



## **AccessAbility Services Occasional Absence Guidelines and Agreement Form**

### ***Overview:***

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 faculty member in each course. AccessAbility Services may determine that a student's disability may impact their class attendance. This accommodation is intended to create a reasonable modification to the classroom attendance policy which is stated in the course syllabus.

Since each course and situation is unique, the extent of the modification should be determined by the professor in consultation with AAS within a reasonable amount of time after the electronic accommodation letter has been received. As a proactive measure, AAS recommends faculty members develop an agreement as soon as possible. Once contacted, AAS will assist the faculty member in creating such agreement.

Once an Occasional Absence Agreement is created, the faculty member will email the agreement to the student with a copy to AAS ([aas@wcsu.edu](mailto:aas@wcsu.edu)). This email serves as official notification of the modification(s) to the student. If the student does not agree with the Occasional Absences Agreement, they must contact AAS within a reasonable amount of time.

Western Connecticut State University (WCSU) will make every effort to appropriately 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 AAS that attendance is an essential or fundamental academic requirement for the course, they may put in place and enforce attendance requirements. In these cases, the chair of the department and faculty member will be required to submit a written Essential Requirement Statement Form.

Faculty members in consultation with AAS will determine the appropriate threshold of a modified attendance accommodation by consideration of such things as attendance 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 student and/or faculty member 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 class(es). The student will be graded according to the criteria set forth by the faculty member within the course syllabus and occasional absence agreement. Modification of the attendance policy does not mean that unlimited absences will be permitted. Absences for non-disability related reasons will not be excused by the modification. Students should 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.

## ***Guidelines Regarding Attendance Policy Modifications from the Office of Civil Rights***

The U.S. Office of Civil Rights (OCR) states that requests for accommodations for absences due to a disability should be considered on an individual basis. This accommodation should be provided unless the accommodation threatens the integrity of the course as offered. If it is determined that attendance (as defined in the existing course syllabus) is an essential requirement and that a modification to the attendance policy would alter the integrity of the course, the faculty member and department chair are not required to make a modification, but must submit a written Essential Requirement Statement Form to AAS.

The OCR has provided the following guidelines to be used in considering whether attendance is an essential element of the course:

1. Are there classroom interactions between the faculty member and the students and/or among the students?
2. Do student contributions in class constitute a significant component of the learning process?
3. Does the functional nature of the course rely on student participation as an essential method of learning?
4. To what degree does a student's failure to attend class constitute a significant loss to the educational experience of the other students in the course?
5. What do the course description and syllabus say regarding attendance?
6. What are the classroom practices and policies regarding attendance?



## AccessAbility Services Occasional Absence Agreement Form

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Course/Section: \_\_\_\_\_

Professor Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Semester: \_\_\_\_\_

**What is the Classroom Attendance Policy as Stated on Syllabus?**

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**How will the attendance policy be modified (beyond the syllabus outline) for this student in the course?**

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**If the student reaches the maximum number of absences or exceeds the modified policy, then what options does the student have? (For instance, can the initial modification be reasonably revisited and reasonably re-modified? Should the student consider withdrawing from the course? Is a retroactive withdraw possible?)**

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**Should the student contact the faculty member each time an absence related to disability occurs?**

Yes     No

**If 'yes', indicate how the student should notify the faculty member:**

Email     Phone call     Before/After the next class

**By when should the student inform the faculty member of the absence?**

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**What is the procedure for making up a missed quiz, examination, or in-class graded assignment given on the day of a disability related absence? How long does the student have to make it up?**  
(Students are reminded that they must follow AAS' procedure for missed quizzes/exams as well as their faculty member's procedure):

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**What is the procedure for turning in homework/projects due the day of a disability related absence? How long does the student have to hand it in?**

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