
Guidelines for Attendance Modification Accommodations

Policy Statement

Students at Hofstra University are individually responsible for adhering to course attendance policies as per individual faculty direction. Instructors are expected to provide notice of attendance policies and dates in which exams and assignments are due in a course syllabus. The number of allowable absences depends upon the interactive or participatory nature of a course, or is based on department, college, or accrediting agency rules. Federal law requires colleges and universities to consider reasonable modification of attendance policies if required to accommodate a student's disability; Student Access Services (SAS) has developed the Guidelines for Attendance Modification to address this. This accommodation cannot alter the course or program requirements set forth.

Procedure:

1. Students must complete and submit a Request for Reasonable Accommodations form and provide documentation of a disability from a qualified professional to Student Access Services (SAS) office
2. Each request is reviewed in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and a determination is made to verify that the disability may cause the student to miss classes that exceed the specified attendance policy.
3. When a student qualifies for this accommodation due to impact of disability, a statement will be included on the ADA Approval Letter of Accommodation (LOA). The LOA should be utilized by the student to inform the instructor that the student's disability has been verified by the submission of appropriate documentation, and that the student's disability may result in unavoidable absences and asks that absences should not prompt the type of sanction ordinarily applied by the instructor.
4. Students must provide timely notification to instructors of the approved attendance modification accommodation at the beginning of each semester. ***The student is responsible for contacting the instructor and SAO as soon as possible when a disability-related absence will/has occurred.***
5. If the accommodation is questioned, the instructor, student, and an SAS Director should discuss whether the disability related absence accommodation is reasonable.

The number of allowed absences will be determined on a case-by-case, course-by-course basis. Absences must not be excessive and/or habitual. Accommodations cannot be implemented retroactively; students who request an accommodation after the limit of allowable absences has occurred will not be eligible. The student is responsible for any material covered or work done during such disability-necessitated absences. Neither extension of deadlines for assignments due, nor arrangements for making up tests and exams missed during such absences are included in this assigned accommodation. Adjustments for these issues may be appropriate, but they need to be negotiated individually with the instructor as need arises

For Students

Students with an approved *attendance modification* accommodation are expected to take initiative to meet with faculty members of each course to share their LOA at the start of each semester to discuss the potential need to utilize this accommodation and review these Guidelines. Students with this accommodation are to understand that even if their absence is due to their documented disability and beyond their control, such absences may impact their grade, particularly if the class grade includes an element of participation, in-class exercises, quizzes which contribute to the final grade and/or written assignments. Students still bear the responsibility to keep up with required reading, obtain class notes, and make up any assignments they may have missed. Students are advised to make in-person contact with class instructors to discuss the way in which this accommodation will work in practice and to agree upon appropriate procedures and protocols.

Instructors are not obligated to create extra work for either the student or themselves as a substitute for “participation” in class or missed assignments. However, instructors are encouraged to consider whether there are opportunities for the student to mitigate or “make up” their reasonable absence; this is particularly relevant for classes that are highly interactive and include assignments and group work. SAS can engage faculty and students in the legally required “interactive process” considering and determining whether such an accommodation is reasonable given the circumstances.

For Faculty

It is Hofstra’s faculty responsibility to inform students of an attendance policy, meet with students who wish to discuss the attendance policy, and explain how they are able to modify their attendance policy including the rationale(s) for this decision. Students most likely to request modified attendance policies as an accommodation are those with serious health-related disabilities that flare up episodically. Students with psychological disabilities who are experiencing an acute exacerbation of symptoms may also request flexibility in the application of attendance policies.

Instructors are encouraged to follow their academic department's course design and classroom procedures. When students engage in a learning relationship, they have needs and expectations, including information on course procedures, attendance, content, and goals; instructors should provide a syllabus detailing these aspects.

If a student misses many classes, faculty are advised to contact SAS to assess the student's continued enrollment viability.

There may be circumstances where granting a modification to attendance requirements will not be possible. A student may have a legitimate disability-related need and may still not be able to identify any accommodation that would not unreasonably alter an essential element of the University’s curriculum. Instructors seeking guidance on accommodating students without compromising standards or believing that requested attendance policy modifications alter

essential program elements should consult with SAS. Such accommodations are evaluated for reasonableness and may not be suitable for every case. In instances where attendance is crucial, a withdrawal or incomplete may be considered reasonable if absences become excessive.

Please consider the following guidelines the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) has provided to determine if attendance is an essential part of a class:

- Is there classroom interaction(s) 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 elements of the class experience are used to calculate the final grade?
- What are the classroom practices and policies regarding attendance?
- Is there a legitimate alternative accommodation that can be made instead of modifying attendance requirement?

Optional Student-Faculty Attendance Modification Worksheet

Is there a maximum number of absences that would fundamentally alter course or program requirements?

Are there specific course dates which are mandatory and inexcusable for success in this course?

Method for completion of missed work when absences occur:

Method for completion of missed exams (if appropriate/applicable) when absences occur:

Additional work/assignment opportunities to make-up in-class participation:
