



## Instructor Guidance for Creating an Intermittent Flex Plan

The role of attendance, due dates and participation vary from course to course, so it is important for you and the student to discuss how an intermittent flex plan will be handled in your course. While this document should provide you with a solid foundation for this discussion, remember that SLDS Access Specialists are available to you and the student to facilitate the conversation, answer questions, and brainstorm reasonable modifications.

On the Qualtrics form ([go.osu.edu/flexplan](https://go.osu.edu/flexplan)), you can opt-in to the “default flex plan.” The default plan outlines a baseline of flexibility that should work for many traditional lecture courses (for details, see our website). We encourage you to create custom flex plans for courses with significant hands-on or interactive components, such as labs and clinical.

### Essential Questions:

With this accommodation, the student is permitted a reasonable amount of flexibility. Reasonable flexibility can be determined by analyzing the course design. **These modifications should not compromise the essential design and learning outcomes of the course.** During your analysis, we ask that you consider the following questions:

- If there is a structured attendance policy, is there room for flexibility? If so, how?
- If a student misses an in-class activity, is it possible for the student to complete an alternate assignment?
- If the student needs to miss class, should they email or call you? How can the student catch up on what they may have missed?
- If the student is absent from class when an assignment is due, can they turn in the work via email?
- If the student misses an exam? If you allow make-up exams, is there a timeframe within which make-ups must be completed?
- If the student needs to request an extension, how much flexibility will there be for an assignment?

### Considerations for Attendance:

When considering how an attendance policy can be modified to accommodate a disability, faculty should first consider how regular attendance corresponds to the essential nature of the course. Regardless of the modification of the attendance policy, the student is required to meet all of the academic course requirements and to complete all assignments and examinations.

If the course is mostly lecture-based, the in-class content is available in the text or from instructor/peer notes, and minimal student interaction is involved during class, then more flexibility with excused absences/participation points is reasonable.

On the other hand, if the course is mostly experiential or discussion-based, the in-class content is not recreated elsewhere, and/or involves significant student interaction, then less flexibility with excused absences/participation points is reasonable. Some examples include a dance or



physical education class, a science lab, a class geared specifically to group work, or foreign language classes that include an expressive language component.

**Some strategies for addressing additional absences include:**

- Provide class notes on a class website or assist students in getting notes from a classmate or TA when the student misses class due to disability.
- Permit students to attend another section of the class or view an on-line version if available.
- Permit student to view a videotape of course content as available (e.g., anatomy dissection, Shakespearian play, etc.).
- If discussions are missed, consider having the student keep a journal for contributions or e-mail comments to instructors and/or classmates.

If an acceptable alternative to the attendance requirement is reached, but there is insufficient time for the student to meet it before grades are due, consider granting an incomplete. There may also be times when a student has missed so many classes that the intent of class attendance is lost. In these situations, we advise you to contact our office to explore alternatives.

**Considerations for Missed Quizzes/Exams:**

**Makeup exams of equivalent difficulty must be offered to students with flex plans, even if the course policy is to drop the lowest exam or offer a comprehensive makeup exam at the end of the semester.** While a student may choose to opt-in to these alternative options, an equivalent makeup exam must be on the table.

Decisions about arranging an equitable make-up exam are often based on the test design for the original test, the overall number of exams to be administered in the semester when in the semester the student misses an exam and the size of the class. Many faculty teaching large classes routinely create a second exam anticipating that a percentage of the class may miss an exam due to illness, family emergencies, religious holidays, etc.

**For those classes that offer do not have a second exam in place, the following alternatives are suggested below.**

- Administer the same exam the class took as a make-up exam with a clearly communicated expectation that the honor code with regard to test integrity will be enforced.
- Modify the existing exam by rearranging the question order and/or adding new questions.
- Substitute an exam from a previous semester if only minor changes to the content are needed to match relevance to the current semester's material.
- Substitute a paper, project, presentation, or oral exam for the written exam.



- Discuss the possibility of an incomplete when the student's performance in the class is consistent with the guidelines regarding granting this grade placeholder. The student can then take the exam when the symptoms of the disability are less interfering.

### Considerations for Deadlines:

Like all students, students with disabilities are expected to carry a credit load that is reasonable and manageable. Students with fluctuating disorders though may be unable to predict the frequency or severity of their flare-ups. Requesting an extension is a common request in these situations.

If modifying exam dates and deadlines would not substantially impact the flow or design of the course, then more flexibility with exam dates and deadlines is reasonable. For example, it may be reasonable to allow a research paper to be turned in a few days late if it would not impact the overall progression of the course. On the other hand, it may be unreasonable to modify an assignment due date that is based on an inflexible factor, such as a journal's publication deadline.

**Because repeat extensions can cause a “snowballing” effect, however, and ultimately undermine the student’s ability to complete the work or even the semester, some preventive instructional strategies are suggested below:**

- Give notice of all assignments and due dates on your syllabus so that students can plan their workload accordingly.
- Work with the student to develop an appropriate plan and timeline for managing the assignment. Break a large project into smaller parts with intermediate deadlines to assist students in staying on task.
- Refer students to the Dennis Learning Center for guidance and coaching on time management, organization, and study skills.
- If flexibility with deadlines is not possible (e.g., if the assignments are discussed daily), let students know early on so they can plan accordingly. Offering a journal exercise or reflection might be a reasonable substitute for this kind of activity.
- A typical extension for papers and projects is 1-3 days, but it could be longer for large projects or extreme circumstances (e.g., hospitalization of the student). If the project is one of many smaller projects, consider merging two or more into a larger project with a longer timeline.
- Contact SLDS when a student is requesting repeat extensions. While this may seem to make the most sense to a student in the short run, it may lead to a completely unmanageable semester affecting more than one class.
- As mentioned earlier, consider an incomplete when appropriate.

### For more guidance:

Please contact Ruth Montz at 330-287-1247 or [montz.11@osu.edu](mailto:montz.11@osu.edu) who is available to you for consultation.