

## Using Universal Design to Reduce Barriers for Remote Learners with Disabilities

### Questions to consider

1. Identify a task? What are students meant to demonstrate by completing the task?
2. What are the barriers students with disabilities are likely to face when completing the task?
3. What are all the other possibilities for demonstrating that skill or understanding ?
4. What are the implications of those possibilities? How might they support all students?

### Universal Design: Excused Absences/ Extensions

1. Identify a task. What are students meant to demonstrate by completing the task?

Example: Participation in class activities and discussions enables students to explore, expand and share their understandings as well as enable professors to address misunderstandings.

2. What are the barriers students with disabilities are likely to face when completing this task?

- Unanticipated symptoms of a chronic or mental health diagnosis may prevent a student's attendance or ability to hand in work at the assigned due date.
- Difficulties with internet service may interrupt a student's ability to be present.
- Time zones may be a barrier.

3. What are all of the other possibilities for demonstrating that skill or understanding?

- Use asynchronous approaches to learning such as discussion boards or posts that can happen over the course of 24-48 hours.
- Create assignments that are broken down into smaller manageable components that can be done each week rather than having a lot due at one time.
- Schedule ongoing communication with all students but particularly those who have this accommodation as a means to stay in touch.
- Use intentional student pairings or small groups so that students who miss a class have a built in support group to get caught up.
- Develop an alternative schedule or agreement with individual students.

4. What are the implications for those alternatives? How might they support all students?

- More intentional and regular one-on-one meetings may be needed in the beginning of class to get started...all students may benefit from this opportunity.
- Intentional use of partners or small groups to have people supporting each other during this time can provide both academic and emotional support.
- Asynchronous options allow all students to participate at different times.
- Some students may use these options as a means to do less.
- Certain students may in fact need extensions and incompletes. Please, reach out to me or their class dean if you feel a student has missed more than two sessions.