



Boston University Disability & Access Services

Flexibility in Attendance Policy

Q&A

Does a student with a disability have to adhere to my attendance policy?

All students, regardless of disability, must adhere to your attendance and make-up policies. If a condition exists that could have a legitimate impact on a student's attendance, you will be notified in the Faculty Accommodation Letter. Faculty retain authority to determine what is and is not essential and fundamental to their courses. Please see policy below:

Flexibility in attendance and make-up work:

In limited circumstances, you may receive a Faculty Accommodation Letter requesting "flexibility in attendance" due to a disability.

The Language of the accommodation will appear as follows:

"Due to the severity or fluidity of symptoms, attendance may be legitimately impacted, therefore the student may occasionally miss class and need to make up work."

Boston University Faculty alone determine their own course attendance and make-up policies. As attendance is, almost without exception, integral to the learning process, ODS cannot mandate modifications to attendance or make-up policies regardless of the severity of a student's disability.

However, there are some significant disabling conditions that may legitimately impact a student's attendance due to the severity or fluidity of symptoms. Based on a case-by-case review of current documentation, as well as a student interview, ODS may make a formal determination that flexibility in attendance is an *appropriate* recommendation.

Unlike other accommodations, flexibility in attendance is not a mandate for you to modify or alter your policies. Rather, this is an invitation for you to engage in a process of determining if attendance is fundamental to the course (see below). Once this appraisal is complete, you may decide if any modification can be made—in other words is the accommodation *reasonable* per your course. In some cases, you may decide that attendance is fundamental to your course objectives and cannot be modified; for example, students may be required to interact with others in the class, to participate in a group presentation, to produce team projects. In other instances, you may determine that students can master course content despite some class absences.

Please note, this accommodation is never to be applied retroactively.

You are encouraged to use the following questions as a guide to determining what is essential and reasonable in terms of attendance:

- 1) Is there significant classroom interaction between instructor and students?
- 2) Is there significant classroom interaction between students?
- 3) Does student contribution constitute a significant component of the learning process?
- 4) Does the course require student participation as an essential method for learning?
- 5) To what degree does a student's failure to attend constitute a significant loss to the educational experience of other students in the class?
- 6) What does the course descriptions and syllabus say?
- 7) How are final course grades calculated?
- 8) What are the classroom practices and policies regarding attendance?
- 9) What are the technical standards noted for this school, program, and course?

After evaluating a course, you may determine that attendance is fundamental. In that case you would not be required to modify the attendance policy for that course. If you determine that flexibility in attendance is warranted, an accommodation for that course must be made.

In either case, Disability & Access Services requests that you meet with the student to discuss the specific parameters and expectations of your applicable attendance policy. Disability & Access Services also asks that the outcome be noted on the form attached.

Meeting:

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss with the student your attendance expectations and, if applicable, outline the limits and parameters of attendance flexibility. For example, how many days can be missed, how would a student communicate an absence, how much time is permissible for make up work, etc. Please complete the form with your student so that all parties understand the expectations going forward. This form needs to be signed and returned to ODS by the student.

This meeting will ensure that the University does not fundamentally alter essential academic standards, while also communicating the scope of the agreement to which the student is required to adhere.

Attendance Agreement Form

Due to the severity or fluidity of symptoms, _____ (U _____) attendance in your _____ course may be legitimately impacted, therefore the student may occasionally miss class and need to make-up work.”

Depending on the nature of your course, attendance may be fundamental. However, for some courses, absences beyond those allowable for all students may be permissible. Please refer to the BU Disability Services Attendance Policy to assist you in determining whether and to what extent attendance is essential to your course.

Once you make a determination, please meet with the student to discuss any flexibility in attendance and/or resulting allowances in assignment deadlines you are able to grant. Please document your agreement on the form below and sign.

AGREEMENT FORM

I have met with the student and determined that:

- Attendance is fundamental to my course and course objectives and cannot be modified.
- Attendance can be modified in my course.

Total absences allowed to all students.

Total additional absences allowed.

The student and I have met and discussed the nature and expectations of the course including attendance and assignment extensions. We mutually understand and have agreed on the following:

Please make sure to include: How many totally absences allowed, how much extra time for missed work and how the student should contact you to communicate said absence.

If _____, requests additional absences and/or extensions not previously agreed upon they will contact me prior to each absence or requested extension to discuss if it is allowable. Disability & Access Services will also be notified of any agreed upon extension.

I have read and agree to adhere to the above modifications to the attendance and assignment policy for _____ course.

Professor Signature

Date

Student Signature

Date

Please return the signed form to the BU Disability & Access Services.

Disability & Access Services staff review

Agreement reviewed by _____

Approved by _____

Date _____