

# Occidental College

## Recommendations for Student Concussion Accommodations

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### Concussion Symptom List and Categories

PHYSICAL	Headache
	"Pressure in head"
	Neck Pain
	Nausea
	Vomiting
	Dizziness
	Blurred/Abnormal Vision
	Balance Problems
	Sensitivity to Light
	Sensitivity to Noise/Sound
	Tinnitus/"ringing in the ears"
COGNITIVE	Feeling slowed down
	Feeling like "in a fog"
	"Don't feel right"
	Difficulty concentrating
	Difficulty remembering
	Confusion
SLEEP/ ENERGY	Fatigue or low energy
	Drowsiness
	Trouble falling asleep
	Sleeping more than usual
EMOTIONAL	Feeling more emotional
	Irritability
	Sadness or depression
	Nervous or anxious

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### Suggested accommodations

#### **Physical Symptoms**

- Remove from physical activity without penalty.
- Sit out of music and computer classes if symptoms are provoked.
- Allow rest breaks during class.
- Allow wearing of sunglasses, both outdoors and indoors.

#### **Emotional Symptoms**

- Allow student to remove him/herself from class to de-escalate. Student can establish a “signal” letting the professor know that he/she is leaving the room because of escalating symptoms.
- Understand that mental fatigue can manifest in “emotional meltdowns.”
- Watch for secondary symptoms of depression and anxiety usually due to social isolation and concern over “make-up” work and slipping grades.

#### **Sleep/Energy Symptoms**

- Allow rest breaks during class.
- Alternate “mental challenge” with “mental rest.”
- Allow student to leave class early.

#### **Cognitive Symptoms**

1. Feeling slowed down. (*Area of Concern: Slowed processing speed*)
  - Provide extra time for tests and assignments.
  - Adjust (postpone) due dates/test dates, especially during the first-week critical recovery period.
  - Provide a peer note-taker or additional notes, if possible.
  - Grade work completed- do not penalize for work not done.
2. Difficulty concentrating, feeling like in a “fog,” “don’t feel right.” (*Area of Concern: Difficulty concentrating*)
  - Reduce the cognitive load and apply flexibility with assignments (smaller amounts of learning will need to take place during recovery).
  - Consider: what is the most important concept for the student to learn during this recovery?
  - Be careful not to tax the student cognitively by expecting that all learning continue at the rate prior to the concussion.
3. Difficulty remembering. (*Area of Concern: Difficulty with working memory*)
  - Work toward comprehension of smaller amounts of material versus rote memorization.
  - Remove “busy” work that is not essential for comprehension. Making the student accountable for all work missed during the recovery period places undue cognitive and emotional strain on him/her and may hamper recovery.
  - Consider: what is the most important concept for the student to learn during this recovery?
4. Confusion. (*Area of Concern: Emotional*)
  - Be mindful of emotional symptoms throughout! Students are often scared, overloaded, frustrated, irritable, angry and depressed as a result of concussion. They respond well to support and reassurance that what they are feeling is often the typical course of recovery.
  - Watch for secondary symptoms of depression — usually from social isolation.
  - Watch for secondary symptoms of anxiety — usually from concerns over make-up work or slipping grades.