

Individual Assignment Extensions

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, psychological or physical situation poses challenges with completing assignments by deadlines when unexpected *disability-related* situations arise. If the student has a disability with random or cyclical acute episodes, the accommodation allows for flexibility in individual assignment deadlines and make-up work.

This accommodation is recommended when either of the following circumstances occur:

1. An assignment was not listed on the syllabus initially and is given to students with one week or less to complete.
2. An unexpected medical, mental health or physical episode interferes with the student's ability to complete the work in the expected timeframe.

The number of days given for each assignment extension depends on the interactive or participatory nature of a course, or is based on department, college or accrediting rules. If special consideration in meeting deadlines is needed, students need to work with the instructor to determine the maximum extension that can be given before compromising the integrity of the course/program.

In general, assignments with more than one week to complete can be done successfully with proper management and planning and only warrant an accommodation when an **unexpected** disability-related episode occurs that prevents the student from following through, regardless of how much the student got done prior to that time.

Unexpected illness or injury, recent diagnosis, onset or change in condition may warrant a withdrawal or incomplete from a course. In those cases, the University process should be followed.

Students must factor in the reality of their own personal situation and use time effectively to complete assignments. Heavy course loads, outside employment, or other family commitments are **not** considered when determining reasonable accommodations.

Some instructors allow all students in their class more time than they believe is needed for students to complete assignments and/or exams. For example, an instructor gives an assignment they believe should only take two days to complete but allows students three days. If all students in the class are provided "extended time" or buffer time to complete assignments, legal guidance suggests that it would be discriminatory not to provide the extended time in addition to the time given to all students in the course.

Considerations for faculty when determining *reasonable extensions* of assignment deadlines:

1. What is the purpose of the assignment? Is it necessary to have it completed before an exam? Before a discussion?
2. What does the syllabus say about deadlines?
3. Are students required to actively participate in class discussions/activities?
4. How is participation figured into the final grade?
5. How are students expected to interact with each other (in class, group work outside of class, via Canvas/e-mail)?
6. Is the material being learned in the class sequentially? Does each week's material build on the material learned in the previous week(s)?
7. Are there other lab or class sections the student could attend to catch up on missed material?

8. What general policies exist for making up missed exams, pop quizzes? Turning in late work?
9. Could missed assignments be turned in via discussion board/e-mail?
10. Are tests to be taken at a specific time and place, or is there a window when the test can be taken?

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. Any concerns should be directed to Disability/Access Services, disabilityservices@framingham.edu.

Points for faculty to consider in making a *final decision* for the individual assignment extension:

1. 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.
2. The accommodation does not have to be implemented if it becomes a fundamental alteration to the course – consult with Disability/Access 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 are directed to consult with Disability/Access Services before making a final decision.

What an Individual Assignment Extension is NOT

This accommodation is not intended to cover the following:

1. **Unlimited acceptance of late work.** This is not a “free pass” for students to turn in late work. Agreed upon extensions should be specific and limited to a specific amount of time. For students who experience regular difficulty with meeting assignment deadlines in a class (vs. episodically or occasionally), it may be appropriate to request a Course Withdrawal or an Incomplete Grade Request from individual instructors for consideration. An Incomplete Grade may allow an opportunity to complete course requirements by the terms detailed in the Incomplete Grade Request policy. Students who have missed (or anticipate missing) too many assignment deadlines may find that a make-up plan is not workable. The professor’s class policy on late work (e.g., 10 points off a grade for each day late, or a lower letter grade for each day an assignment is late) will remain applicable even to students with an approved Individual Assignment Extension deadlines accommodation if they fail to meet an agreed upon disability-related extension or if they miss deadlines for other non-disability related reasons.
2. **Retroactive requests.** Some students may register with Disability/Access Services later in the term or wait to give class instructors notice of their eligible accommodations. Presenting an accommodation letter mid-semester would not reverse any previously missed deadlines. Instructors are not obligated to adjust assignment due dates retroactively or excuse any prior late assignment submissions. Students with this accommodation have a responsibility to anticipate their need for and request an extension in good time.
3. **Personal organization and time management difficulties.** Students must factor in the reality of their own personal situation and use time effectively to complete assignments. Taking a heavy course load, having a job outside of school or other family commitments do not justify allowing an accommodation even if they have a diagnosed disability that may otherwise support this accommodation. For example, a student with a disability might request a modified attendance policy for an early morning class, claiming they do not function well in the morning or is not organized and may forget to come to class. While this may be related to the student’s diagnosed condition, the University is within its rights to expect students with disabilities to be able to fulfill basic and essential requirements, with or without accommodations. Support is available through the Center for Academic Success and Achievement (CASA) through academic coaching or Academic Strategy Peer Tutors.

Procedures for Individual Assignment Extension

1. Upon establishing that a student has a disability that requires a reasonable accommodation of extended deadlines, Disability/Access Services will authorize Extended Deadlines for Individual Assignments as an eligible accommodation.
2. At the start of, or as early as possible in the semester, student will notify Disability/Access Services when *Individual Assignment Extension* is needed as an accommodation.
3. Disability/Access Services will notify instructors that this accommodation is warranted via the Faculty Notification of Accommodation letter.
4. Student will email the instructor to request an extended deadline for any particular assignment 24 hours in advance of the deadline, unless a mitigating circumstance prevents the student from contacting the professor (hospitalization, etc.).
5. Instructor will reply to the student to confirm if deadline extensions are workable or if it will be necessary to first consult with Disability/Access Services.
 - Instructor will request consultation with Disability/Access Services if they believe that extending the deadlines for assignments would fundamentally alter an essential element of their course or if they have questions about what a reasonable amount of time extensions is within the context of their course.
 - If extensions are pedagogically possible, the instructor will work with the student in good faith to determine a reasonable amount of time and set a new deadline for **each** eligible assignment.
 - Instructor will verify the specific plan in writing (by email) to the student.