

Dear Professor,

This communication is intended to notify you that reasonable flexibility for attendance and deadlines, as a disability-related accommodation, may be indicated on *Notification Letter* provided to you by one of your students. Such flexibility is intended to mitigate the impact of fluctuating symptoms experienced by the student. Implementing this accommodation requires the student to meet with you to establish the specific parameters of its use in your class. Students are strongly encouraged to initiate this conversation early in the semester, or as soon as the student has met with Student Accessibility Services and received their *Notification Letters* for the semester.

Some chronic health conditions (i.e. Crohn's disease, chronic migraine, or epilepsy) and/or mental health conditions (i.e.. depression, anxiety, or bipolar disorder) have symptoms that are unpredictable or episodic in nature. Symptom flare-ups related to the documented disability can impact daily functioning and may cause a student to miss class or a deadline. Your willingness to provide flexibility when/if these challenges occur aid in helping to accommodate our student's documented disabilities.

With this in mind, we offer the following questions and suggestions (see back of this page) to guide the conversation that you and the student will have to establish the attendance and deadline flexibility parameters applicable to your course:

1. What are the essential requirements and learning objectives of your course?
2. Is there more than one way to meet the course requirements?
3. Does the proposed flexibility maintain the essential requirements and objectives of the course?

Once you and the student come to an agreement related to the flexibility that can be reasonably provided, we recommend that Instructors memorialize the agreed-upon details in a follow-up email to the student. *These adjustments should not compromise the essential requirements or learning outcomes of your course.*

Feel free to contact Student Accessibility Services if you have questions or need assistance with this process.

Respectfully,

Student Accessibility Services
Dean of Students Office

Please note: Iowa State University's Faculty handbook outlines the expectation of faculty members to make reasonable accommodations to allow participation and access for people with disabilities to all programs, activities, services, and facilities (Section 8.4.1.1). Ways in which other ISU faculty have accomplished academic flexibility are listed on the back of this letter.

Accommodation Suggestions to Support Students with Disabilities Affecting Class Attendance and Deadline Expectations.

Students with medical conditions that fluctuate may need reasonable flexibility to complete course work. **The following guidance and suggestions may support students with disabilities and instructors during times of heightened symptoms, when flexibility is needed:**

Attendance

- Is attendance and/or participation factored in as part of the course grade? If so, how? Is there a course, departmental, or college policy?
- What does the course syllabus say about attendance and missed deadlines? How have you made exceptions to these policies in the past?
- Do student contributions/participation constitute a significant component of the learning process?
- What is the impact on the educational experience of other students in the class if a student is absent or misses a deadline?
- Please consider allowing more absences than listed on syllabus, per conversation with student.
- Please consider allowing the student to attend another section of the class or view an on-line version if available.
- Please consider allowing the student to view equivalent course content as available (e.g., anatomy dissection, Shakespearian play, etc.)
- If discussions are missed, consider having the student keep a journal for contributions, e-mail comments to instructors and/or classmates, or meet during office hours.

Deadlines

- Discuss how and when you would like to be notified that the student cannot meet the deadline (e.g., email, voice mail, 1 - 72 hour notice depending on reasonableness, etc.).
- Allow reasonable extensions on a case-by-case when appropriate.
- Merge two smaller projects into a larger one, with a longer timeline.
- Let students know how many assignments can be flexed, or if flexibility is not possible.
- Consider whether an essential element of the assignment is the time necessary to complete the assignment. It may be reasonable to extend an assignment deadline if the time necessary to complete is not a factor being assessed. If an essential element of an assignment is the ability to complete the assignment within a certain meaningful time frame, then a deadline extension may not be reasonable.
- Consider granting an "Incomplete" for the course when most of the work is completed satisfactorily.

*If you believe it is not reasonable to make recommended adjustments to your course, please contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) at 4-7220 or accessibility@iastate.edu.

**If modifying attendance policies and deadlines would not substantially impact the nature or design of the course, then flexibility with attendance policies and deadlines is reasonable.

***If learning in your course is primarily based on classroom discourse and experiences, and cannot be easily recreated elsewhere, then less flexibility with attendance and deadlines would be reasonable.