

Adjustment to Course Attendance as an Accommodation

The purpose of this accommodation is to allow an eligible student to receive an adjustment to their course's attendance policy.

This accommodation is **not intended as a blanket accommodation for multiple successive absences**. If a student is experiencing long-term or chronic absences, the student's need exceeds the bounds of the *Adjustment to Course Attendance* accommodation, and OAS recommends that the student connect with the Office of Student Life to manage their multiple successive absences. Students must understand that absences under this accommodation should only be used when they experience an exacerbation of their diagnosis-related symptoms which impacts their ability to attend a scheduled course meeting.

FOR STUDENTS:

Students are expected to follow attendance policies established by the faculty member for each course; however, the University recognizes that there may be times when a qualified student with a disability cannot attend class because of urgent diagnosis- or disability-related reasons. If a student is granted an adjustment to a course attendance policy, an instructor will not penalize the student's nonattendance; however, the student is responsible for all missed material of the course session in addition to all programmatic expectations.

In order to activate this accommodation, an eligible student MUST:

1. Provide their current, valid *Academic Accommodation Authorization* document to their faculty member. If the student has not provided their faculty member with their *Academic Accommodation Authorization* document, they are not yet eligible to request an accommodation-related absence in that faculty member's course.
2. **Email their instructor and COPY OAS prior to the course session they will miss (if they are able)** in order for this accommodation to apply to the disability-related absence. Without such notice, the accommodation cannot apply.

FOR FACULTY:

Faculty are instrumental in determining the importance of student participation and whether a student can meet course outcome expectations despite emergency-use absences. In instances where class participation is expected, faculty should consider the following questions to determine the propriety of and number of additional allowable absences for students with this accommodation.

- Do student contributions constitute a significant component of the learning process?
- Does the fundamental nature of the course rely upon student participation as an essential method for learning?
- To what degree does a student's failure to attend class constitute a significant loss to the educational experience of other students in the class?
- What is the method by which the final course grade is calculated?

Upon receipt of an *Academic Accommodation Authorization* document from a student who is eligible for this accommodation, **faculty determine the number of allowable absences for an eligible student and communicate this number of absences to the student.** We ask that faculty use the chart below as guidance when making determinations concerning allowable adjustments to course attendance.

Please note, OAS staff do not know the instructional complexity of all courses at Simmons University. Likewise, for confidentiality reasons, faculty may not know the complexities of a student's diagnosis or disability. Faculty who have questions about this accommodation or about how to determine an appropriate adjustment to their course attendance policy should contact OAS staff for guidance and discussion.

Simmons University is obligated to consider a reasonable and appropriate allowance for adjustments to course attendance. Timely processing and review of such accommodations is critical for faculty and students. A student cannot be penalized for nonattendance when appropriately utilizing the *Adjustment to Course Attendance* accommodation; however, if the student exceeds the established *Adjustment to Course Attendance* accommodation, faculty may treat the student's nonattendance as they would for any other student.

In order to help faculty members determine the additional time, if any, that a student is allotted to be absent from their class without penalty, the chart below **suggests potential adjustments to course attendance** based on how frequently a course meets. The time allowed for a student to be away from class must not fundamentally alter the course. **The following examples are only suggestions**, and faculty may adjust the OAS' recommendations to ensure that their course is not fundamentally altered.

Suggested Guidance for Determining Attendance Adjustment

Course meets:	# of allowable absences for all students in the course as per syllabus:	+	Suggested adjustment to course attendance:	=	Suggested # of allowable absences for eligible student:
1x per week	X	+	1 class (2 hrs. and 50 mins.)	=	Adjusted allowable absences
2x per week	X		2 classes (80 mins. + 80 mins.)		Adjusted allowable absences
3x per week	X		3 classes (50 mins. + 50 mins. + 50 mins.)		Adjusted allowable absences

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

- To qualify for consideration for the *Adjustment to Course Attendance* accommodation, a student must first submit written documentation from an appropriate healthcare professional to the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS). Students are encouraged to request accommodations from OAS prior to the start of the semester or as close to the start of the semester as possible. **Students are not eligible to have this accommodation applied retroactively.** Please note that OAS considers accommodation requests at any time during the academic year.

- While Simmons University is committed to reasonably accommodating a student's disability-related needs, attendance allowances may not be able to be adjusted if doing so would fundamentally alter the essential nature of a course. Course participation is often integral to instructional design and thus integral to course outcomes and successful completion of the course.
- A student's timely completion of a course may be impacted by frequent use of the *Adjustment to Course Attendance* accommodation. Frequent emergent, disability-related absences may, in aggregate, fundamentally alter a course. For this reason, students should attempt to attend all classes.
- Absences related to non-diagnosis, personal-life circumstances are not covered by this accommodation.

Students and faculty are advised to immediately reach OAS with any concerns about the timing, delivery of, changes to, or appropriate use of the *Adjustment to Course Attendance* accommodation by emailing access@simmons.edu.