

Disability Related Flexibility in Assignments Policy and Guidelines

▪ **Assignment Deadlines:**

Students are expected and encouraged to meet all deadlines for assignments. Faculty have the right to establish late work policies and are encouraged to do so.

▪ **What does flexible assignment completion mean?**

Federal law requires CMU to consider reasonable accommodations for flexible assignment completion if needed to accommodate a student's disability. **The Office of Disability Resources has determined that a student enrolled in your course has a documented disability that may directly impact their ability to complete assignments on time on a regular basis.** Upon review of medical documentation and after a thorough discussion with the student, Disability Resources has determined that flexible assignment completion dates where possible and appropriate is a reasonable accommodation for this student. Students with this accommodation have disabilities which are episodic in nature with unpredictable or cyclical acute episodes, and as a result the disability may occasionally impact the students' ability to complete an assignment at the scheduled time.

▪ **Questions to Consider:**

Please consider the following questions as you determine whether flexible due dates can be reasonably granted for any upcoming assignments in your course. This guidance comes from cases adjudicated by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR).

- Are there group assignments?
 - Are solutions to problem sets/ homework released on a set schedule? If so, how long after the due date is it feasible to wait before posting solutions? Are there other hard deadlines that would limit the amount of flexibility on due dates?
 - Would learning outcomes by peers be negatively impacted if flexibility is granted?
 - Would accommodating flexible due dates result in a fundamental alteration of the curriculum?
 - What do the course description and syllabus outline?
 - What are the classroom practices and policies regarding assignments?
 - Which method is used to calculate the final grade?
 - For ideas on how to provide accommodations based on the answers to the above questions, visit the Flexible Assignment Dates and Attendance section of the [Faculty FAQ](#) on the Disability Resources website.
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- **Procedure:**
 - Student initiates notification of this accommodation to their faculty through Accessible Information Management (AIM), the Disability Resources online portal
 - Faculty receives an email from the student's primary contact at Disability Resources, listing this and any other accommodations for the student
 - The student will typically contact the faculty member to set up a meeting to create a written agreement around this accommodation. **Note that Disability Resources staff may facilitate this meeting instead at either the student's or faculty member's request.**
 - During the discussion, student, faculty, and Disability Resources staff (if present) should clearly specify:

- If there are any assignments, papers, or projects in the syllabus where it would be reasonable to allow a flexible due date, should the student need it due to a potential exacerbation of symptoms
- How much flexibility is granted for each assignment
 - How and when the student should inform instructors they will request to use their flexibility
 - How the student will submit the assignments, papers, or projects if they are being submitted after the rest of the class
 - If it is reasonable for online discussion expectations to be modified due to disability related reasons and under what conditions
- Once the verbal agreement has occurred, students and faculty should collaborate to fill out the Flexible Assignment Completion Student Faculty Agreement Form through the AIM portal. This is a written record of what has been agreed upon during the discussion. This form can be accessed and submitted by the student only. Once completed, the faculty member, student, and Disability Resources will all receive a copy via email.
- Note that if deemed most appropriate, students and faculty may summarize the agreed-upon assignment flexibility via email in lieu of completing the online form. Any questions that may arise during this discussion should be directed to Disability Resources at access@andrew.cmu.edu.
- **Important Information:**
 - If no one reaches out to the faculty member to discuss the accommodation and fill out the form, then the accommodation is not implemented into the course.
 - This accommodation is not a blanket reason to request flexibility on every assignment, paper, or project.
 - Some students register for accommodations late in the term, and some wait to respond to the need to fill out the Flexible Agreement Form. In these cases, faculty are not expected to provide retroactive accommodations. However, it may still be helpful to have this information, even at a late point in the term, and flexibility on any remaining future assignments may be arranged when appropriate.
 - At no time is the student required to present the faculty member with medical documentation verifying their disability related need for this accommodation.
 - Extension requests that are not related to the effects of a disability are not included in this accommodation (i.e. those due to a common illness, forgetting an assignment, etc.) and should be addressed according to the syllabus stated extension policy. The student is responsible for following the faculty member's syllabus regarding extensions due to non-disability related issues.
 - Flexible assignment dates do not extend beyond the end of the semester, and therefore an incomplete in the course is not part of this accommodation.
 - Extensions may not be appropriate for every course component: a flexible due date accommodation may not be reasonable if there are group assignments, solutions released on a set schedule, or if providing this accommodation would result in a fundamental alteration of the course and/or curriculum.
 - Students have the responsibility for completing all class work and should be held to the same standard as all other students.

If the instructor and/or the student have any questions or concerns at any point about this process or agreement, please contact Disability Resources as soon as possible:

access@andrew.cmu.edu