

Chapter 9: Flexibility with Attendance and Coursework

What are these accommodations for?

- Students with disabilities who experience periodic flare-ups of a chronic condition - such as gastrointestinal disorders, autoimmune diseases, and mental health disorders, etc. **may** be approved for this accommodation.
- The purpose of disability-related accommodations is to ensure access. This extends to providing reasonable flexibility within attendance/assignment policies to students with disabilities, so they are not disproportionately penalized for exacerbations of their condition.

Federal law requires colleges and universities to consider reasonable modification of attendance policies and deadlines if needed to accommodate a student's disability.

In making this determination, two questions must be answered:

1. Does the student have a documented disability that directly affects his/her ability to attend class on a regular basis or submit work on time? The SAR Center will make this determination based on a review of documentation from the student's physician or other qualified provider and provide verification in a letter the student presents to the instructor.
2. Is attendance an essential part of the class? Would modification of attendance policies or deadlines result in a fundamental alteration of the curriculum? Instructors make this determination in consultation with The SAR Center.

The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) has provided the following guidelines to assess if attendance is an essential part of a class:

1. Is there classroom interaction between the instructor and students and among students?
2. Do student contributions constitute a significant component of the learning process?
3. Does the fundamental nature of the course rely on student participation as an essential method for learning?

4. To what degree does a student's failure to attend constitute a significant loss to the educational experience of other students in the class?
5. What do the course description and syllabus say?
6. Which method is used to calculate the final grade?
7. What are the classroom practices and policies regarding attendance?

How does the accommodation work?

- The **Flex Plan** module is built into the AIM accommodations portal and helps to maintain details on what flexibility may be possible in a course and track when a student's disability results in an absence, extension, or makeup throughout the semester.

Getting Started with Flex Plan

1. Log into your [AIM Instructor Portal](#).
2. Navigate to **Flex Plan** from the menu on the left-hand side.
3. Scroll to the **Overview of Flex Plan** section and take note of the count listed for **Number of Plans Not Initiated**. These are courses where a **Flex Plan** still needs to be submitted.
4. Continue scrolling to the **Step 1: Select Courses (for Bulk Specify or Copy from Previously Completed)** section.
5. The table shows all courses where a **Flex Plan** has been requested. You can either manage plans in bulk by checking the boxes and clicking the **Specify Flex Plan for Multiple Courses** button or simply click the **View** option in the left-hand column to specify details individually for each course.

Initiating a Flex Plan

To initiate a **Flex Plan** for your course, follow the steps in the **Getting Started with Flex Plan** section.

Once you click the **View** link for a **Flex Plan** or choose the **Bulk Specify** option, you will complete the short questionnaire regarding information on expectations, outcomes and activities as part of your course.

Once submitted, the SAR Center will review your submission to ensure parameters are clear and will then mark the **Flex Plan** as **Completed**. The student will receive an email with the details of your **Flex Plan**.

Copying a Flex Plan to Other Sections/Courses/Semesters

To copy a **Flex Plan** across sections/courses/previous semesters, follow the steps for accessing **Flex Plan** in the **Getting Started with Flex Plan** section.

In the table of courses and flex plans, click the **View** link beside any course where a **Flex Plan** has already been initiated.

Scroll to the **Options** section below the details of the **Flex Plan** for the currently-selected course. A drop-down provides other courses where a **Flex Plan** has not yet been initiated.

Select the course from which you would like to copy your **Flex Plan** responses and then click the **Copy Flex Plan** button.

Reviewing a Flex Plan Implementation Notification

To review an **implementation notification**, follow the steps to navigate to **Flex Plan** in the **Getting Started with Flex Plan** section. Scroll to the **Implementation Notification Requests** section and choose from the available options:

- Click the **List All Implementation Notification Requests Waiting for Instructor Response** link to review and **Accept** or **Dispute** requests submitted by students with the Flexibility with Attendance and Coursework accommodation.
- Click the **List All Implementation Notification Requests** link to review any requests that have been received across your courses for the current semester.

When a new disability-related absence notification request is received, you can either Accept or Dispute it based on information provided in your Flex Plan.

If you choose to **Accept** the request, the process is marked **Complete** and both you and the student will receive a confirmation email.

If you choose to **Dispute** the request, you will be asked to provide details to both the student and the assigned Accessibility Specialist as to why you are disputing the request. (Please note: The student's Accessibility Specialist will follow up with both you and the student to gather information in the event additional context is necessary).

Once a disputed request has been fully reviewed, the Accessibility Specialist will either cancel the request or work with the instructor and student to resolve any concerns.

Important Information

- Attendance policies are set by faculty, at the college level, or departmental level.
- At no time is the student required to present the faculty with medical documentation verifying their disability-related absence.
- In order to receive this accommodation, the student has already provided the necessary documentation and verification to the SAR Center.
- Absences that are not related to the effects/impacts of a disability are not included in this accommodation (e.g., absences due to a common illness, COVID, car trouble, childcare, etc.) and should be addressed according to the attendance/absence policy stated in the syllabus.

Does a Flex Plan need to be submitted for every student with the Flexibility with Attendance and Coursework accommodation in my courses?

No. Because flexibility would be determined based on the expectations, objectives and outcomes of a course, a Flex Plan would typically apply to all students in the course. Once you complete a Flex Plan for your course, it is automatically applied to each student with the accommodation who has already requested accommodations and for any additional students who request their accommodations afterward. Additionally, you can copy a Flex Plan submitted for one section to any other courses or sections being taught during the current semester.

Questions or Concerns?

The SAR Center staff is available to consult with faculty and students on issues concerning disability, attendance and deadlines.