Extension to deadline dates as an accommodation

General

Regardless of a disability, all students are responsible for fulfilling the essential requirements of courses/programs/degrees, including meeting completion dates for assignments. However, some students have disabilities which can impact their ability to complete assignments by the due date, including, but not limited to, students whose conditions are episodic in nature, conditions that change and result in problematic symptoms, and conditions that require treatment and in some cases hospitalization.

If ARS approves an accommodation request that supports extensions to due dates, the Instructor Notification email will note this accommodation. At any time of asking ARS can verify that a student has a disability which may address the legitimacy of an extension request.

Instructors should not compromise or lower essential requirements of the course and are not expected to take on an undue administrative burden. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, reasonable accommodations are intended to provide equal access and not necessarily success. When it comes to accommodations involving extensions, we ask that you work with the student in a good faith effort to determine a reasonable amount of time and set a new deadline. However, this provision cannot be applied retroactively and is not considered to be reasonable if it would constitute a fundamental alteration of an essential element of the program. If you believe that a request for an extension would fundamentally alter an essential element of your course, please contact ARS immediately.

If ARS approves an accommodation request, any accommodations are prospective only; accommodations are not granted retroactively and do not excuse any prior
unexcused late assignment submissions or mitigate any consequences from failing to meet deadlines. Any such consideration or provision would be an exception, at the discretion of an instructor.

In general, extensions on assignment due dates may be considered reasonable in an academic setting if the student's disability will have a direct impact upon their ability to devote sufficient time to the assignment or may have unpredictable impact upon the student's ability to complete essential work. ARS will work with you if you have questions about what a reasonable amount of time is given the context of your course. All accommodations must be determined on a case-by-case basis.

ARS reminds students with this accommodation that they have a responsibility to anticipate their need for and request an extension in good time. In addition, students should not plan on the granting of an extension as matter of course and that they should use this accommodation, if available, with care. Students can use the Deadline Extension Request form to request an extension.

**Determining the Reasonableness of an Extension**

The ultimate decision regarding extensions and the resulting influence extensions may have on grades is at the discretion of the instructor. ARS encourages instructors to consider the following questions in relation to an extension request:

- What are the essential course requirements?
- Would an extension (or multiple extensions) fundamentally alter the course?
- What does the course description and syllabus indicate regarding late work or completion deadlines?
- Does the fundamental nature of the course rely upon timely completion of assignments as an essential method of learning?
- Does timely completion of assignments constitute a significant component of the learning process?
- To what degree does a student's failure to submit timely completion of assignments constitute a significant loss of the educational experience for other students in the class

In consultation with ARS, instructors can often offer an extension as a reasonable accommodation or can find reasonable, equivalent options for students to successfully complete essential course requirements without compromising course standards. Where granted, extensions should usually be short, that is, a matter of a day or two. A student who is experiencing more significant challenges with meeting deadlines or who has multiple classes with deadlines which are difficult to meet, should meet with an ARS staff member to consider alternative strategies.

It is essential to consider what has been granted in the past and the selected option
should be individually tailored to the impact of the disability, the course requirements, and the instructor’s expectations. If an extension is granted specific information should be communicated about the revised due date and time.

Instructors should include the following in the syllabus: an explanation of course goals and objectives, the name of the text and any other materials required of each student, the instructor’s office hours, an explanation of how the grade is to be determined, and an explanation of any additional reading, papers, projects and examination which the instructor expects to give or assign. The advance notice allows students to be able to begin work earlier and be proactive.

Some options that may be considered include

- Provide advance notice of completion deadlines.
- Offer to meet students or check-in with a student who have this accommodation in advance of the due date in an attempt to keep them on track and accountable.
- Offer a certain number of “grace days” to be used proactively throughout the semester.
- Giving an incomplete grade to allow an opportunity to fulfill course requirements by an agreed date.
- Ask student to submit everything completed by the completion deadline with a small extension on what remains to be completed.
- Should an extension not be an option on a particular assignment, consider providing the option of an additional assignment to makeup for points which may have been lost due to the late submission.
- Encourage the student to make use of campus resources such as the Learning and Writing Centers and CAPS.

Please feel free to Contact ARS [2] to discuss the granting of extensions in your course or academic program in more detail.

Source URL: https://ars.unc.edu/faculty-staff/extension-deadline-dates-accommodation

Links
[1] https://ars.unc.edu/students/request-forms/deadline-extension-request
[2] https://ars.unc.edu/about-ars/contact-us