DISABILITY-RELATED ABSENCES

What Students With Disabilities Need To Know About Attendance
Attendance is not only an academic issue, but also an important job skill. A disability does not supercede classroom requirements. However, there are times when an absence may be unavoidable. In such an incidence, the following are guidelines that the student and professor should follow.

Attendance and Students with Disabilities:
The Office of Disability Services does not determine class attendance policies. Because attendance may be integral to the learning process, the faculty of the college, at the departmental or individual level, sets these policies. In most cases attendance is fundamental to course objectives. For example, students may be required to think and argue critically or to participate in group projects. In other instances faculty may determine that students can master course content despite some or many absences. Rarely, faculty may decide that students do not need to attend class at all. Similarly, faculty also determines policies regarding make-up work and missed quizzes and exams.

Faculty is ultimately responsible for determining the weight and importance of class attendance and participation. Faculty determines if attendance and participation are integral components to the learning process. If the student is not meeting these requirements, then the student may not be "otherwise qualified" to attend school at this point in time. However, faculty is not required to lower or effect modifications of standards for accommodation purposes.

What are the responsibilities of the students:
Students are encouraged to submit appropriate medical and/or psychological documentation at the beginning of the semester to the Office of Disability Services. Letters from the Office of Disability Services verifying the documentation has been submitted and meets the ADA qualifications are distributed by the students to professors to initiate discussions concerning polices of attendance and make-up of course work. Students who are absent from class due to a disability related absence, should obtain verification notices for their professors. The type of verification notices should be discussed at the beginning of the semester with the professor as to what is considered appropriate medical and/or psychological verification. Students are required to submit appropriate documentation for the period of absence. It is the responsibility of the student to notify professors of prolonged absences (i.e., hospitalization, prolonged treatment, etc).

Students should listen closely to faculty announcements about attendance and make-up policies and procedures. Also, refer to your syllabus frequently throughout the semester for information about these issues.
If the student is absent from class because of a disability-related circumstance such as those mentioned above, the student will need to provide verification of the absence from their health care provider to the professor. The documentation should establish the reason for the absence, but not necessarily a disclosure of the disability.

If the student encounters an unexpected disability-related circumstance, such as an emergency hospitalization or illness, he/she should notify his/her professors. The student will need to notify the instructors to arrange make-up work or other assignments.

The student may wish to medically withdraw if the student's health care provider advises the student to do so. Also, refer to "Medical Withdrawals" in the Office of the Dean of Students.

For questions contact:
The Office of Disability Services
404-413-1560