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## **Consideration for Absences Procedure**

At Slippery Rock University, we are committed to providing reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. The Office of Disability Services (ODS) reviews every request with care and concern, and we approve accommodations only when there is a clearly documented rationale or discussion with the student.

- When a student is approved for consideration for absences as an accommodation, this means that a student is permitted a reasonable number of additional absences beyond the course requirements that are set for students by the faculty of a course for disability-related reasons.
- The Office of Civil Rights and the Department of Justice require us to consider these requests on a case-by-case and course-by-course basis. In approving these requests, we want to ensure clear communication between faculty, students, and ODS about the limits of absences and about how to proceed when absences approach the threshold of unreasonable.
- ODS considers 2-4 additional absences as a reasonable number of absences for a student with this accommodation; although, as mentioned above, each student's situation should be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Please note that students who are approved for this accommodation are strongly encouraged to attend all classes on a regular basis as outlined in the syllabus for the course. The student is informed that this accommodation is ONLY applicable for the specific disability that the student is registered for with ODS. Students are also informed that if a class session is missed due to a disability related circumstance, they must email the faculty member and copy ODS staff to the email to notify all parties of the absence.
- In all instances when the student experiences an exacerbation of their condition, they are notified to maintain ongoing, timely communication with their faculty members and ODS as well as to fulfill all objectives associated with their courses. ODS encourages the faculty member to notify ODS when they believe that absences are nearing the threshold of unreasonable or if/when communication with the student is made regarding a withdrawal from the course or issuing an incomplete.

### **How to Initiate the Process**

For students who have already completed the welcome meeting and have been approved for consideration for absences, ODS asks that the student proceeds with one of the following options:

**Option 1:** STUDENT WORKS DIRECTLY WITH PROFESSOR – Speak with your professor to decide what is appropriate for the course. Students and faculty are encouraged to finalize a specific plan in writing via email to [disabilityservices@sru.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@sru.edu). Details on course attendance adjustments, if any, need to be clearly stated in writing. The faculty should be copied on the email to ODS, and the plan must be reasonable. If you are unable to come up with a reasonable solution, please contact ODS and refer to option 2.

OR

**Option 2:** STUDENT SUBMITS REQUEST TO ODS – Students have the option to request that ODS contact their faculty to discuss a plan of action; then the staff will follow up with you in writing as to what the plan entails. Faculty and students will be copied on the email.

It is very important that you initiate the process at the **beginning of the semester- please do not wait until too many classes are missed.** Until a plan is created, no accommodation is in place and the accommodation will not be retroactive to cover missed coursework.

***Both options listed must be completed two weeks after the semester begins; waiting until after this time will result in no accommodation for the semester. If you are having difficulty reaching the faculty, please let ODS know.***

### **Sample Questions**

When creating a plan for consideration for absences as an accommodation, you can use the following questions as a guide to ensure that you create a detailed plan. When complete, email your plan to [disabilityservices@sru.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@sru.edu) and copy your course professor on that email.

#### ***Consideration for Absences***

- How many absences do you allow for all students in your class and how many additional absences are you willing to consider for a student with this accommodation?
- How should the student communicate with you that they need to utilize an absence related to their disability?
- Are there options for professor notes, peer notes, or other materials that are available for missed sessions?
- If the student misses a quiz/exam or an assignment due to a disability-related absence, is a make-up of the quiz/exam or a deadline extension reasonable?
- Are there any other items that need to be addressed in this plan regarding your course and the student's attendance accommodation?

### **Expected Communication**

Once a plan is created through option 1 or 2, the student must notify the instructor prior to, or within 24 hours after, the missed class.

*If you experience a course or professor-related accommodation situation that concerns you, contact ODS as soon as you feel reasonable access is not happening; ODS cannot promise an outcome to your personal satisfaction but does promise to consider all relevant variables to determine reasonable access and accommodations.*

This accommodation is not for students who are missing a significant amount of time in a classroom due to disability related concerns. In these situations, students and professors will often need to discuss if it is possible to adequately address absences and/or missed coursework and to maintain course pace while meeting the fundamental requirements of the course. ODS can be involved in these discussions as necessary per student or professor request. If a plan was previously established through either option 1 or 2, it may need to be revisited. In some cases, reasonable adjustments may not be possible, and the student's final grade may be impacted should the student choose to stay in the course.