

# **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 Dates 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 flares up episodically and unpredictably and 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 due dates with a modest amount of flexibility 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.

## **Flexible Assignment Procedure**

- Student initiates notification of this accommodation to their faculty through Accessible Information Management (AIM), the Disability Resources online portal.
- The faculty member receives the Summary of Accommodations Memorandum via email from the student's primary contact at Disability Resources, listing this and any other accommodations for the student.

- The faculty member logs onto the [AIM Instructor Portal](#), navigates to the Flex Plan module, and proposes appropriate and reasonable flexibility using the Flexibility Plan form. The instructor completes one Flexibility Plan for all types of flexibility accommodations, and this form gets applied to anyone in the class who has the approved accommodation of Flexible Assignment Completion Dates, Consideration for More Flexible Attendance, and/or Flexibility with Timely Arrival to Class. The instructor need only complete this form once, and only the parts of the form that apply to flexibility on assignments will be viewable by students with this accommodation.
- Disability Resources staff review the Flexibility Agreement proposed by the instructor and may engage in an interactive dialog with the instructor if the proposed flexibility is not clear, does not appear reasonable, or would not meet students' needs.
- Once all changes are made (as applicable), Disability Resources staff mark the Flexibility as complete, and it appears on the student's dashboard for their review.
- The student reviews the Flexibility Plan through the AIM portal. If needed, the student may reach out to their primary contact at Disability Resources to request changes or concerns.

### **Important Information:**

- If the instructor does not propose any assignment flexibility through the AIM System instructor portal within two weeks of receiving notification of the accommodation, a default flexibility of twenty-four hours extension on all non-group assignments will go into effect, back dating to the date the instructor received the Summary of Accommodations Memorandum listing the Flexible Assignment Dates accommodation.
- Once the Flexibility Agreement is completed, it is available for viewing in the AIM Student Portal and Instructor Portal.
- This accommodation is not a blanket reason to request flexibility on every assignment, paper, or project.
- If the student or instructor are not closely adhering to the agreement, either the student or instructor should contact Disability Resources immediately to discuss.
- Some students register for accommodations or notify their faculty about their approved accommodations late in the semester. In these cases, faculty are not expected to provide retroactive accommodations. The accommodation only goes into effect when the student uses the AIM system to notify their faculty of the flexibility accommodation, and the Summary of Accommodations Memorandum is sent to the instructor. Flexibility on any remaining future assignments may be arranged when appropriate.
- At no time should the student be requested 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 the student's disability are not included in this accommodation (i.e., those due to a common illness, athletic commitments, forgetting an assignment, etc.) and should be addressed according to the syllabus state 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:**

**<mailto:flexibility@andrew.cmu.edu>**