

## **Attendance Policy Modification**

In most cases, class attendance is critical to a student's mastery of the knowledge and skills that are taught in a specific course and students are expected to follow the attendance policy established by the instructor in each class. If a qualified student with a disability believes it may not be possible to abide by the attendance policy due to disability related reasons, the student should contact the Disability Services Office (DSO) prior to the beginning of the semester, or as soon as possible after the need for an exception arises, to discuss the matter of a possible accommodation.

The DSO may determine that a student's disability entitles the student to a modification of the usual course attendance policy. Modifications of course attendance policies will be determined on an individual, case-by-case basis depending upon the extent to which the supporting medical or psychological documentation from a licensed professional, qualified to diagnose and treat the disability, supports the need for modification to an attendance policy. The determination will be indicated on the student's Approved Accommodations notice.

Since each class and situation is different, the extent of the modification should be determined by a discussion between the professor and the Disability Services Office early in the semester. The Disability Services Office and the professor will meet and complete an Attendance Agreement Form. The student will be provided a copy of the agreement by the Disability Services Office. If the student has questions or concerns about the agreement they may notify the DSO of those concerns. The DSO will renegotiate the agreement if necessary. When necessary, the academic chair, dean or other academic administrator will be included in the discussions.

West Virginia State University will make every effort to reasonably accommodate students disability related academic needs. However, neither the university nor an individual faculty member is required to waive essential or fundamental academic requirements of a course regardless of the nature of a student's disability. If a professor or department can demonstrate to the Disability Services Office that attendance is an essential or fundamental academic requirement for the course or to any directly related licensing requirement, they may put in place reasonable attendance requirements.

The Disability Services Office will determine the appropriateness of a modified attendance policy by consideration of such things as statements in the syllabus and course description regarding attendance, grading methods, whether student participation is an essential method for learning, the need or lack thereof for classroom interaction, and the impact, if any, which non-attendance will have on the educational experience of other students.

Regardless of the modification of the attendance policy, the student is required to meet all of the academic course requirements and to complete all assignments and examinations. It is the student's responsibility to obtain the material and notes from missed classes. The student will be graded according to the criteria stated in the class syllabus. If a student finds that he or she is not doing well in the class due to extended absences, the student is urged to consider options such as dropping the class, withdrawing from the class or taking an incomplete. It is important for the student not to abuse the modification of the attendance policy. Modification of the attendance policy does not mean that unlimited absences will be permitted. The number of absences permitted will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Absences for non-disability related reasons will not be excused by the modification.

It is important for the student to realize that even if excused, absences could impact the student's academic performance because the student will not have the benefit of such things as full classroom interaction and the opportunity to ask questions while the material is being presented.