



THE UNIVERSITY OF
TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

Assignment Extension Accommodation Guidelines

What is the purpose of this accommodation?

The purpose of the assignment extension accommodation is to provide reasonable flexibility for students with disabilities if episodic and acute disability symptoms interfere with the ability to meet a course assignment deadline. The accommodation is approved when necessary to provide equitable access, ensuring that a student with a disability is not disproportionately penalized for exacerbations of symptoms that may be unpredictable in nature. While a late assignment policy may be incorporated into the grading structure noted in the syllabus, this accommodation is intended to modify any stated policies to provide some flexibility, if reasonable.

This accommodation is generally not approved as a substitution for proper time and workload management when the impact of the disability is known, steady, and persistent. Continuous difficulties with meeting course deadlines typically need to be addressed through [academic coaching](#), a reduced course load, or other support resources and skill development.

What is the implementation process for this accommodation?

1. Students will utilize the [SDS Student Portal](#) to request their accommodation letters, which are then generated and emailed to instructors. The accommodation will be listed accordingly. However, there are occasions where new symptoms or diagnoses arise, and the accommodation wasn't previously approved. SDS will still consider extension requests in those cases, as warranted.
2. If an extension is needed, students may initiate the request in the manner they prefer, either through SDS by completing the [Assignment Extension Request Form](#) or by first talking with the instructor. Once a request is received, the instructor and SDS will collaborate to consider the reasonableness of an extension for the assignment in question. ***While an instructor may approve a direct extension request from a student, a denial should never occur without first consulting with the student's SDS Coordinator.***
3. In most cases, students are expected to request an extension before the assignment is due. However, the nature of disability symptoms may make this impossible, in which case, the request should be made as soon as the student is reasonably able. The student will propose a new assignment deadline, which will be taken into consideration. Assignments are expected to be completed as soon as possible after the original deadline, taking disability symptoms into account.

Student Disability Services
915 Volunteer Blvd/100 Dunford Hall, Knoxville, TN 37996-4020
865-974-6087 (p) 865-974-9552 (f) 865-622-6566 (vp)
sds.utk.edu

4. ***Instructors may not ask for any specific disability information from students or SDS.*** SDS will correspond with the student to confirm that disability symptoms have impacted the ability to meet a deadline.
5. ***Continual changing of course due dates for a student is typically not reasonable*** and falls outside the scope of this accommodation. A chronic inability to meet course deadlines may signal a need to reduce one's overall course load, work with an academic coach to develop strategies for meeting deadlines, or withdraw from the course.

How is the reasonableness of an assignment extension request evaluated?

Once approved as an accommodation, the reasonableness of an assignment extension is evaluated on an individualized, assignment-by-assignment basis, as requested by the student. This evaluation includes input from Student Disability Services (SDS), the instructor, and the student, allowing an intentional and critical analysis of the extent to which the sequencing of assignments and their corresponding deadlines are essential to the course learning objectives and pedagogical components. ***Instructors may not make an independent determination that an extension is unreasonable if requested by the student and must collaborate with the student's SDS Coordinator.***

This accommodation should be approved on an individual assignment basis unless an extension would significantly compromise the integrity of the course. As with any accommodation, an instructor may consult with SDS if they believe assignment extensions would fundamentally alter the nature of their course. In collaboration with the instructor, SDS will consider the following to determine the reasonableness of an extension request from a student, as well as the length of extension that may be warranted:

- Information in the syllabus about assignment deadlines and late work policies
- The nature of the assignment and how long students had to complete it
- Whether assignment completion directly impacts future assignments or tests (e.g. Is this a homework assignment that is being discussed immediately in class?)
- Whether the assignment is used as class content when it is due (e.g. Are students required to use the assignment to actively engage in class discussions?)
- The extent to which upcoming course material and activities build upon the assignment in question
- Whether answer sets for the assignment are released to the class and how flexible this can be without compromising student learning and course sequencing
- Potential review of the assignment to evaluate adequate partial completion if there has been a significant amount of time to work on the assignment
- Whether assignment completion directly impacts the educational experience of other students in the class (e.g. For a group assignment, would failure to complete the assigned portion directly impact the other group members' ability to complete their portion of the assignment?)
- Exceptions to late policies under other circumstances, such as athletic travel or religious observances