Oberlin College
Post-Concussion Disability Accommodations
Policy and Procedures
(Adapted with permission from Pomona College Guidelines)

Approximately 1.5 to 2 million Americans experiences a traumatic brain injury, or “concussion,” annually. According to the American Academy of Neurology, a concussion is “a trauma-induced alteration in mental status that may or may not involve loss of consciousness” with “confusion and amnesia” as hallmark symptoms of concussions. Concentration difficulties can often accompany concussion symptoms as well, in addition to headaches, nausea, dizziness, and emotional lability.

Medical consultation with and diagnosis by a physician with appropriate training is an essential component of care for immediate concussions as well as treatment of post-concussive symptoms.

Recent advances in concussion related research have provided clinicians with guidelines for diagnosis, treatment, and return to play/activity for students who have incurred concussions. The foundation of a concussive injury is neurometabolic impairment, where additional physical and cognitive activities during a period of attempted recovery may cause symptoms to reemerge—a possible signal that the brain’s dysfunctional neurometabolism is being pushed beyond its tolerable limits. Although most concussions resolve spontaneously in a few weeks to 6 months, providing an environment where a concussed individual can rest can lead to a faster recovery.

Although physical rest has been emphasized in post-concussive care, cognitive rest has been an often under-looked component of medical treatment that has demonstrated benefit. At Oberlin College, via the Office of Disability Services (ODS), we will provide reasonable academic accommodations to provide students with post-concussive academic support. **Accommodations will only be made by ODS once a student has met with a physician and has documentation to demonstrate that they have been appropriately diagnosed and are undergoing treatment.**

Students are to meet with a professional in the Office of Disability Services (ODS) to discuss these accommodations. The accommodations may include the following:

- **Immediately Following Injury**
  After medical attention, the student meets with ODS. A temporary accommodation may be provided for both physical and cognitive rest. The student is responsible for work missed at the professor’s discretion. During this process, students are encouraged to speak with their professors to determine if course work deadlines can be postponed or course work excused. In order to facilitate accommodations and provide an on-going dialogue with faculty, **the student is required to attend weekly meetings with ODS.**

- **Weeks One and Two Following Injury**
  With concurrent medical supervision, if symptoms remain, it may be helpful to explore further accommodations including extended time on examinations, extra time for assignments, and note-taking services, all on a temporary basis.
• **Weeks Three and Beyond**
  If post-concussive symptoms persist beyond a third week, the student should consider withdrawing from one or two classes, taking classes pass/no pass, or taking a medical leave. A medical leave of absence would be a reasonable consideration if the student continues to experience post-concussive symptoms for greater than three weeks and if the coursework missed becomes too onerous to make up.

Once a physician provides medical clearance, the student should present that follow-up documentation to ODS. *If a student has been given medical clearance for physical activity or voluntarily resumes physical activity, then Oberlin College’s position is that cognitive activity has already reached pre-concussive baseline, and academic accommodations will conclude.*

Since accommodations must not fundamentally alter a course or program component, the student, ODS, and the faculty members will work together in all stages of the process to determine the details of the accommodations. Individualized accommodations are outlined in a letter that the student receives from ODS on their initial visit. It is the student’s responsibility to provide the accommodation letter to the faculty members. This accommodation letter serves as the gateway among ODS, the student, and faculty members.