



Absence Leniency Guide

Texas A&M University – Central Texas makes every effort to provide reasonable accommodations that meet a student's documented disability as related to academic needs. Neither the College nor an individual faculty member is required to waive or alter an essential or fundamental academic requirement of a course, regardless of the nature of the student's disability.

The university is not required to accommodate absences from classes due to a disability, however, each request will be considered on an individual basis. Students are responsible for notifying the faculty member with the Absence Leniency Request that excessive absences are a possibility.

If a portion of the grade is dependent on class attendance, the student can discuss it with the faculty member and make an informed decision about any alternatives that may be available.

Absence leniency is an accommodation that is recommended most often in cases where students have chronic health or unpredictable, episodic conditions that may cause them to be absent more often than their peers. Absence leniency means that the student will not be penalized for absences within reasonable limits beyond what the course attendance policy allows (e.g., If other students lose points for being absent, a student with an absence leniency accommodation will be exempt from losing points and allowed to make up missed work). It is possible that a student's performance on assignments and exams may be directly impacted by absences; however, a student with this accommodation should not lose points solely based on absences. Also, students with this accommodation should not be asked to bring a doctor's note unless missed classes are due to a doctor's appointment or hospitalization. Most often, students who are approved for this accommodation have been living with the condition for an extended period of time and require self-care, rather than a doctor's appointment.

While absence leniency is approved on a case-by-case basis by Access and Accommodation (A&A) and depends on each student's individual circumstances, the degree of leniency is decided by faculty, in consultation with A&A, on a course-by-course basis. The nature of the course determines the extent of flexibility with absences. Because professors are the content experts, they are best situated to assess their courses to determine the extent to which leniency can be granted.

Recommended Communications & Documentation

It is often difficult to give students an exact number of how many absences will impact their educational experience up front. Therefore, regular communication with the student regarding absences and progress is recommended. At the very least, A&A recommends an initial meeting to develop a plan for absences, a follow-up meeting or email communication if a student is nearing a critical point with absences, and then a final meeting or email once the student has reached a point at which their educational experience is compromised.

Initial Meeting

During the initial meeting, faculty should discuss the nature of the course, the limits of absence leniency (if any), and a plan for absences. Faculty and students should use the Absence Leniency Agreement Form to facilitate a plan for absences. It is also advisable to discuss an overall plan for communication with regard to absences and student progress throughout the semester.

Follow-Up Meeting/Email Communication

This meeting may only need to occur if the student has missed several classes and there is a concern about them missing additional classes. During this meeting, it would be important to express concerns, discuss any missing or future assignments/exams, discuss current grade, discuss future class dates of specific importance, gauge student's feelings about course progress and set limits if necessary. A face-to-face meeting is preferred, but an email or phone discussion will suffice.

Final Meeting

This meeting is only necessary if the student is in danger of not being able to complete the course with a passing grade and it is believed that absences have contributed to this. This may happen after the last day to drop classes. In this case, the instructor may refer the student to Academic Affairs and may wish to write a letter on the student's behalf if deemed necessary.

Documentation

After each of the above meetings with the student, consider emailing the student a brief summary of what was discussed. This will serve as documentation for both you and the student and can help to ensure all parties are clear as to what occurred



Absence Leniency Agreement

This form is intended to facilitate and provide record of an absence leniency agreement between students and instructors.

Student Information

Student Name: _____

UIN: _____

Phone: _____

Course Information

Course Name: _____

Instructor Name: _____

Phone: _____

Absence Leniency Information

Flexibility with regard to the instructor's attendance policy may be necessary to fully include this student in your course. Courses where the majority of learning comes from in-class group work, discussion, and hands-on practical experiences may be less flexible than courses where the majority of learning comes from reading the text-book, completing homework assignments, and taking class notes. Students should schedule individual meetings with faculty to discuss this accommodation early in the semester. Below are some points to clarify.

Plan for Absences

Degree of Leniency. While absence leniency is approved on a case-by-case basis by A&A and depends on each student's individual circumstances, the degree of leniency is decided by instructors on a course-by-course basis. The nature of the course determines the extent of flexibility with absences. Because professors are the content experts, they are best situated to assess their courses to determine the extent to which leniency can be granted. To assist instructors with this course analysis, Access and Accommodation created the attached Absence Leniency Guide.

Reporting Absences

The student should report absences in the following manner (indicate all that apply):

____ By emailing the instructor via the contact information provided in the course syllabus.

____ By calling the instructor via the contact information provided in the course syllabus.

Please report all scheduled absences prior to the date on which the absence will occur and no later than the day you miss class for unscheduled absences.

Missed Exams. If the student is absent on an exam day (Indicate all that apply):

____ The student will contact the instructor to make appropriate arrangements to make up exams.

____ The instructor will contact A&A to make appropriate arrangements for administering the makeup exam.

____ The instructor will make arrangements within the department to proctor the exam at an alternative time.

____ The student should contact A&A to make appropriate arrangements for a makeup exam.

Submitting Assignments. If an assignment is due the day of the absence, the student should:

____ Email homework as an attachment on the due date.

____ Submit the homework no later than the next class period.

____ Deliver the homework to the instructor's departmental mailbox as soon as possible.

____ Other (Please describe) _____

Missed Information/Handouts. When class is missed the student should:

____ Get a copy of notes/handouts from a classmate

____ Get notes/handouts from instructor during office hours or by appointment

Documentation for Absences. The student should not be asked to provide documentation for absences unless the absence was related to a hospitalization, surgery, or a medical appointment.

Instructor Signature: _____

Date: _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____