



Attendance Flexibility Policy

Students with documented disabilities that are chronic and episodic in nature may require flexibility with course attendance requirements. Federal law requires colleges and universities to consider reasonable accommodation of attendance policies, when appropriate, to accommodate a student's disability. The process to request attendance flexibility is a collaborative process between the student, faculty instructor, and Office of Disability Services (ODS).

Process to request attendance flexibility:

1. The Office of Disability Services (ODS) will first meet with the student to evaluate whether the request is a reasonable accommodation. (*Students must first receive approval to receive accommodations. That process is set forth on the ODS website at: <https://www.wpi.edu/student-experience/resources/disability-services>.) The student selects the ODS approved accommodation in the ODS student portal when sending accommodation letters to their instructors at the start of each term.
2. The student selects the ODS approved accommodation in the ODS student portal when sending accommodation letters to their instructors at the start of each term.
3. The student schedules a time to meet their instructors to discuss a contingency plan in the event that attendance flexibility may be needed beyond the course's standard attendance policy. The number of course activities that can be missed and still satisfactorily complete the course should be discussed with your individual instructor. It is recommended the following questions be addressed in the plan:
 - How and when should a student notify the instructor of the need to miss class?
 - In the event of a missed class on an assigned due date or exam date, what would be the policy or expectation for that assignment or exam?
4. The instructor determines whether attendance is an essential component of the course. This decision should take into account the following questions:
 - a. Is there classroom interaction between the instructor and students, and among students?
 - b. Do student contributions in the classroom constitute a significant component of the learning process?
 - c. Does the fundamental nature of the course rely upon student participation in the classroom as an essential component of learning?
 - d. To what degree does a student's failure to attend a class constitute a significant loss to the educational experience of **other** students in the class?
 - e. Is classroom attendance a component of grade calculation?
 - f. What are classroom practices and policies regarding attendance and what does the course description and syllabus say regarding expectations for class attendance?

If attendance is an essential component of the course, attendance flexibility may not be a reasonable accommodation.

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5. The student fills out the Attendance Flexibility Agreement (attached), asks the instructor to sign it, and provides one copy to the instructor one copy to ODS, and keeps a third-copy for their records. The Student may satisfy this criteria by circulating a PDF of the signed agreement to the instructor and ODS. ODS can be reached at disabilityservices@wpi.edu.

It is recommended this process occurs as soon as possible at the start of the term.

Important Reminders

- Flexible attendance policies do not mean unlimited missed classes. Students may not be able to succeed in the course and may need to consider alternate options if too many course activities are missed. This is why it is critical that the number of course activities that can be missed and still satisfactorily complete the course should be discussed with your individual instructor.
- When possible, it would be important for the student to make every effort to attend class on key course dates such as exams or assignment due dates. This policy does not automatically grant extensions on homework or rescheduling of exams.
- It is the student's responsibility to seek out the instructor and other classmates to obtain the missed information in class, including course content and lecture notes.
- If an approved accommodation grants attendance flexibility, a student's learning and academic performance may be impacted by not having the real-time classroom experience.
- Students have the right file a [disability grievance](#) if they do not feel the interactive process pertaining to attendance flexibility has provided equal and reasonable access to their course.
- The Attendance Flexibility Policy and Agreement are posted on the Office of Disability (ODS) website at: <https://www.wpi.edu/student-experience/resources/office-disability-services-policies-and-procedures>.