does not allow students to have unlimited or excessive absences. Additionally, due to the unique nature of each class, students and faculty must work together to complete a Flexible Attendance/Due Date Agreement via a student's ACCESS Connect account.

Students with chronic or episodic conditions may also miss deadlines due to a disability-related reason. This accommodation also facilitates intentional dialogue between students and instructors before a flare up, episode, or relapse of a disability interferes with the submission of an assignment. Students and instructors will develop an agreement as to flexible due dates when a disability prevents timely submission including how length of a disability-related extension as well as the best way to notify the instructor of the need to exercise the flexible due date accommodation.

### Limitations

The ACCESS Center recognizes the unique nature of this accommodation and wants to provide students and instructors information about the limitations when implementing these accommodations. The Flexible Attendance/Due Date Accommodation has the following limitations:

- Unlimited and excessive absences are unreasonable.
- This accommodation is not permitted for students not registered with The ACCESS Center.
- This accommodation may not cause a fundamental alteration of course objectives or essential components of the course.
- This accommodation may not be permissible where class attendance or participation can be demonstrated to be an essential component of the course.

## Helpful Considerations

- If instructors already offer considerable flexibility in their course syllabus, this can be taken into consideration when determining the number of disability-related absences.
- Lab courses and other once-per-week courses may substantially limit the number of disability-related absences due to the nature of the course.
- If a student or instructor have concern about the number of days or need additional consultation, they should reach out to their ACCESS Center advisor.
- If a student is getting close to their maximum number of disability-related absences, they should schedule a meeting with their ACCESS Center advisor.

## Procedure

The following is the procedure followed for the Flexible Attendance/Due Date accommodation.

### *Determining Eligibility*

- Student meets with ACCESS Advisor to discuss disability and accessibility needs.
- ACCESS Center advisor determines eligibility of accommodation after reviewing all relevant documentation.
  - a. During this process, ACCESS Center staff will advise students of the limitations of this accommodation as well as their unique needs

### *Requesting and Implementing the Accommodation*

1. Once eligible, students will request the Flexible Attendance/Due Date accommodation through ACCESS Connect.
2. Instructors will be notified via email about the students request.
3. The student will meet with each instructor individually to complete the Flexible Attendance/Due Date Agreement form via ACCESS Connect
  - a. During this meeting, faculty will determine the maximum number of class periods a student may miss due to a disability.
  - b. *Disability-related absences under this accommodation must be separate from other absence policies an instructor may have with their class.*
4. Once the instructor and student have completed the agreement the ACCESS Center will keep the agreement on file.

### *Grievance Procedure*

1. If a student believes their accommodation is not being met they may file a grievance using the ACCESS Center grievance procedure.

**Course Analysis:** To determine whether flexible attendance consideration is appropriate for your class, the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) has provided the following guidelines to help assess whether attendance is an essential component of the course. We have included an analysis tool with these questions to assist faculty in determining absences.

- Is there classroom interaction between the instructor and students?

**Very little                      Some                      About Half                      Most                      All**

- Is there classroom interaction between students in the form of in-class group work?

**Very little                      Some                      About Half                      Most                      All**

- Do student contributions in class constitute a significant component of the learning process?

**Very little                      Some                      About Half                      Most                      All**

- Does the fundamental nature of the course rely on student participation as an essential method for learning?

**Very little                      Some                      About Half                      Most                      All**

- To what degree does a student's failure to attend constitute a significant loss to the educational experience of other students in the class?

**Very little                      Some                      About Half                      Most                      All**

Other questions to consider:

- 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?

### **ACCESS Center Recommendations**

**High Leniency:** If you answered “very little” or “some” for most of the questions, you most likely have a lecture style course and could offer a great deal of leniency to students. Well above the minimum of 10% of instructional class time. (e.g., 3 credit course – 6 hours of disability related absences)

**Moderate Leniency:** If you answered “Some” or “About Half” for most of the question, your course is a hybrid lecture/experiential course that may involve some group work and lecture style learning. It is recommended that you offer moderate leniency above the 10% instructional class time. (e.g., 3 credit course – 5 hours of disability related absences)

**Limited Leniency:** If you answered “Most” or “All” to the following questions, you class is mostly experiential such as a practicum, lab, or group-based learning experience. It is recommended that you offer disability related absences at the minimum recommended 10% of instructional time (e.g., 3 credit course – 4 hours of disability related absences)