

MODIFIED ATTENDANCE ACCOMMODATION

Attendance is an important component of the learning process in higher education. In most cases, class attendance is critical to the student's mastery of the knowledge and skills that are taught in a specific course. Recognizing that some students with disabilities may have difficulty attending class occasionally due to conditions that are chronic and episodic in nature, Disability Services has established the following procedure for evaluating requests for modified attendance as an accommodation.

Modified Attendance is intended to allow a slight amount of flexibility for students who may miss class occasionally due to the impact of their documented disability. The accommodation does not waive attendance and is not designed to support a substantial number of missed classes or lengthy extensions for coursework. Additional options may need to be considered on a case-by-case basis for these situations.

PROCESS:

Students seeking consideration for modified attendance must request this accommodation from Disability Services and follow the Process for Establishing Services that all students seeking accommodations must follow. This process includes submitting documentation from a licensed healthcare provider. <https://www.evansville.edu/counseling/disability/eligibility.cfm>

As with all disability-related accommodation requests, Disability Services will evaluate the request and the documentation provided to determine whether the student has provided justifiable disability-based reasons for requesting modification for attendance requirements.

If it is determined that the request for Modified Attendance is justified by the impact of the student's disability, Disability Services will contact the instructor of each class in which the student is enrolled for that semester to gain an understanding of the attendance requirements, course design, and learning outcomes specific to their class. Disability Services will ask instructors to consider the following:

- Is there classroom interaction between the instructor and students and among students themselves?
- 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 of learning?
- To what degree does a student's failure to attend class constitute a significant loss to the educational experience of other students in the class?
- What do the course description and syllabus say regarding attendance?
- By what method is the final grade calculated?

The number of absences a student may take as a reasonable accommodation will be determined on a case-by-case basis through a conversation between Disability Services and the instructor, depending on the student's individual disability, the nature of the course, and the degree to which class attendance is an essential requirement of the specific course. Any limits or parameters an instructor wants to establish regarding the implementation of the accommodation including the process for communicating absences and coursework deadlines missed due to a disability-related absence will be documented in a Modified Attendance Agreement and provided to the student.

Institutions are obligated to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities including modification of attendance policies. However, accommodations should not compromise the fundamental objectives of the course or program requirements. If it is determined after talking with an instructor that it is not possible to consider Modified Attendance for a given course, the student will be informed and given the opportunity to discuss other accommodation options.

DISABILITY SERVICES ROLE

Through the interactive process with the student, Disability Services will determine if Modified Attendance is an appropriate accommodation.

Disability Services will consult and support faculty in determining if the accommodation is reasonable for their course and the extent to which it can be implemented.

Disability Services will facilitate communication between students and instructors regarding specific limits and parameters that have been established.

Disability Services will provide support and guidance when students and instructors have questions or difficulties with the implementation of the accommodation.

FACULTY ROLE

It is critical that instructors collaborate with Disability Services in a timely manner to determine the extent to which they can reasonably modify their attendance policy for a specific class without fundamentally altering the learning objectives.

It is highly recommended that instructors work with Disability Services to set parameters on the number of absences a student with this accommodation is allowed and the process for making up coursework that is due on the day of a disability-related absence. Disability Services will assist instructors with determining reasonable parameters and communicating those parameters to students through a Modified Attendance Agreement.

If an instructor believes the accommodation is not reasonable due to course objectives and learning methods, they should contact Disability Services immediately to discuss their concerns. Instructors should never unilaterally deny an accommodation. Instructors will be asked to clearly articulate why modified attendance would not be reasonable by completing the Faculty Concern Form.

Students must notify their instructor prior to, or within 24 hours after, missing class due to their disability unless otherwise stated in an agreement. Instructors cannot require that the student provides medical documentation for disability-related absences.

STUDENT ROLE

Students approved for Modified Attendance must specifically request to use the accommodation at the beginning of each semester, or as soon as they are eligible for the accommodation. Accommodations are not retroactive.

Modified Attendance is evaluated on a class-by-class basis each semester. If an instructor provides appropriate justification that attendance is an essential component of a class, then Modified Attendance may not be endorsed for that class. In such situations, it is recommended that students discuss their curriculum needs with Disability Services and their academic advisor.

Students are expected to read and respond to emails sent by Disability Services and their instructors in a timely manner. Good communication between Disability Services, instructors, and students is required to ensure the proper implementation of the accommodation. Failure to read and respond to emails in a timely manner may result in missing important information and deadlines.

Students must notify their instructor prior to, or within 24 hours after, missing class due to their disability unless otherwise stated in an agreement.

Disability Services will provide students with a Modified Attendance Agreement for each class in which the instructor has set specific limits and parameters regarding the implementation of the accommodation. It is the student's responsibility to read and be knowledgeable of those parameters. Disability Services is available to answer any questions or concerns the student may have.

Students are responsible for the course content, lecture notes, and information presented during a disability-related absence. Instructors are not obligated to re-teach material missed.

Students are responsible for any assignments or assessments due on the day of a disability-related absence. The student needs to arrange how they will complete these course elements.

This accommodation applies only to absences due to the disability for which it was approved. The attendance policy stated in the course syllabus will apply to all non-disability-related absences.

Students are not required to provide their instructors with medical documentation for absences that are due to the disability for which the accommodation is approved. Instructors can require medical documentation for non-disability-related absences.

While Modified Attendance offers some relief from the physical requirements of attending class, students should be aware that absences may still hurt their academic performance due to missing content and experiential learning. Students should make every attempt to attend class and meet all course deadlines.

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Disability Services is available to mediate any concerns regarding Modified Attendance throughout the semester. Students are encouraged to contact Disability Services to discuss options and resources if they are experiencing a significant flare of their symptoms and have missed more than 50% of their agreed-upon absences.