

Alternative Access to Class Content Accommodation

The Director of Disability Access and Education, DAE, may authorize this accommodation for a limited amount of time if it removes an obstacle to the student's education because of a specific temporary or episodic verifiable disabling condition. Accommodations are not granted for short-term illnesses such as cold, common flu, allergies, etc. or for life circumstances such as transportation difficulties or dealing with personal/family situations. Faculty have the right to extend leniency or uphold syllabus attendance policy in such situations. For anything more than a common, short-term illness or one-day medical procedure, students must request accommodations from the DAE office. Faculty should not create accommodations on their own as such a practice creates inconsistency and inequity which puts the university at risk.

Cases of COVID are eligible for temporary accommodations because of mandatory exclusion of affected persons from being present on campus.

Accommodation memos will read:

- Alternative access to class content (instructor to determine appropriate arrangements) with anticipated end date: (to be filled in by DAE)

Student Responsibilities

- Contact your instructor in advance if you have been approved by DAE and need to use this accommodation.
- Follow the instructor's directions on how you should participate in class or engage with the class content which could be in one or more of the following or some other means:
 - View a pre-recorded lecture or class session
 - Engage in a conversation with the instructor via phone/computer call about class content for the day(s) you are unable to attend
 - Read additional material on the subject
 - Submit a response log on the subject
 - View notes from a student who attended the session
 - Log in for a synchronous Zoom session
 - Etc.

Professor Responsibilities

- Communicate what you would like the student to do to participate in class or engage with the material for the session(s) the student will be unable to attend; Zoom is not mandatory.

- **If you choose to use Zoom:**
 - If you need help, communicate with Helpdesk and/or your campus assistant operations manager on how to use technology.
 - It is not recommended to use your own laptop for access to the whole class.
 - Many classrooms have computers with whole-class cameras and sound systems.
 - A few classrooms have lapel microphones for faculty.
 - Loaner laptops for small group use may be available to check out from Hiebert Library, the front desk of regional campuses, or IT Services.
 - Create a Zoom link and share with student(s) involved in advance.
 - Begin hosting Zoom session at the beginning of the class session.
- Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, ADA, accommodations must never create a substantial modification of the essential elements of a course. As creators of the course, faculty have the authority to determine what those essential elements are and when accommodations might cross the line to a potential substantial modification.
 - Faculty should request a negotiation with the Director if they think an accommodation might not be reasonable.

Things to keep in mind

- “Alternative access” does NOT automatically mean a Zoom session.
 - Professors have the freedom to fulfill the alternative access accommodation in any way that fits the subject and structure of the course in general and for a specific class session.
- While Zoom is not a perfect substitute for face-to-face interaction, it can at least provide an audio version of the class content.
 - Students have gotten so used to Zoom, that for many, this has become their preferred version of access to a class they are forced to miss due to COVID isolation mandates and other matters beyond their control.
 - Some students report that the question and answer between classmates and the instructor is often the most valuable part of their learning.
 - The technology may not always provide full access to visual elements of a class, but many students prefer imperfect access to missing the live audio altogether.
 - Any slides presented during class can be sent or posted separately.
 - Substituting a fellow student’s notes will not always reflect what the student missing class needs to know or be fully comprehensible to another person.
- If a student has requested this accommodation for a period more than two weeks, the Director will consult and negotiate with the instructor and/or program

director to determine if such an accommodation would be considered reasonable and appropriate.

- The anticipated end date on the memo may read: *entire course IF appropriate.*
- In some situations, a student's need of this accommodation may be episodic, arising from unpredictable recurrence of symptoms and therefore not limited to a specific timeframe.
 - The Director will negotiate with the instructor and/or program director to determine how many sessions of remote access would be reasonable.
 - The anticipated end date on the memo may read: *as needed (to be communicated in advance).*