

# **UNCW Disability Resource Center Guidelines**

## **Consideration for Attendance Leniency**

### **ATTENDANCE POLICIES OF UNCW**

Students are generally expected to be present at all regular class meetings and examinations for the courses in which they are registered. Each faculty member is responsible for setting the policy concerning the role of attendance in determining grades for their classes. It is the responsibility of the students to learn and comply with the policies set for each class in which they are registered. Students should familiarize themselves thoroughly with each course's attendance policy, as explained in the course syllabus. Students should be aware that when a course policy allows for a specific number of absences with no penalty, that number typically includes absences for any reason (including those with documented justification). For many courses, absences beyond the allowed number mean that the student has not completed the same work as other students in the class and therefore cannot receive the same grade.

For some students with disabilities, medically-related conditions of an episodic nature or other specific and individual aspects of a disability may make it difficult for them to fulfill the typical attendance requirements. Disability Resource Center (DRC) has established the following procedures for the request and evaluation of such requests for consideration for attendance leniency:

- 1) Students with disabilities should request consideration for attendance leniency from Disability Resource Center prior to, or at the beginning of, each semester in which it is believed to be warranted. In making a determination, the curricular impact and appropriateness of such request will be considered for each course individually. A student seeking consideration must engage with DRC in an interactive decision-making process, providing documentation indicating a rationale as to why they may need to miss classes and to what extent attendance is anticipated to be affected. While it is understood that one cannot always accurately predict the number or percentage of absences anticipated, the student is asked to provide some indication of the scope of the request.
- 2) DRC will evaluate each request and any provided documentation to determine whether the student has provided a justifiable disability-based rationale for requesting consideration in attendance requirements. Documentation is considered confidential and will not be shared with the faculty.
- 3) All requests for leniency in attendance requirements (and extensions for assignments as a result of disability-related absences) will be evaluated carefully, giving consideration to the following information offered by faculty:
  - a) Is there regular classroom interaction between the instructor and students and among the students themselves?
  - b) Do student contributions or interactions in class constitute a significant component of the learning process?
  - c) Does the fundamental nature of the course rely upon student participation or interaction as an essential method of learning?
  - d) To what degree does a student's failure to attend class constitute a significant loss of the educational experience of other students in the class?
  - e) What does the course description and syllabus say regarding attendance?
  - f) What is the method by which the final course grade is calculated?

- 4) If it is determined that consideration for leniency of an attendance policy is not possible or appropriate for a given course, the student will be so informed and given an opportunity to discuss other accommodation options with DRC staff. Appeals may be addressed to the UNCW ADA/Section 504 Compliance Coordinator ([ADA-504-Coordinator@uncw.edu](mailto:ADA-504-Coordinator@uncw.edu)).
- 5) If a request is determined to be justified due to the impact of the student's disability, DRC will include “*Consideration for Leniency on Attendance Policy*” in the student’s accommodation plan, which must be provided to faculty of each class at the beginning of the term, or immediately upon issuance, if being requested. It is important to note that for traditionally offered classes (i.e., face-to-face), ***attendance is generally considered a significant aspect of participatory learning***. The student and the faculty share the responsibilities in establishing how to carry out this request through completion of an ***Attendance Leniency Worksheet***.

*Important Note:* At no time is the student asked to negotiate whether attendance leniency is or is not reasonable—their role is in coming to an understanding with the faculty member of the parameters for employing the accommodation.

- 6) Specifically:
  - a) The student and faculty must coordinate to complete a ***Reasonable Attendance Adjustment Worksheet*** for each course and submit it to DRC for review and acknowledgement. Upon receipt, DRC staff may seek additional information or clarification in order to support both the student and faculty.
  - b) Students are responsible for abiding by the communication plan agreed upon in the ***Reasonable Attendance Adjustment Worksheet***, which includes contacting the faculty member as soon as possible when a disability-related absence will occur/has occurred and, as necessary, informing the faculty member as to when the student will return to class.  
[While not a requirement, students are encouraged to cc: [DRC@uncw.edu](mailto:DRC@uncw.edu) when emailing faculty regarding disability-related absences]
  - c) This request potentially provides relief from requirements for physical attendance in classes. However, the student remains responsible for any material covered or work done during such disability-necessitated absences. Additionally, *neither* an extension of deadlines for assignments due, *nor* arrangements for making up tests and exams missed during such absence are included in this accommodation and must be individually addressed by the faculty in the ***Reasonable Attendance Adjustment Worksheet***, and as need may arise otherwise.
  - d) If, at any time, the faculty member believes that the student's absences from class threaten the academic integrity of the curriculum or the accomplishment of learning objectives, or that the student is not abiding by the ***Reasonable Attendance Adjustment Worksheet***, they should contact the Disability Resource Center AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. After consulting with the faculty member, DRC may determine it necessary to contact the student to review available options.