

Attendance Modification: Considerations and Implementation

Presenters

Yvonne Campbell, MSW
Disability Resources Specialist

ElizaBeth Pifer, MS, ATP
Assistant Director

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and
Civility and Respect

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Learning Outcomes

1. Ability to identify if a process is currently in place for determining eligibility for a modified attendance accommodation
2. Understand and conceptualize what a modification to an attendance policy means.
3. Identify how a modified attendance accommodation provides access for particular disabilities and be able to pinpoint the specific barrier related to attendance

Determining Eligibility



**ARE YOU SCARED OF
THE UNKNOWN?**

What is an attendance modification?

- An attendance agreement can be a substantial modification to an existing (attendance) policy, and requires significant consideration.

NAU DR accommodation is written this way:

- This student has a disability that may affect their attendance. Depending on the individual class, the accommodation may result in a modification to the usual attendance policy (a member of the DR staff will contact you).

Example of Standard Attendance Policy – HA 243

Classroom Attendance:

- Our culinary laboratory provides hands-on, skill-oriented learning experiences. Your attendance and maximum participation are required. All absences, regardless of reason, will be recorded and may affect your overall evaluation. We use a swipe card system to track attendance.
- If you miss 3 classes, you will drop 1 full letter grade (example: if your final grade is a B in the course, you will receive a C). If you miss 4 classes, you will drop an additional letter grade (example: if your final grade is a B in the course, you will receive a D). If you miss 6 or more classes, you will automatically receive an F in the course.

Example of Standard Attendance Policy - Continued

- In order to ensure transparency in expectations we will review and sign off to acknowledge your responsibilities as a student in this class:
- I understand that if I miss three classes for any reason, I will drop one letter grade at the end of the course:
_____ (Initial)
- I understand that if I miss an event prep day or event day that I will lose 50% of that event grade:
_____ (Initial)

Example of Modified Attendance Agreement-HA 243

Classroom Attendance:

- This student's disability-related absences will be considered excused as long as they notify the instructor as required below. This student will receive five absences with no penalty. A letter grade reduction will apply once the student accrues six absences. The student will receive a failing grade once they accrue nine absences.
- The student will be responsible for working with their Event group to determine reasonable tasks that they can complete ahead of the actual event date. The student is responsible for completing these tasks prior to the event date to ensure that they are still able meet their obligation to the group even if a disability-related absence prevents them from participating on the day of the event.

Example of Modified Attendance Agreement - Continued

Instructor Notification:

- Disability-related absences are to be reported to the instructor via NAU email within 24 hours after the absence.

Consider the Barrier

What is the barrier to attendance we are trying to remove/address with the accommodation?

- Student is physically unable to walk due to significant pain when in a flare
- Student's brain fog is so severe that they cannot see straight
- Student with migraines has to take medications that puts them to sleep for several hours
- Forcing a student with anxiety to go to class would make their anxiety worse in the long term and would make it harder to treat
- Student has seizure disorder and is out for an entire day after a seizure, must sleep for several hours afterwards.

Determining Eligibility

Are there other equally effective alternatives that will remove the barrier? Consider these other equally effective alternatives:

- Reduced course load
- Ability to enroll in classes reserved for online students
- Participate in class remotely
- Ability to have a note-taker when absent from class

Considerations:

What are we really looking for when evaluating this request?

- Access (necessary to provide an opportunity to participate) vs Success (ensuring an outcome)
- Necessary versus what is nice or wanted
- Accommodations are assigned to remove barriers to equitable access

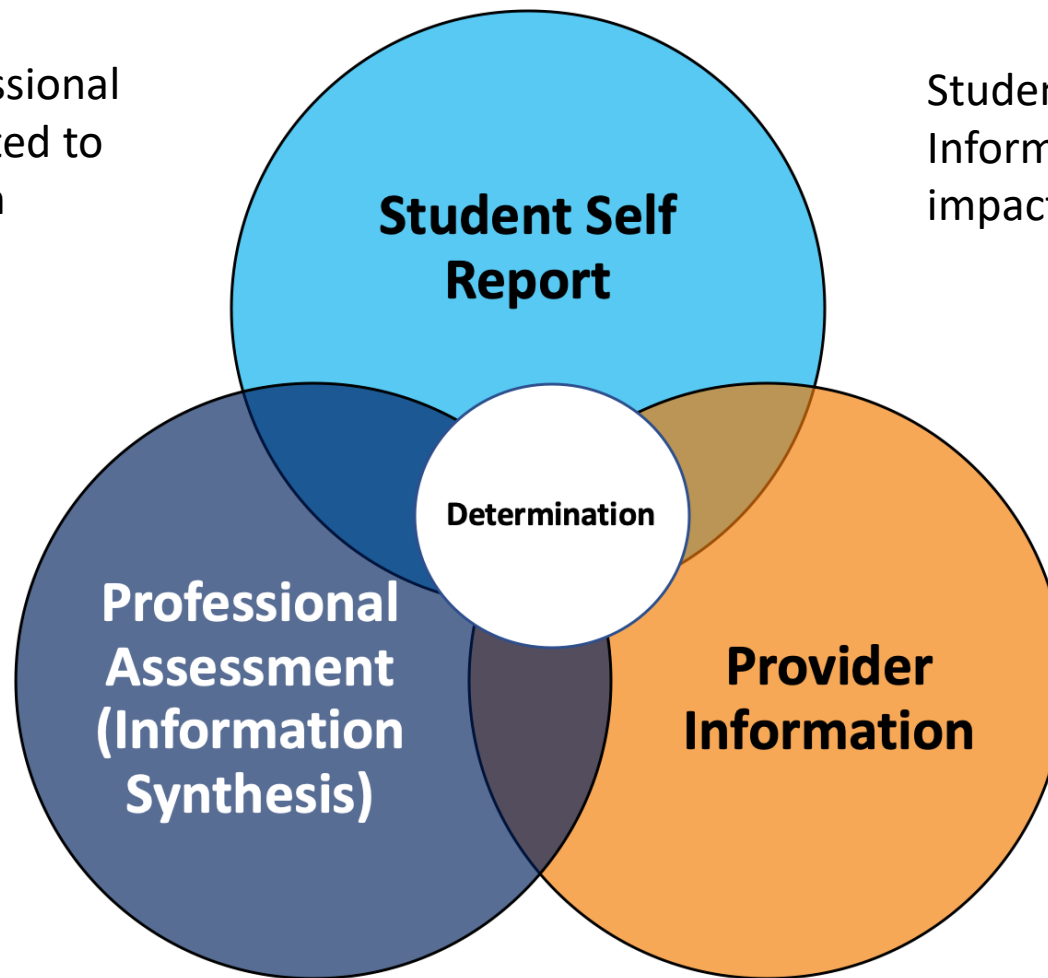
Eligibility is determined through:

- Student self-report (intake interview)
- Provider information/documentation
- Synthesis of information and professional judgement
- Determination Team Meeting



Student Self Report + Professional Assessment: Is request related to disability, has a barrier been identified?

Student Self Report + Provider Information: Do diagnosis, symptoms, impacts, etc. match/make sense?



Provider Information + Professional Assessment: Does information give clarity on barriers to attendance?

Determination = Is there sufficient information to support the request? Can you connect the dots?

General questions asked to help determine if an attendance modification is necessary:

- Describe the variability of your condition (amount of change in your condition over a period of time) and possible flare-ups or episodes.
- How often do you experience flare-ups, how long do they last?
- Describe how those flare-ups impact your ability to participate in and complete academic work.

General questions - continued

- When was the last time you had a flare-up?
- Can you work on a computer during those times?
- Do flare-ups require immediate medical attention?
- Are you currently taking any medications that the use of, or adjustment of, may impact your learning? If yes, what are the side effects?

Medical or Physical Diagnosis

- How often does a flare-up or episode result in an absence?
- If a flare-up does not always result in an absence, why?
- How many absences have you had so far this semester (or during the last period of time in school)?
- If student has multiple conditions, what is the primary reason they cannot get to class?
- Are there certain times of day that create greater barriers to getting to class?

Mental Health Diagnosis

- How do the symptoms of your mental health condition manifest on a day-to-day basis?
- What are possible flare-ups like for you?
- What are your symptoms like during an episode of increased [insert mental health condition]?

Mental Health Diagnosis - Continued

- What is the primary symptom preventing you from going to class?
- Is it difficult to get to class (i.e. get out of bed, get dressed..etc.) but possible?
- If you force yourself to go to class, how does that affect your [mental health condition] for the rest of the day?

Provider information

- Looking for a diagnosis or description of symptoms that supports and/or confirms the student's description of their disability

Working through why student needs this accommodation

- Does the documentation support the information the student has provided?
- If the student has a medical or physical condition, does the self-report match what we know about the condition?
- Does the documentation confirm their condition and describe associated symptoms?
- Does the documentation provide clarity to the barrier the student experiences and the need for an attendance modification?

Working through why student needs this accommodation - Continued

- If the student has a mental health condition, is the student able to articulate how forcing themselves to go to class during a flare or exacerbation of symptoms, would cause on-going psychiatric harm over time?
- If the student has a mental health condition, is the provider information specific enough in describing why going to class during a flare or exacerbation of symptoms would be contraindicated, or would be harmful?

Working through why student needs this accommodation - More

- If the provider information is not clear or specific enough, what other information do you need?
- Do you have a clear understanding of the barrier? If not, what other information do you need?
- Is the barrier related to symptoms that could be addressed by other methods? If so, what other methods may be effective?
- Consider course schedule.
- What if the student describes an excessive number of absences?

Student with Mental Health Diagnosis: Not Approved

Self-Report

- Significant anxiety, not successfully treated with therapy or medication
- If anxiety is high, causes “paralyzed” feeling, prevents going to class and completing academic tasks
- Experience panic or spike in anxiety 2x per day, can last 2 – 3 hours, no pattern
- Doesn't want to break down in front of people

Student with Mental Health Diagnosis: Not Approved - Continued

Provider Information

- Diagnosis: Generalized Anxiety Disorder; Major Depressive Disorder, recurrent, in partial remission; ADHD
- Patient is engaged in Dialectical Behavior Therapy and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, to reduce anxious and depressed symptoms.
- Recommend that client pursue medication management and neurofeedback to further reduce symptoms
- Student must be allowed to take breaks or step outside classroom to calm self when experiencing anxiety/panic

Student with Mental Health Diagnosis: Not Approved - Continued

Provider Information

- Multiple incidents where anxiety would impede ability to follow through with scheduled activities and obligations.
- Recommend academic accommodations that take into account significant symptoms of anxiety.
- Recommend continued treatment with a local clinician to provide support to help manage and cope with anxiety appropriately. Regular mental health support will be crucial to success
- Until student is treated, anxiety will prevent them from regularly attending classes.

Student with Mental Health Diagnosis: Approved - Temporary

Self-Report

- Experience anxiety everyday, sometimes results in panic attacks
- Anxiety comes out of nowhere and I am on edge all the time, can't go to class
- Can't do anything when having a flare, frequently freak out, cry frequently for no reason
- Anxiety never goes away, makes heart beat fast and get shaky, feels nauseous

Student with Mental Health Diagnosis: Approved – Temporary, Continued

Provider Information

- Diagnosis: Generalized Anxiety Disorder, ADHD
- Treatment plan to get symptoms under control
- Medication changes
- Going to class is contraindicated during high anxiety, causes a spiral of anxiety symptoms and interrupts treatment plan - harder to treat underlying anxiety when student spirals

Student with Medical Diagnosis: Not Approved

Self-Report

- Undiagnosed GI concerns, intestinal pain, and hypoglycemic episodes impact attendance
- GI issues are unpredictable, cause nausea & vomiting. GI issues prevent attendance if vomiting.
- May vomit repeatedly for an hour at a time. May also vomit for days at a time.
- Last flare was 3 weeks prior to intake and lasted one day. Longest flare lasted 3 weeks, occurred one year prior to intake. Four flares over a period of one year.
- Intestinal pain is severe and can't move due to pain.

Student with Medical Diagnosis: Not Approved - Continued

Self-Report

- Hypoglycemic episodes are a few times a week
- Hypoglycemic episodes – have to eat and wait for blood sugar to regulate. A symptom is inability to walk for 30-40 minutes until glucose stabilizes. Occurs about 3x/week. Mostly occurs in the morning.
- Hypoglycemic episodes are more frequent than hyperglycemic episodes
- There are complications with vomiting a lot and diabetes/trying to maintain blood sugar

Student with Medical Diagnosis: Not Approved - Continued

Provider Information

- Diagnosis: Type I Diabetes, Celiac Disease, Crohn's Disease
- Needs to test blood sugar and treat with food, resume activities when it returns to normal. May need to administer additional insulin if blood sugar high. May lead to delays in attending class.
- If student has symptoms of hypoglycemia (cold sweats, shakiness, dizziness, severe hunger), they should be allowed to check blood sugar and treat themselves
- Hypoglycemia can lead to loss of consciousness and seizures (student identified that this has never happened before).

Student with Medical Diagnosis: Approved

Self Report

- Dealing with residual effects of treatment for Hodgkins Lymphoma
- Continued effects of treatment include extreme lethargy & weakness, sleeping sometimes 13 – 14 hours per day, feeling like limbs won't move, mental blocks and fatiguing easily
- Flares occur a minimum of 1x week, and can last 1 – 3 days
- Computer use exacerbates symptoms

Student with Medical Diagnosis: Approved - Continued

Provider Information

Diagnosis: Hodgkin Lymphoma

- Experiences post-chemotherapy symptoms including chronic fatigue, swelling of lymph nodes, fever, night sweats, weight loss
- The cumulative effects of these symptoms may require sleeping all day at times

NAU's Process for Determination

1. What is the barrier the student identifies?
2. Is there sufficient information from the self-report and the provider regarding the variability of the condition, frequency of flare-ups, and related academic impacts?
3. Are there other reasonable alternatives?
4. Can you connect the dots?
5. If not, what other details would support the request?

Impacts of COVID-19

Spring 2020 semester: all courses moved to remote learning (online format) after spring break

- 81 students eligible for attendance agreements
- Zero impact to accommodation

Q: Does this affect modified attendance and assignment extension agreements

Completed attendance agreements and assignment extension agreements will be honored, though reasonable modifications to the structure of the agreements may be needed with the shift to online instruction. Please contact DR to discuss any additional barriers presented by changes to the course format.

Impacts of COVID-19, Continued

Sent survey to all registered DR students, 218 responded, 20% rate of return.

Attempt to assess how problematic this move was for students with disabilities.

Question	Yes	No
Have your needs for accommodations changed since you transitioned to all online classes?	34.88%	65.12%
Have there been any issues using accommodations you were already approved to receive?	22.81%	77.19%
Has it been helpful for the management of your conditions for classes to be online?	55.56%	44.44%
Have you been able to access all of the content in your courses (materials, exams, etc.)?	91.28%	8.72%
Do you have access to the assistive technologies you need for full participation your classes?	82.94%	17.06%
Would you like to speak with a DR Specialist about barriers or educational challenges you are experiencing? (34.88% responded “Maybe”)	9.88%	55.23%

Moving Forward After COVID-19

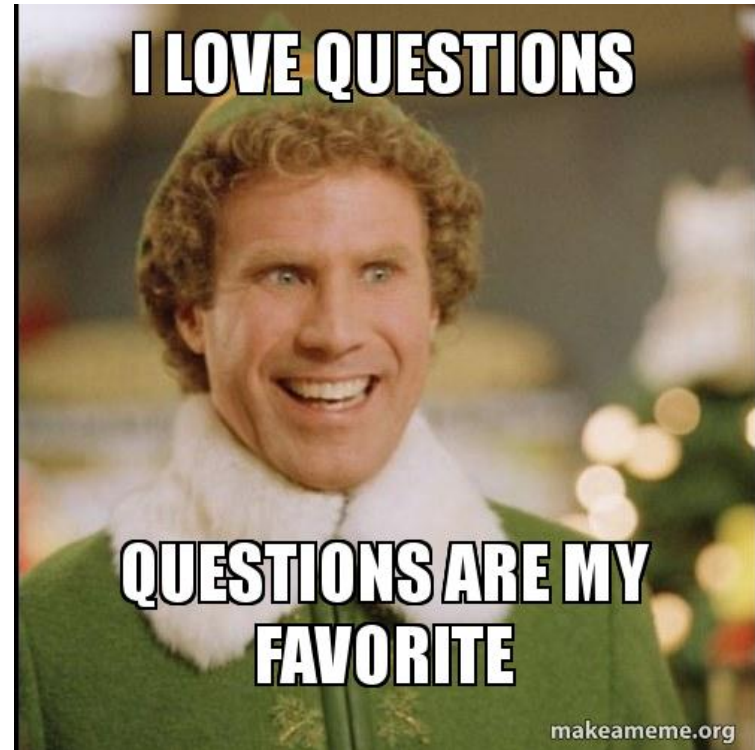
Adopting HyFlex principles (pedagogical strategy, Hybrid + Flexibility) customizing to NAU to create flexible options for students

- Learner choice is key:
 1. Participate in face-to-face instructional sessions
 2. Participate online during instructional sessions
 3. Complete course learning activities independently online
 4. Or a combination

Moving Forward After COVID-19, Continued

- Modified attendance agreements are not applicable during fall 2020 semester, except for unique circumstance (testing)
- Impacts for determining eligibility for an attendance accommodations are minimal

Questions?



Contact Information:

Yvonne Campbell, MSW

yvonne.Campbell@nau.edu; 928-523-8462

ElizaBeth Pifer, MS, ATP

elizabeth.pifer@nau.edu; 928-523-5091

Session Evaluation

- Access Session Evaluation at:
tinyurl.com/AHEAD2020-SessionEval
- Your feedback helps shape future programming.
- Thank you for attending!