Academic Accommodation Requests outside the Americans with Disabilities Act, Religious Observances, and Pregnancy Policies

Students often request academic accommodations that fall outside those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (i.e., McBurney Disability Center approved), for religious observances (per UW policy on religious observances found at https://kb.wisc.edu/page.php?id=21698), or Title IX regarding pregnancy here at http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/dcl-know-rights-201306-title-ix.html

Faculty and instructional staff have the prerogative to grant such requests, which commonly ask permission to make up missed or late work due to an unforeseen life circumstance or other exigency. Some examples include but are not limited to:

- Family emergency requiring student to leave campus.
- Serious illness or injury.
- The student was the victim of a serious crime.

Faculty and instructional staff are encouraged to work with students on an individual basis when situations such as these arise so students can meet their academic obligations. Some factors to consider when deciding whether to grant these requests include:

- Is the request reasonable, appropriate, and timely?
- Will granting the request compromise the academic integrity of the course?
- Can the student provide verification of the reason for the request?
- Has the student’s attendance and participation in class been at a level where they can successfully complete the work?
- Is the decision to allow the accommodation consistent with previous requests?

Agreements to allow an academic accommodation should be documented in writing to the student so a record can be maintained of the accommodation granted, including:

- The timeline for any assignments and a final deadline when all coursework should be completed.
- What work should be completed.
- What grade will be assigned if the student does not complete the work as agreed.

Other Considerations:

- Instructors are encouraged to include clear and concise accommodation information on their syllabi that students can be referred to.
- Instructors should make it explicitly clear that when a student fails to follow through with an accommodation agreement, there is no rule or expectation the student must pass the course.
- Instructors who require attendance should make it clear that excused absences still may have an impact on the student’s final grade.