Academic Adjustment to Course Policy Guidance

The Office of Disability Resources may determine that, in some cases, an academic adjustment to course policies is a reasonable accommodation. An academic adjustment to course policy requires instructors to give the student additional flexibility for assignment deadlines, flexibility in rescheduling tests and quizzes, and attendance. This accommodation does not require the instructor to alter the essential design and learning outcomes of the course. This accommodation may be recommended in cases where a student has an episodic or unpredictable condition that may cause them to miss class, exams, or deadlines due to a flare up of their condition.

Procedure

Faculty will be notified of an academic adjustment to course policy via an official Notification of Accommodations email from the Office of Disability Resources. A staff member from the Office of Disability Resources will contact the instructor to discuss and develop an Academic Adjustment to Course Policy Agreement which will establish the modified standards by which the student will be assessed. These agreements must be completed within one week of receipt of the Notification of Accommodations email. Once the Academic Adjustment to Course Policy Agreement has been developed, the instructor and student will be emailed a copy and the agreement will remain on file with the Office of Disability Resources.

Guidance Questions for Determining Reasonable Adjustments

1. What are the course policies on attendance and deadlines as outlined on the syllabus? How would modifications to these policies for an accommodation impact the course and student learning?

2. What flexibility with attendance, make up exams, or assignment deadlines is already built into the course? Under what conditions?

3. Is there significant classroom interaction between the instructor and students or among the students (i.e., significant discussion, observation and feedback on performance provided, peer review, in-class group work, etc.)? Note: Most question and answer interactions that occur during lecture-style courses do not constitute significant interaction. To what degree does a student’s absence constitute a significant loss to the educational experience of other students in the class?

4. Does the fundamental nature of the course rely upon student participation as an essential method for learning (i.e., labs, internships, hands-on experiences)?

5. Do student contributions based on completed assignments constitute a significant component of the learning process (i.e., regular student presentations, discussions, group work, etc.)?
Additional Considerations

General Policies:

- Once finalized, any requests for modifications to the agreement should be directed to the Office of Disability Resources.
- Students with the approved accommodation should not be asked to provide medical notes or other documentation for disability-related absences.
- In the event that the student is unable to meet the terms of the agreement, and if no reasonable revisions to the agreement can be made after consultation with the instructor and access coordinator, the student should be held to the relevant course policies as outlined in the syllabus.

Attendance:

- This accommodation does not automatically authorize a blanket waiver of attendance.
- Students are responsible for acquiring missed class content.

Exams/Quizzes:

- Decisions on offering make-up exams for this accommodation may not be simply based on the logistical “ease” of offering one sitting for the exam.
- Course policies that do not permit for make-up exams but instead redistribute grading or allow “dropped” grades are not a valid reason for denying a make-up opportunity. Instructors should work with DR to develop accommodations that allow students to take advantage of general course grading policies in addition to their approved accommodation.
- Disability Resources most often only considers it a reasonable accommodation to make-up 1 or 2 exams or quizzes.
- When make-up quizzes/exams are facilitated, the same quiz/exam should be administered whenever possible. If a different version or a different format is necessary, the make-up exam/quiz must be designed with the goal of an equal level of difficulty.

Assignment Deadlines:

- Extensions may not apply to work that must be completed and submitted as a group. These circumstances should be discussed with an access coordinator in Disability Resources.
- Work turned in beyond the revised due date may be penalized in keeping with the standard(s) established by the course policy.
- Instructors are not expected to alter assignments or lower standards.