

Accommodation Guidelines: Flexibility in Attendance and/or Deadlines

Even when we embrace universal design for learning principles, there are times when the interaction of a student's disability with an activity or environment creates a barrier to full access, that is, it interferes with a student's ability to: Fully engage and participate in the same activities, utilize the same information shared with everyone, have the same opportunity to achieve, or enjoy the same campus services, benefits, and experiences as a person without a disability.

In those instances, academic accommodation may be necessary to provide an equitable, inclusive, and accessible educational experience for the student. This may include flexibility in stated attendance and/or assignment deadline policies.

These accommodations are not requests to waive policies in their entirety. Participating in class and completing work are necessary components in many courses, as they both promote learning and allow for the evaluation of learning. Attendance and/or deadline flexibility ensures that a student is not unfairly penalized for absences or late work due to their disability so long as that flexibility does not fundamentally alter the essential elements of the course (i.e., lowering the essential academic standards, removing an essential skill or learning objective, or irreparably damaging course continuity and scaffolding).

Legal obligations and guidance from the Office of Civil Rights require that these accommodations be considered on a course-by-course basis through a process that thoughtfully considers course structure, pedagogy, and essential learning objectives as well as the individual student's needs. If an instructor believes additional absences or extended deadlines beyond the stated policy would fundamentally alter the nature or essential elements of a course, then the instructor should consult with the Director of Student Accessibility Services to determine reasonability and next steps.

Our Process:

1. Students [apply](#) and are approved for flexible course attendance and/or deadline accommodation through the Office of Student Accessibility Services.
2. Students request the use of accommodations each term by notifying their instructors through their [AIM Dashboard](#).
3. Instructors will receive an email outlining students' needs and can also access that information at any time by logging into their [AIM Instructor Portal](#).
4. SAS sends [Course Flexibility Questionnaire](#) to impacted instructors.
5. Instructors complete the Questionnaire and consult with SAS regarding the reasonableness of the requested accommodation(s).
6. SAS Director meets with students to complete the Student-Faculty Agreement(s) informed by instructors' responses on the Questionnaire.
7. Completed Student-Faculty Agreement(s) are sent via email to instructors and students. Students can also access these agreements at any time in their [AIM Dashboard](#).
8. Students and instructors meet to review and verify the Agreement(s) and discuss any specific questions or concerns.
9. When necessary, students communicate the need to use their accommodation(s) according to the process outlined in the Student-Faculty Agreement(s) and follow the pre-determined plan for staying engaged and continuing to make progress in the impacted course. These accommodations only apply to disability-related absences or deadline extensions.
10. If student absences or deadline extensions exceed the parameters established in the Student-Faculty Agreement(s) leading to a fundamental alteration of the course, then other options, including Withdrawal or Incomplete, may need to be considered.

Our Roles and Responsibilities in this Process:

The Office of [Student Accessibility Services](#)

- Store and manage student information on the Accessible Information Management (AIM) platform.
- Review documentation and meet with students to better understand their disability-related experiences. Through this interactive process, the Director of SAS determines if a student needs modifications to class attendance or late work policies to mitigate disability-related impacts throughout the term. If so, Flexible Course Attendance and/or Flexible Assignment Completion Dates will be listed as eligible accommodations on the student's accommodation letter.
- Consult and support faculty in determining the reasonableness of accommodation or how to implement these accommodations in light of essential course elements.
- Provide support to students and faculty when questions or difficulties arise related to the accommodation.
Students and faculty members can reach out to SAS for support at any point during this process

Students

- Connect with SAS to apply for accommodation.
- Send Notification Letters to instructors each term through the [AIM Dashboard](#).
- Meet with SAS Director to complete Student-Faculty Flexibility Agreements.
- Meet with Instructors to review those agreements.
- Once an agreement has been established, make decisions about the expected ability to attend class and/or meet deadlines given one's current state of health.
- Communicate with instructors according to the guidelines established in the Student-Faculty Agreements if there is a **disability-related need** to be absent or extend a deadline. If students do not communicate with instructors about the need for flexibility, instructors are not expected to assume that the missed class or late work is due to disability. Please note: At no time are students required to present documentation to instructors in order to justify a disability-related absence.
- Arrange to receive missed content, make up work, and/or submit assignments on or before an adjusted deadline according to the guidelines established in the Student-Faculty Agreements.

Instructors

- Review student notification letters sent via email and available in the [AIM Instructor Portal](#).
- Complete the [Course Flexibility Questionnaire](#) and work with SAS to determine what, if any flexibility in stated attendance and/or assignment deadline policies is reasonable for a given course.
 - Accommodations are generally not reasonable if they are unnecessary, of a personal nature, impose a direct threat to others, present an undue hardship, or fundamentally alter the essential elements of a program, course, service, or activity.
 - Examples of fundamental alteration include lowering the essential academic standards, removing an essential skill or learning objective, or irreparably damaging course continuity and scaffolding.
- Meet with students to review Flexible Course Attendance and/or Flexible/Extended Deadline Student-Faculty Agreements.
- Work with students to facilitate the utilization of approved accommodations when necessary. Please note: At no time are students required to present documentation to instructors in order to justify a disability-related absence. If an instructor has a concern related to student misuse of accommodation, they should contact SAS.