



Absence Policy – Disability Related

The Americans with Disabilities Act specifies that case-by-case exceptions may be made to established policy in order to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability. To address this, The Office of Student Accessibility Resources has adopted a Disability Related Absence Policy and Procedure.

Absences due to a disability are not automatically accommodated, as each request is considered on an individual basis. Proactive action can be taken by notifying the faculty on the accommodation letter that disability related absences are a possibility. If a proportion of the grade is dependent on work done during class sessions, the faculty should be notified in advance and can discuss the issue with the student. The student can then make an informed decision as to the alternatives. We have a separate document called the **Flexible Attendance Policy** which is a contract that the student and instructor sign that explains more in depth how students should manage this accommodation.

Verification of a Disability

Based on documentation provided by the student from a qualified professional, The Office of Student Accessibility Resources will verify whether the student's disability may cause the student to miss classes. When a student qualifies for an accommodation, a statement will be included on the accommodation letters. Students who present documentation after absences occur will not be eligible for retroactive accommodations.

Instructor Notification

The student should meet with the instructor at the beginning of the semester to present the accommodation letter and to discuss how absences may affect the completion of coursework should the student need to use this accommodation. The Office of Student Accessibility Resources staff can attend this meeting upon request.

Examples. Some examples of allowances that can be made by instructors as accommodations for disability related absences are:

- If a certain number of absences would result in a lowering of student's grade, the student will not be penalized for disability related absences only. The student would be responsible for submitting evidence that an absence was purely disability related.
- If there were a policy that allows no make-up of missed exams, the student may be allowed to make-up the exam.
- Arrangements may be made for taping of lectures or provision of notes.

Procedure. When a disability-related absence occurs, the following procedures should be followed:

- The student should notify Instructors and The Office of Student Accessibility Resources within 48 hours of absence.
- When the accommodation is questioned, the instructor, student, and Student Accessibility Resources should discuss whether the disability related absence accommodation is reasonable.
- The University reserves the right to request documentation of the disability-related absence from a qualified professional.

Considerations. The decision in determining whether this accommodation can be provided should be based on the following considerations:

- Is the absence truly related to the disability? Routine medical appointments, transportation difficulties, work-related activities, etc., are not reasons to warrant the disability-related absence accommodation because they are not disability related.
- Will the absences cause the student to miss essential components of the class? (For example, missing group work in an oral communication class.)
- Can the activities missed by the student be made up? (For example, making up a missed nursing rotation may cause an administrative burden.)

Responsibilities of Students with Disabilities

- Meet the University's qualifications and essential technical, academic and institutional standards
- Self-identify in a timely manner as an individual with a disability when an accommodation is needed
- Provide documentation from an appropriate professional source that confirms the presence of a disability, identifies functional limitations and provides support for the requested accommodations
- Follow the specific, published procedures for requesting and obtaining reasonable and appropriate accommodations
- Provide for one's own personal independent living needs or other personal disability related needs
- Assume personal responsibility to meet with faculty, and to request assistance through other campus resources
- Communication with the instructor regarding the absence
- Inquire about missing homework or ask for instructor notes that they missed
- Abide by the University's standards and guidelines for behavior and academic integrity
- Treat all University staff and faculty with respect and courtesy

NOTE: Individuals with disabilities remain subject to the university student community code, as are all students. The Community Code is located in the William Woods University Student Handbook.

Responsibilities of Faculty

Shared Responsibility

As an employee of William Woods University, which has compliance obligations under federal laws, it is the responsibility of the faculty to assume a shared responsibility in providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. The university is responsible for implementation and, as an employee, faculty are required to adhere to the policies and procedures. The responsibility for meeting the academic needs of individuals with disabilities through reasonable accommodations is assigned to the Director of the Student Accessibility Resources Office.

Referral

If a student notifies a faculty member that s/he has a disability or if the student brings a medical statement to the instructor, the faculty member should refer that student with his or her medical statement to Student Accessibility Resources.

Responsibilities of Student Accessibility Resources

- Provide information regarding policies and procedures to students with disabilities and assure its availability in accessible formats upon request
- Provide or arrange for reasonable and appropriate accommodations and/or academic adjustments for students with disabilities on an individualized basis upon request, and with documentation verification
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication concerning students with disabilities except where disclosure is permitted or required by law or authorized by the student
- Treat all students with respect and courtesy