

## Adjustment to Assignment Deadlines as an Accommodation

The purpose of this accommodation is to allow an eligible student to use additional time to complete an assignment when their timely completion is impacted by an exacerbation of their documented diagnosis.

This accommodation is **not intended as a blanket extension for all assignments in a course**. Students must understand that an extension under this accommodation should only be requested when they experience an exacerbation of their diagnosis-related symptoms that prevents them from meeting an assignment deadline stated by the course syllabus. Moreover, this accommodation is not intended to be used to renegotiate assignment start dates, particularly for long-term assignments; a faculty member may request to see a student's progress on an assignment before granting a requested extension of the assignment.

### **FOR STUDENTS:**

Students are expected to complete assignments by the due dates prescribed by their faculty member in the course syllabus. This accommodation is not a blanket adjustment for every assignment in a course; however, the University recognizes that there may be times when a qualified student with a disability cannot complete an assignment due to an exacerbation of their diagnosis-related symptoms that prevents them from meeting an assignment deadline stated by the course syllabus. It is at the *faculty member's* discretion to determine an appropriate extension, not the *student's*. If a student is granted an adjustment to an assignment deadline, an instructor will not penalize the student for missing the original assignment deadline stated on the syllabus; however, if the student exceeds the adjusted deadline established under the *Adjustment to Assignment Deadlines* accommodation, faculty may treat the student's missed or late assignment as they would for any other student. a

Students eligible for this accommodation are expected to meet all programmatic and course expectations.

### **To activate this accommodation, eligible students 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 adjustment to an assignment deadline for an assignment in that faculty member's course.
2. **Email their instructor and COPY OAS prior to the assignment deadline** in order for this accommodation to apply to the disability-related need for an extension. Without such notice, the accommodation cannot apply.
  - a) Students are encouraged to submit the portion of the assignment they have completed at the time of their notification when they contact their faculty member to request an adjustment to the deadline.

**FOR FACULTY:**

Faculty are instrumental in determining the importance of assignment deadlines and whether a student can meet course expectations despite turning in an assignment after the original due date. Faculty should consider the following four questions to determine the propriety of and extent of an adjustment to an assignment deadline.

- What does the course description and syllabus say regarding late work?
- To what extent does the fundamental nature of the course rely upon completion of assignments within a specified time frame as an essential method for learning?
- Is the completion of an assignment within a specific time frame a critical component of an assessment activity?
- To what degree does a student's failure to submit timely completion of assignments constitute a significant loss of the educational experience for other students in the class?

**When a student activates this accommodation by notification to their faculty member and the OAS, the faculty member must determine an appropriate extension to the assignment deadline and communicate the new deadline to the student in a timely manner.** It is at the faculty member's discretion to determine an appropriate extension, not the student's.

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 an assignment deadline should contact OAS staff for guidance and discussion.

Simmons University is obligated to consider a reasonable and appropriate allowance for adjustments to assignment deadlines. Timely processing and review of such accommodations is critical for faculty and students. A student cannot be penalized for a late assignment when appropriately utilizing the *Adjustment to Assignment Deadlines* accommodation; however, if the student exceeds the adjusted deadline established under the *Adjustment to Assignment Deadlines* accommodation, faculty may treat the student's missed or late assignment 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 finish an assignment after the original due date, **the following examples are only suggestions**, and faculty may adjust the OAS' recommendations to ensure that their course is not fundamentally altered.

**EXAMPLE A:**

A student has draft #1 of a paper due April 4, which will be previewed by the professor and returned to the student. Prior to the due date, the student activates the *Adjustment to Assignment Deadlines* accommodation for a disability-related, urgent reason by emailing the OAS and the faculty member before the deadline. An adjusted deadline is determined by the faculty member to be April 9 (five days after the original due date) which does not fundamentally alter the course/assignment calendar. The syllabus states that the final paper is due on April 24. The first extension cannot surpass the second due date since this is a scaffolded assignment.

**EXAMPLE B:**

A weekly reflection paper is due at 5:00 p.m. on Monday which students respond to in class on Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. The deadline on the weekly reflection paper can be adjusted to Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. as that would not fundamentally alter the course. If the paper were to be turned in after Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. the student would have been exposed to their classmates' responses, thus fundamentally altering the assignment.

**EXAMPLE C:**

A student has a semester-long research paper due on April 25 at 11:59 p.m. The original assignment was posted on February 1. The student sends an email only to the faculty member (and omits OAS, against guidance for proper use of this accommodation) on April 25 at 8 p.m. stating that they are unable to complete the assignment and they request an adjustment of two weeks. An adjustment of two weeks may not be appropriate since this long-term assignment has been posted for months, and, in addition, it is at the faculty member’s discretion to determine an appropriate extension, not the student’s. This may be a case where the faculty can request to see what has been completed to date and how much more time may be needed to complete and finalize the assignment before submission. It is crucial to understand that the *Adjustment to Assignment Deadlines* accommodation is not intended to be a renegotiation of the start date of an assignment.

**EXAMPLE D:**

A student is a member of a group assignment team with a multi-step project due on May 1. The faculty member determines that an extension for the student may not be reasonable and appropriate due to the collaborative and tiered work expectations of the group. Faculty are encouraged to contact OAS for consultation in these situations.

The chart below is intended as **guidance** for faculty when making determinations concerning allowable adjustments to deadlines. Upon receipt of an *Academic Accommodation Authorization* document from a student who is eligible for this accommodation, you may have questions or concerns regarding your responsibility in the administration of this accommodation and are invited to contact OAS at [access@simmons.edu](mailto:access@simmons.edu).

**Suggested Guidance for Faculty for Determining Assignment Extensions**

An assignment is due...	Original syllabus due date:	+	Suggested assignment extension:	=	Suggested adjusted assignment due date:
Weekly	X	+	1 day	=	Adjusted due date
Long term	X		5 days		Adjusted due date
Labs	X		Generally made up at a lab in the same week		Adjusted due date
Clinical/Field	X		Generally determined by clinical and field placement teams		Adjusted due date

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION:**

- Missed or late assignments unrelated to the documented disability are not covered by this accommodation.
- A student’s timely completion of a course may be impacted by multiple or frequent use of the *Adjustment to Assignment Deadlines* accommodation. Frequent urgent, disability-related need to

adjust assignment deadlines may, in aggregate, fundamentally alter a course. For this reason, students should attempt to complete assignments by the prescribed deadlines when able to do so.

- The student is encouraged to meet with Simmons resources (faculty, Tutoring Center, OAS) in advance of the due date to clarify the goals and expectations of the assignment.
- To qualify for consideration for *Adjustment to Assignment Deadlines*, 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, some assignment deadlines may not be able to be adjusted if doing so would fundamentally alter the essential nature of a course. OAS is committed to working with students on time management and organization so they are able to complete assignments in a timely manner.

Students and faculty are advised to reach OAS with any concerns about the timing, delivery of, changes to, or appropriate use of the *Adjustment to Assignment Deadlines* accommodation by emailing [access@simmons.edu](mailto:access@simmons.edu).