

Documentation Guidelines Specific to Reasonable Modifications of Attendance Policies

Attendance is an essential element of a post-secondary education. Because of this, there is an enhanced need for greater specificity in documentation that supports the critical need for this policy modification. Requests for modifications of attendance policies must include comprehensive, detailed information *directly related* to the request for an attendance modification and must come from a qualified health care provider who currently oversees the medical care of the student. Medical information regarding the student's request for this policy modification must also be *specific* to the student in question and cannot be generalized to how the typical person with the diagnosed disorder might be impacted.

Students who request accommodations and policy modifications must have a disability as defined by the American's with Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAA). The legal definition is: a mental or physical condition that substantially limits a major life activity compared to most people. Substantial in this context is somewhat subjective but *in general* means a notable, significant, or meaningful limit/difference to the manner in which the individual engages in the activity, the conditions necessary for them to engage in the activity, the duration for which they can engage in the activity, or the frequency with which they can engage in the activity. Major life activities include, but *are not limited to*, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, working, and the proper functioning of major bodily functions.

Approval for accommodations and policy modifications is not based solely on a diagnosed disorder or on meeting the above definition of a disability. Instead, approval for accommodations and policy modifications is based on how each individual student is *impacted* by a diagnosed disorder.

Medical documentation related to a request for modification of attendance policies should be typed on the health care provider's official letterhead and signed by the health care provider. In the medical documentation, health care providers must provide answers to the following questions:

1. Does the student qualify as a person with a disability under the ADAA definition detailed above?
2. What is the prognosis for this student's disorder? Are the student's symptoms and the related impact from the disorder stable or will they fluctuate over time?

3. If the symptoms might fluctuate, what are the possible triggers that can cause this student's functioning to worsen?
4. How does a flare-up of this student's disorder manifest itself in terms of symptomology and what is the impact on the student's daily functioning?
5. How often might this student experience the disorder in a manner that prevents her/him from participating in major life activities or from attending class?
6. If a worsening of symptoms occurs, what immediate medical treatment is needed that might prevent the student from attending and participating in class? What medical risk(s) does the student face if s/he delays treatment or attends class while experiencing the symptoms?
7. How long is the typical recovery period if this student should experience of flare-up of the diagnosed disorder?

If there are questions or concerns related to the student's request for a modification of attendance policies, please contact:

Student Disability Services
234 Martindale
The University of Mississippi
University, MS 38677

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FAX Number: 662-915-5972
Email Address: sds@olemiss.edu