

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 great caution and we approve accommodations only when there is a clear documented rationale for their need. An accommodation that can be considered for a student through ODS is *consideration for absences*.

Consideration for Absences

When a student is approved for a *consideration for absences* accommodation, this means that a student is permitted a reasonable amount of additional absences beyond the attendance requirements that are set for students in a particular course. 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 a request for consideration for absences, we want to ensure clear communication between faculty, students and ODS about the limits of that consideration and about how to proceed when absences approach the threshold of unreasonable. ODS considers 2-4 additional absences as reasonable 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 a consideration for absences accommodation are strongly encouraged to attend all classes on a regular basis. The student is informed that this accommodation is ONLY applicable for the specific disability that the student is registered for with ODS. He/she is also informed that if a class session is missed due to a disability related circumstance, he/she 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 he/she believes 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.

Consideration for Absences Agreement

In order to enhance communication between students, faculty and ODS, we have created a *Consideration for Absences Agreement Form*. Faculty and students can access this form within the Faculty tab on our ODS website (www.sru.edu/ods) or under the Resources tab in *Accommodate*. Our intention with this agreement is to help guide conversations regarding attendance and the parameters that are agreed upon by all parties; the student, faculty and ODS.

Procedure

The following procedure will be **required** when a student gains approval for a consideration for absences accommodation:

1. The student will be given a copy of or be instructed to retrieve the *Consideration for Absences Agreement Form* from ODS.
2. The student will approach each of his/her faculty to engage in discussion regarding the parameters of attendance.
3. Once the parameters are set, the student and faculty will sign the agreement form.
4. The student will be asked to provide a copy of the signed agreement to ODS.

5. ODS will review the document and reach out to the faculty member and the student to address any questions or concerns. A copy of the document will be maintained in the student's file in ODS.
6. The student will email the faculty member and an ODS staff member to communicate when disability related absences occur.

All questions or concerns regarding the consideration for absences accommodation, agreement, or process, should be directed to Dr. Natalie Burick, Director for the Office of Disability Services.

Consideration for Absences Agreement Form

The *Consideration for Absences Agreement Form* (page 3 of this document) is designed to provide faculty and students a framework for developing parameters and a contingency plan for *consideration for absences* as a reasonable accommodation as verified by the Office of Disability Services. The purpose of this form is to facilitate discussions about how to apply this accommodation to a given course by balancing the student's need for a consideration for absences as a reasonable accommodation and maintaining the academic integrity of the course.

Functional Limitations

Students are encouraged to share specific functional limitations as they apply to the course to enable proactive planning around these accommodations. *Functional limitations* are restrictions in performing physical, mental, or psychological actions or activities in the manner or within the range expected by students without a diagnosed disability. Accommodations are meant to allow a student to achieve at their potential while mitigating functional limitations of their disability, but are not a guarantee of success.

Please note that students are not required to disclose their specific diagnosis, but the typical frequency, manner and duration of the impact of their disability are important factors in determining appropriate consideration for absences.

Students should consider sharing information relevant to the below questions:

- How do your functional limitations affect you outside of class and delay your ability to complete work and/or attend class?
- If your functional limitations are more static and predictable, how do they typically affect you relevant to deadlines and attendance?
- If your functional limitations are more sporadic and intermittent, how often do you typically expect them to occur?
- When flare-ups do occur, what is the typical duration of their impact (hours, days, etc.)?
- Is there any additional information you would like to share with your professor?

Faculty members should consider the following when thinking about attendance:

- How much classroom interaction occurs between the students and faculty member and among students?
- Do students' contributions during class contribute a significant component of the learning process?
- Does the nature of the course rely upon student participation as an essential method of learning?
- To what degree does a student's absence detract from the educational experience of other students in the class?
- How does attendance factor into the final grade?

Please use the *Consideration for Absences Agreement Form* as a guide to engage in conversation about a *consideration for absences* accommodation for a particular course. ODS is available to attend upon request.

Consideration for Absences Agreement Form

If the student has an approved accommodation for *consideration of absences*, the following questions may apply to the discussion between professor and student. This is not an exhaustive list and students and faculty should discuss any additional questions or concerns with one another and document them on this form or attach to this form for ODS review.

Course Name			
# of absences allowed per syllabus		# of additional absences allowed upon considering functional limitations	
Are there any specific dates planned for doctor's appointments that can be shared now?			
When the student identifies an unpredicted or unplanned need for a consideration for absences, how should the student communicate that need to the professor?			
Keeping the objectives for class sessions in mind, if a session is missed, are there options for missed material/objectives to be made up?			
Are there any course sessions that are unable to be made up or replicated, such as labs, in-class discussion or experiential learning?			
Consideration for absences does not automatically allow for extended deadlines for assignments or imply make-up dates for tests/quizzes/exams. If a deadline or exam is missed, is a make-up or flexibility reasonable?			
Are there options for professor notes, peer notes or other materials to be made available for missed sessions?			
<p>By signing this agreement, the faculty member and student agree to the terms noted above. In addition, the student agrees to provide a copy of this signed form to the Office of Disability Services for review and to maintain in the student's file. Both parties also agree that if either the student or faculty member believe that the outcome of this discussion is unfavorable or leaves unanswered questions, that he/she will contact Dr. Natalie Burick, Director for the Office of Disability Services to support a discussion to attempt reconciliation of any discontinuity. By signing this agreement electronically, both parties agree that the electronic signature provided is the legal equivalent to his/her manual/handwritten signature.</p>			
Faculty Printed Name			
Faculty Signature		Date	
Student Printed Name			
Student Signature		Date	
ODS Printed Name			
ODS Signature		Date	