

Possible Extended Time on Assignments

Disability Services Program (DSP) – Merritt College

Specific Accommodation

The purpose of this accommodation is to suggest that extended time on course assignments may be a reasonable accommodation in certain situations because one's medical or clinical situation poses challenges with completing the assignment by deadlines with short notice. Those assignments with longer notice are a time management issue and not a disability related issue. For the short notice assignment extension specifically, Disability Services recommends this accommodation when:

- An assignment was not listed on the syllabus initially and is given to students one week or less to complete and/or
- The assignment deadline is listed on the syllabus but students do not get the necessary information to complete it until there is one week or less to the deadline.

Other situations will be considered only in extremely extenuating circumstances. First and foremost, Disability Services promotes good time and project management skills as well as effective decision-making. This accommodation does not address inefficiencies in these areas. Thus, Disability Services position is that assignments with more than one week to complete can be done successfully with proper management and planning and need not warrant an accommodation.

Student Responsibilities

Disability Services requires students to present the accommodation letter and initiate a conversation with the instructor before an assignment is due. (Students should also contact the Disability Services Program if they have concerns with the instructor's decision.)

- Accommodations are not meant to be retroactive. Missed assignments that occur prior to the instructor receiving the accommodation letter are not covered under the accommodation process. Disability Services recommends that those missed assignments be handled in accordance with the course assignment policy.
- Deadline date adjustments must be pre-arranged with the instructor. Assignments cannot be submitted whenever desired.
- Each outstanding assignment should be discussed individually as reasonable lateness may differ by assignment.

Students must factor in the reality of their own personal situation and use time effectively to complete assignments. For example, if a student is prone to frequent migraine headaches and waits to the last day to complete an assignment, having a last minute migraine headache may not be an effective reason to extend a deadline. Adequate work should have been done prior to the fact in order to avoid such a situation knowing that the possibility of a migraine existed. This accommodation does not correct poor time management skills or decision-making.

Instructor Responsibilities

When listed on the accommodation letter, course instructors are asked to consider whether or not such an accommodation would be reasonable for the class and the assignment(s) in question. Disability Services recommends that the student receive 1 – 2 additional days at most as an accommodation when reasonable. Points to consider in making a final decision include:

- Assess the average time all students are expected to spend on the project relative to the deadline and if the disability situation necessitates an extension beyond this deadline.
- Is it feasible to assign the project to the student with disability in advance of other students while keeping the deadline consistent?
- The accommodation does not have to be implemented if it becomes a fundamental alteration to the course – highly recommended to consult with Disability Services before making final decision.

Instructors who have questions about how to best incorporate this accommodation into a class or who do not believe an assignment extension is reasonable should consult with Disability Services before making a final decision.

Written Follow-Up and Feedback

It is recommended that the student initiate an email to the instructor with a summary of what was discussed and agreed to as being a reasonable deadline extension when applicable.

- Instructors may choose to initiate email rather than wait for the student.
- The email information gives the other person a chance to address any confusion and helps ensure everyone is operating from the same point of view.
- Students and instructors are welcome to include Disability Services on these email exchanges for documentation purposes.