



Student Disability Services
Class Attendance Modification Policy

Federal law requires Whittier College to consider modifying attendance policies if a student's diagnosis warrants this accommodation. Class attendance policies are not determined by Student Disability Services (SDS). Because attendance may be integral to the teaching process, these policies are set by the faculty of the college, the academic department, or by the administration. Attendance is fundamental to course objectives. For example, students may be required to interact with others in the class, to demonstrate the ability to think and argue critically, or to participate in group projects. In others instances, faculty may determine that students can master course content despite some absences.

Nonetheless, students with disabilities are expected to attend classes in accordance with the professor's attendance policy as stated in the course syllabi. When a student's disability prohibits them from meeting the established attendance requirement, the student may request that an attendance exception be made as an accommodation from SDS. **It does not permit students the option to miss an unlimited number of classes.**

After the request for modified attendance is made, SDS will evaluate the request upon:

1. The nature and the extent to which the disability/condition functionally impairs the student. SDS holds the right to require the student to provide further documentation in order to determine degree of functional impairment.
2. SDS may contact faculty members to inquire about this previous history of class attendance.
3. All requests are evaluated on a case-by-case basis with the student's diagnosis in mind, as well as the attendance policy set for each course they are enrolled in.
4. Once the accommodation has been approved, SDS will contact faculty members to inform them of the accommodation as well as the student's scope of responsibility.

The following Office of Civil Rights guidelines can help faculty decide whether attendance is a fundamental component of a course:

1. Is there classroom interaction between the instructor and students and among students?
2. Do student contributions constitute a significant component of the learning process?
3. Does the fundamental nature of the course rely on student participation as an essential method for learning?
4. To what degree does a student's failure to attend constitute a significant loss to the educational experience of other students in the class?
5. What do the course description and syllabus say?
6. Which method is used to calculate the final grade?
7. What are the classroom practices and policies regarding attendance?

Students approved for this accommodation are expected to contact the professor and SDS (disabilityservices@whittier.edu), via e-mail, the day of the absence that is related to the documented disability/condition and to inquire regarding making up missed coursework. SDS may contact the student to inquire about the absence.

Considerations to keep in mind about attendance modification:

1. It does not permit students the option to miss an unlimited number of classes.
2. It does not cover non-disability related illnesses, such as the cold or the flu, or other non-health related reasons as to why a student may miss class.

3. Some students do not request accommodations until later in the term. Please note it is not faculty's responsibility to grant retroactive accommodations.
4. This accommodation will not be deemed reasonable if regular attendance is required for the course.
5. Faculty are not required to re-teach material covered during a student's absence.
6. SDS is available for consultation with faculty about this accommodation. We can be reached by calling 562.907.4825 or by emailing disabilityservices@whittier.edu.