

# Menstrual Impacts on Academic Success

January 15, 2026

Prepared for VP (Academic) Katie Tamsett by  
Department of Research and Advocacy



## Overview

Our objective was to identify period-related barriers to academic success, including physical, behavioural, and systemic impacts. This student-driven survey was co-created with the VP (Academic) with valuable input from Club Periodically, a fee-supported student group responsible for distributing free menstrual health products on campus.

Survey questions were newly developed for this project or were sourced from the methods and findings of a recent pilot survey at the University of Illinois Chicago.<sup>1</sup>

Following the survey, VPA Tamsett presented draft findings to a student-led stakeholder working group for discussion and recommendations. This group is the Women's Health Coalition, including various student groups supporting women and health across campus.

## Key Findings

- 59% of respondents had experienced serious academic impacts from their menstrual cycle. Of those, only one out of six had sought academic accommodations.
  - When re-run in the Annual Survey, this question showed that students from a rural Alberta background were twice as unlikely as other students to seek accommodations.
- 12% were somewhat or very uncomfortable discussing their own or others' periods, with responses often focusing on trust, anxiety, privacy, and stigma.
  - 43% were somewhat comfortable, with responses often focusing on the sex and gender of their audience and their expectations that the topic would provoke negative reactions or professional/academic impacts.

*This survey ran on the UASU Perks student engagement platform from October 8th to November 6th, 2025, and reached 1,709 respondents, of whom 1,387 were in scope for the project. The margin of error for a probability-based random sample of the same size would be two percent, 19 times out of 20. The UASU collected this student data in compliance with its responsibilities under the Post-Secondary Learning Act and the Personal Information Protection Act. Questions can be directed to [dra@uasu.ca](mailto:dra@uasu.ca) and [vp.academic@uasu.ca](mailto:vp.academic@uasu.ca)*

<sup>1</sup> Suleman A, Krishna S, Krishnakumar D, Nemoto K, Nguyễn MLT, Mehta SD. A pilot survey of students' menstrual attitudes, experiences, and needs on an urban university campus. *Women's Health*. 2024. doi:[10.1177/17455057241254713](https://doi.org/10.1177/17455057241254713)

- 29% were very comfortable, with responses often focusing on a rejection of stigma or a desire to talk about lived experience of medical conditions and other major impacts.
- First-year students were less likely to be comfortable discussing menstruation.
- At least 43% of respondents avoid changing their menstrual product while on campus. While there appeared to be impacts from respondents' comfort levels when talking about menstruation, 40% of 'Very comfortable' respondents still avoided changing products on campus.
  - By far the most common reason to avoid changing products on campus was the complex challenge of rinsing reusable products. Several students requested more stalls with sinks or bidets, or more access to water and appropriate soap.
- 62% of respondents had experienced class attendance impacts (missing class, arriving late, and/or leaving early due to their period). These impacts correlated ( $p < 0.025$ ) with whether respondents avoided changing their menstrual products on campus.
  - The most common reasons for attendance disruption were cramps, impacts on bowel movements, headaches, leakage, inability to concentrate, and needing to change menstrual products, all impacting large shares of respondents. Nausea, fainting, mental impacts, fatigue, and severe pain were also cited.
- 10% of respondents had sought accommodations due to their menstrual cycle. Of those, two-thirds felt they usually did not receive the accommodations they had sought.
  - Respondents who were very comfortable talking about menstruation were more likely to get accommodations if they sought them ( $p < 0.025$ ).
- 69% of respondents who had exams or major projects were somewhat or very uncomfortable seeking academic accommodations for them due to their menstrual cycle.
  - Comfort seeking accommodations corresponded to likelihood of successfully having sought them, but was negatively associated ( $p < 0.025$ ) with the number of physical symptoms that had interfered with class attendance. In other words, more severe impacts went hand in hand with somewhat lower comfort in seeking accommodations for those impacts.
- In text responses, students frequently discussed wanting more information (for themselves and/or instructors) about menstrual accommodations, often noting they wish they could trust instructors to take the topic seriously. Many also requested more, and more regularly available, menstrual products on campus, and several highlighted a need for disposal options within bathroom stalls.

## Recommendations

- Recommendation 1: Ensure that Facilities and Operations makes menstrual health a priority for washroom conditions.
  - Students have highlighted needs to maximize access to individual sinks and paper towels, increase frequency of emptying disposals, and provide sufficient lighting and adequate sanitation.
  - F&O can directly support access to menstrual products — for example, through providing menstrual products, providing sink-equipped single-stall bathrooms with appropriate soap to clean reusable menstrual products, or alerting menstrual product providers when supplies are damaged or empty.
- Recommendation 2: Ensure that the University Health Centre receives regular, appropriate training on menstrual health disorders and period pain. This will involve advocacy for increased gynecological access.
- Recommendation 3: Explore accommodation options to allow for students to seek support when they experience menstrual impacts on their academic success. An example of this accommodation involves encouraging instructors to allow students one 'free pass' for submitting assignments late due to menstruation-related barriers, within a set timeframe.
  - Some instructors who use this approach simply require students to let them know if they are using their free pass, by email, on or before the day the assignment is due.
- Recommendation 4: Working in partnership with student groups, the UASU should identify all single-stall bathrooms around campus that have a sink in the stall and can be equipped with appropriate soaps to clean reusable menstrual products.
  - The UASU should advertise these bathrooms' existence to ensure awareness.
- Recommendation 5: Provide further awareness and education to students about the impacts of menstrual health on the academic experience.
- Recommendation 6: Commit to further research to inform ongoing work around exploring menstrual impacts on academic success and how reproductive health of students can be further supported.

## Sample Considerations

The main challenge to this survey's representativeness was the personal sensitivity of the topic — likely the most personally sensitive survey ever run on Perks. Students who are uncomfortable talking about menstruation are likely underrepresented, but we attempted to draw as many as possible in three ways:

- By leaving the survey open and available on the Perks interface for one month to get unsure students used to the idea of talking about the topic;
- By engaging with a wide range of student groups;
- By making the decision to leave out personal demographic questions. (As a rule of thumb for Perks surveys, students are often willing to discuss sensitive personal impacts or sensitive personal characteristics, but not always both.) Exploring demographic variations would be an important reason for further research. We included one key question in the 2025 Annual Survey (ongoing at time of writing), which has a comprehensive demographic panel.

We took the following measures to ensure data quality:

- Access to Perks and the ability to earn Perks points through taking surveys is gated through students' CCID and a data privacy and informed consent mechanism.
- Proportions by year of study were compared to the UASU voter roll, and were similar enough that weighting was not required.

First-year undergraduates	23%
Second-year undergraduates	22%
Third-year undergraduates	17%
Fourth-year undergraduates or higher	20%
Recent graduates or graduate students	5%
Unknown but CCID-gated (either students or recent graduates; likely mostly undergraduates)	14%

- One respondent was identified as a potential 'straight-liner' who selected the first response on all questions and provided no text responses, and was removed.

- 18 self-identified recent graduates and 65 graduate students had access to the survey and were judged to be in scope if not otherwise excluded: their responses can augment assessment of how attitudes and experiences can change as students progress through their academic careers.
- Listwise deletion was applied to the 321 remaining individuals who responded 'Not applicable to me' to the question "Have you experienced serious academic impacts from your menstrual cycle?" This question was the clearest measure of out-of-scope respondents. (For example, using the class impacts question's N/A option would have excluded remote learners, using the N/A options on the two major project/exam questions could exclude students whose coursework has taken other forms, and over 100 substantive respondents answered 'no' or 'prefer not to say' to the question about using menstrual products.)

The final in-scope sample was 1,387. Other than a short section on 2025 Annual Survey data, all analysis below refers to the in-scope sample.

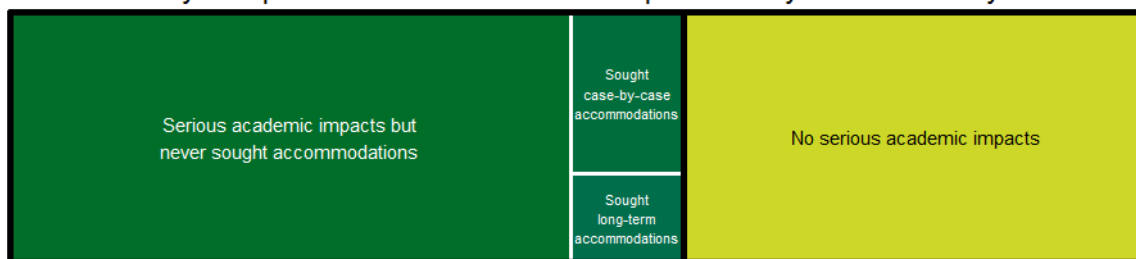
### "Do you use menstrual products (e.g. tampons, pads, period underwear, menstrual cups)?"

- Yes: 91.4%
- No: 5.9%
  - Several of these respondents noted in text questions that they used IUDs or other relevant birth control, had very light periods, or were female but did not get a period.
- Prefer not to say: 2.7%

### "Have you experienced serious academic impacts from your menstrual cycle?"

- Yes, and I have sought case-by-case academic accommodations (e.g. for a specific assignment): 6.4%
- Yes, and I have sought long-term academic accommodations: 3.5%
- Yes, but I have not sought academic accommodations: 49.2%
- No: 40.8%

'Have you experienced serious academic impacts from your menstrual cycle?'

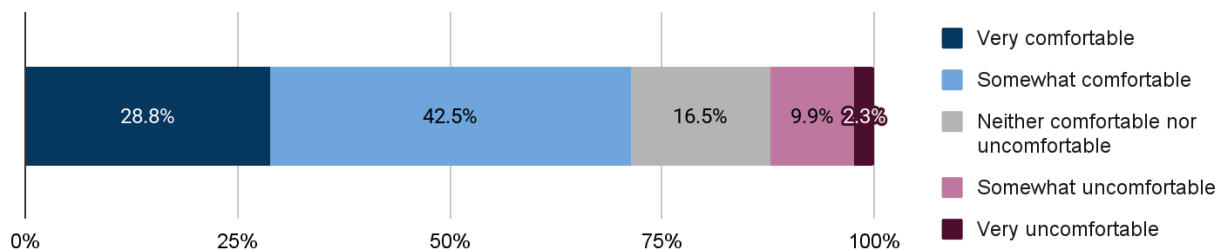


59% of in-scope respondents had faced serious academic impacts. Of those who had, only 17% (around one in six, or 10% of all in-scope respondents) had ever sought accommodations for those impacts.

This question was re-run in the 2025 UASU Annual Survey (n1 = 2,318 after excluding 'not applicable to me' on this question). There was significant variation by demographic:

- 14% of those who experienced serious academic impact had sought accommodations, rising to 25% of 191 in-scope Indigenous students, 28% of 191 in-scope international students, and 30% of 140 in-scope respondents who had disabilities or medical conditions that impacted their ability to travel around campus.
- One demographic was highly unlikely (8%, half the rate of other respondents) to have sought academic accommodations in the context of this question: students who had lived in rural Alberta before enrolling.

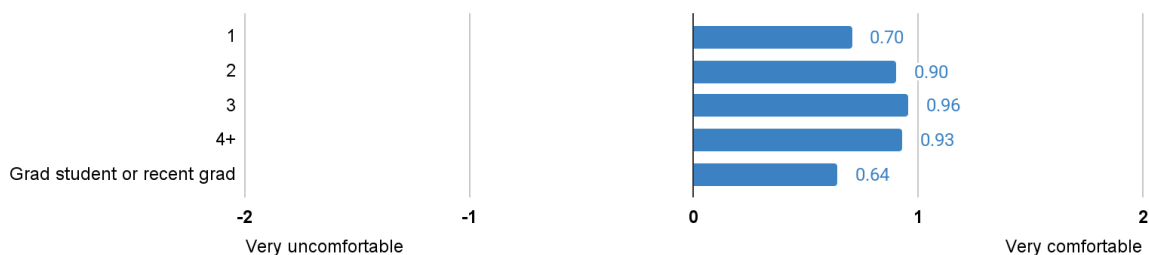
### "How comfortable are you with discussing your own or others' periods?"



Only 71% were somewhat or very comfortable discussing the topic.

Translating this Likert scale into a scale of 2 to -2, the average value was 0.86 (approaching 'Somewhat comfortable'). First-year students were especially unlikely to be comfortable — as were the graduate students and recent graduates, for unclear reasons.

#### Average comfort discussing periods by undergraduate year of study



## "Would you like to elaborate on your previous answer?"

Responses from 'Very uncomfortable' respondents:

- I don't want it to be public knowledge. I don't want to discuss it with anyone.
- I'm gender queer so it is a very dysphoric topic for me.
- Transgender ftm.

Responses from 'Somewhat uncomfortable' respondents centred on factors like trust, anxiety, privacy, and stigma:

- Definitely more uncomfortable discussing my own period than others'.
- Depends on who I'm discussing it with. With friends I'm a bit more comfortable but with my family I generally avoid it.
- Doesn't feel very welcomed of a conversation unless it with your close girl friends
- I believe it's something that's just what it is and should be felt with accordingly and privately in terms of over sharing
- I don't mind when people tell me about their periods, but I hate telling others and also get really anxious about the blood and scent
- I don't really feel comfortable telling my profs that I deal with
- I feel like there's just a big stigma around it still
- I feel like with this whole feminism movement, some are quite extreme and disapproves women to be acting weak compared to men. So when I am cramping badly, I suck it up to avoid being judged.
- I pass as a man
- I'm more comfortable talking about it with other women.
- It depends on the person and where I am and what aspect of periods I'm talking about.
- It's awkward to bring up in general, and straight up uncomfortable to discuss around the opposite sex
- Its a personal thing, I wouldn't just share that with anybody. Only if they're a family member, close friend, or medical professional.
- No one wants to know. It's a bodily function you're just expected to deal with.

- To friends - absolutely. To fellow working professionals - absolutely not. It has a bad stigma unfortunately and can make others look at you differently if you make your period a big deal.

Of note, many of the 'Somewhat comfortable' respondents qualified their answer by explaining they still avoided the topic depending on the sex and gender of those around. Several highlighted an expectation that the topic would provoke consequences:

- I'm fine to discuss it quite publically, but there are still many people who are very against having public discussion about it and constantly vocalize their disgust.
- I'm more concerned with other's potential discomfort with the subject.
- I don't mind discussing it but I do feel there is stigma in stating I have to miss course work due to my period pain.
- I feel distrustful when telling people.
- I'm usually only comfortable talking about it with other people who menstruate or understand. With some people it can be awkward based on their reaction, but mostly I'm pretty open with talking about it. (I was also raised in a more traditional home so talking about stuff like that publically feels taboo even though it's not.)
- I'm very comfortable discussing it in theory, but other people can get iffy about it so I avoid it unless I know they're comfortable talking about it.
- I am often held back by my own discomfort from years of being taught that it is indecent to open up about such things.
- I tend to not bring it up when I feel my concerns are going to be invalidated, or I think the person will not care or understand.

Similar responses of note from 'Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable' respondents:

- It entirely depends on who I'm discussing it with. If they're comfortable, I'm comfortable. If they're not, I'm not.
- I wouldn't disclose to any man that I'm on my period unless it was a dire situation. I wouldn't disclose to a female professor that I'm on my period unless it was a dire situation. I am fine telling my female peers that I'm on my period.

The common themes among 'Very comfortable' respondents were strong feelings about education and normalization, especially in the context of health conditions. For example:

- Endometriosis sometimes makes it impossible to leave my house.
- I always love to educate and tell my friends about what I've been feeling and how women's health works. A good podcast to learn more would be the video on the diary of a CEO YouTube channel about women's reproductive health in general.
- I feel like periods are not taboo whatsoever and I'm actually very happy to talk about them as someone who comes from a place they may be seen as dirty.
- I am an open book and I think making it a taboo topic is really harmful and leads to serious health issues being overlooked.
- I bleed a lot. I get debilitating cramps and make my legs go numb, make it so I'm super lightheaded and dizzy, and sometimes will throw up because of how much pain I am in. I have to constantly do some form of pain management during the day otherwise I won't get anything done.
- I discuss my IUD pretty regularly with my sorority, which has impacted my period significantly in that I don't usually get one anymore (I still do sometimes but it's irregular and maybe once every five or so months). I also have no shame about it, since it's natural and not disgusting like a lot of men tend to think of it.
- I feel very strongly about the understanding of the menstrual cycle in medicine, and the limited knowledge that impacts a lot of women including myself. I have endometriosis, and have been hospitalized multiple times due to ovarian cyst pain — this has pushed severe impacts on my academic performance.
- I find discussing menstrual cycles easy to talk about because they're important and very real parts of being a woman. We shouldn't have to hide because some people are uneducated about them.
- I get very rare and irregular periods due to having an IUD. I would 100% recommend if someone has a heavy flow like I used to have. Now I don't worry about having menstrual products on me, even if I start, it is very light and not enough to justify menstrual products.
- I have endometriosis and other women's health related issues. Often times when I am on my period I am in such severe pain and it causes me to not be able to focus on my course work. It is often severe enough that I have ended up in the emergency room multiple times.
- I have PCOS so my periods are super painful sometimes when I have cysts building. I'm totally open to talking about it.
- I have suspected endometriosis and I have been on birth control since I was 12. I got my period at 10 and have had terrible periods since. Before going on BC I missed elementary school classes due to pain. I even took a full year off of university classes due to the pain being unbearable. I had to be switched from

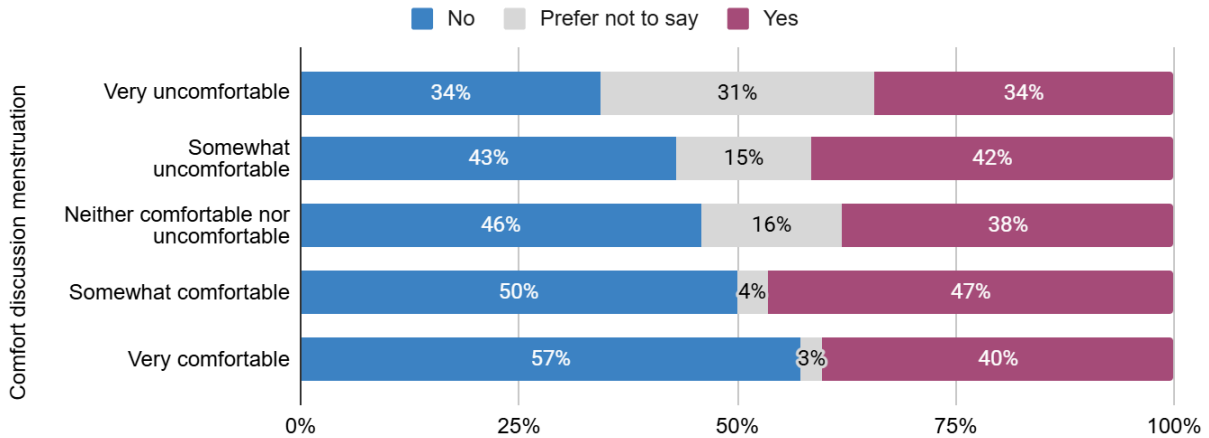
oral birth control to an IUD due to high stroke possibilities. Dealing with the IUD during school my grades dipped dramatically...due to my periods negatively affecting my life.

- I often encourage people to switch to the menstrual cup and talk about experiences with hormones during my cycle.
- I think it's very natural phenomena that women go through every month, so there is no shame in it. The more you hide it, the bigger the taboo becomes.
- I think that it is SO DARN important to talk about periods and women's health. Our bodies run in a fundamentally different way than men's; our 24-day cycle affects us EVERY DAY of our lives, not just the 4-7 days that we're visibly bleeding.
- I used to be very uncomfortable, but now I am in healthcare and realized what I was experiencing wasn't normal, and like to advocate for others.
- I will tell people if I am suffering with cramps the same way I would tell people I have a headache, or a sprained ankle. There is very little stigma for me.
- I would gladly make my guy friends talk about this.
- I'm more comfortable discussing my own. I wouldn't really discuss other periods unless they consented to me talking about it. But I have no issue having conversations about it. I personally think it should be talked about more.
- It has taken a while to be very open, and now I speak openly about my period in defiance of the stigmatisation.
- My period definitely impacts my ability to focus and study for exams, but I've never even thought about reaching for accommodations because of it.
- Personally, I think it's essential to discuss periods and how they affect our daily lives. I think especially when you're in a male dominated field/major, it's even more important to speak about periods and cramps.
- So long as the other person is comfortable. If it's a guy and the topic comes up I usually ask if they have sisters and then gauge my openness with them, or they catch on straight up say it's fine.
- Sometimes I have cramps so bad that I can't move and have had to miss class or delay my study plans.

"Do you ever avoid changing your menstrual product while on campus?"

- Yes: 42.5%
- No: 50.3%
- Prefer not to say: 7.1%

## "Do you ever avoid changing your menstrual product while on campus?"



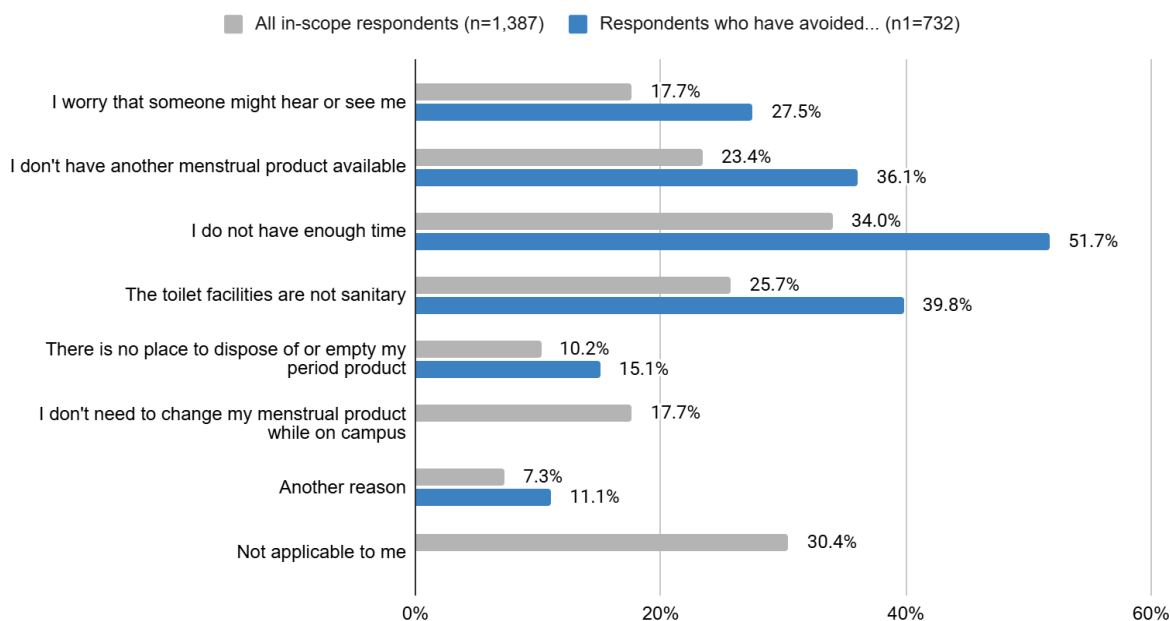
A Pearson's  $r$  test (with 'Prefer not to say' excluded) found a weak negative association between this question and comfort talking about menstruation (-0.043). Lower comfort corresponded to lower levels of 'No' responses and higher levels of opting out of the question. Overall, it seems likely that discomfort talking about menstruation goes hand in hand with avoiding changing menstrual products on campus.

## "What are some reasons you don't change your menstrual product at school?"

This question came with its own 'Not applicable to me' option, as well as 'I don't need to change my menstrual product while on campus,' which would have some conceptual overlap, but allowed us to focus on the 732 respondents who have avoided changing their menstrual products on campus for at least one specific reason.

This approach also allowed the inclusion of 66 respondents who had answered 'Prefer not to say' to the previous question, but were then willing to share specific personal impacts. (These 66 were also much less comfortable talking about periods at all, with an average score of 0.1 on the Likert scale compared to the sample average of 0.86.)

The following chart shows both the full in-scope sample and the impacted group. For example, 18% of respondents who menstruate avoid changing their period products on campus because they worry that someone might see or hear them, and that worry is a factor for 28% of respondents who avoid changing products on campus. Meanwhile, 26% of respondents who menstruate avoid changing their period products on campus because the toilet facilities are not sanitary, and unsanitary facilities are a factor for 40% of respondents who avoid changing products on campus.



### "If you said 'Another reason' to the previous question, would you like to elaborate?"

61 substantive text responses were received and coded. By far the most common factor (17 mentions) was challenges rinsing reusable products like cups, discs, and reusable pads. For example:

- A diva cup or menstrual cup is VERY hard to change out when in a public space. You typically need to wash it out before putting it back in and it feels unsanitary to do that in the public sinks so I typically use a water bottle. But again it's extremely difficult so I try to avoid it as much as possible.
- Emptying Diva cup on campus is hell.
- I use a Diva cup, and I often need to clean it before putting it back in, but there aren't many washrooms on campus where the sink and the toilet are in the same area (and I wouldn't want to take the diva cup in my hand out into the common sink areas).
- It's a pain to clean my Diva cup in the sinks and drip blood everywhere.
- Toilet facilities are often out of toilet paper, soap, etc. And most of the soap provided is scented hand soap, which means I cannot use it to clean my menstrual cup.
- When taking out a menstrual cup you sorta need a stall with a sink. Can be tricky but there are a couple individual washrooms on campus.

Along similar lines, five other respondents spoke to a lack of water, sinks in stalls, or a wish for bidets.

Three transgender men spoke to access barriers:

- As a trans man, it is hard to always have access to a gender neutral washroom, so if I can only get to a men's room there is no way to dispose or empty my menstrual products.
- Being a trans man and feeling uncomfortable doing it in public male washrooms.
- Men's washrooms don't always have trash, and I also don't want men hearing me change my pad.

Other common responses: five responses spoke to embarrassment, five mentioned dislike for public washrooms, five mentioned getting too busy with academic work and forgetting, six mentioned hurrying home or spending as little time on campus as possible, and four spoke to period impacts too heavy to effectively address on campus.

### "Have you ever missed, left early, or arrived late for class for period-related reasons?"

61.6% of respondents had experienced class attendance impacts: missing class, arriving late, or leaving class early; 28.6% said they had not faced any of these impacts, 5.3% said 'Don't know,' and 4.5% said 'Not applicable to me.'

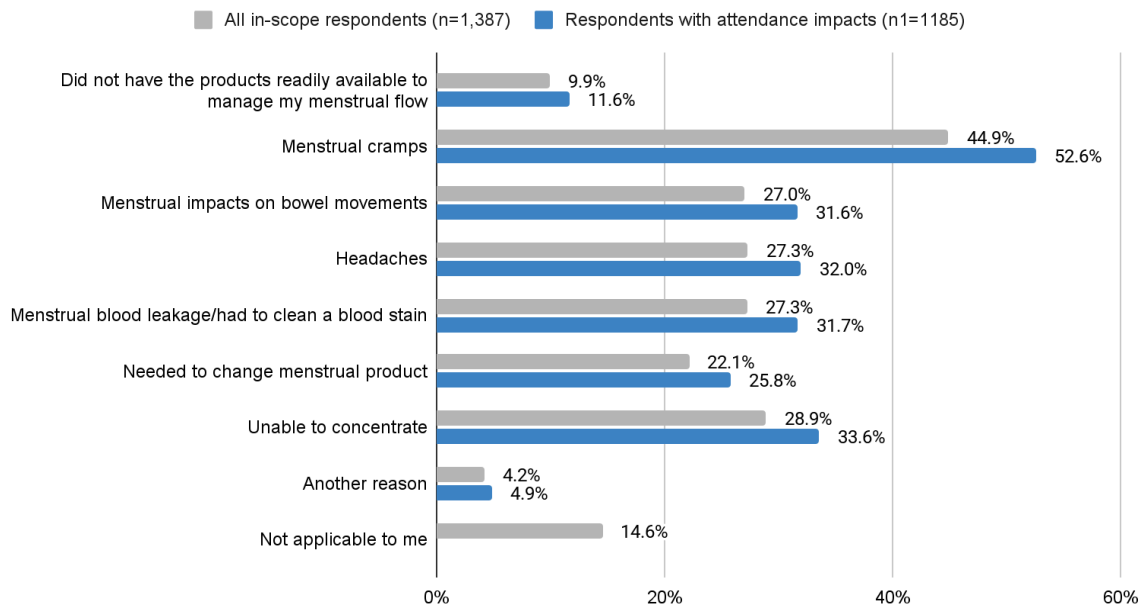
We followed Suleman et al. by treating this question as a binary attendance disruption variable and testing it against menstrual hygiene management (MHM) impacts with a chi-squared test conducted in R. Like that study, we found an association between these two variables. Class attendance impacts strongly correlated ( $p < 0.025$ ) with whether respondents avoided changing products on campus. A Spearman's rho test also produced a significant correlation ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Attendance Impacts	MHM Impacts			Total
	NO	YES	<NA>	
NO	215 ( 54.2% )	165 ( 41.6% )	17 ( 4.3% )	397 ( 100.0% )
YES	389 ( 46.3% )	400 ( 47.6% )	51 ( 6.1% )	840 ( 100.0% )
<NA>	94 ( 79.0% )	25 ( 21.0% )	0 ( 0.0% )	119 ( 100.0% )
Total	698 ( 51.5% )	590 ( 43.5% )	68 ( 5.0% )	1356 ( 100.0% )

$$\chi^2 = 5.1498 \quad df = 1 \quad p = .0232$$

## "If yes, what were those reasons?"

327 respondents (24%) experienced four or more of these eight types of impacts, and 77 (6%) experienced six or more.



## "If you said 'Another reason' to the previous question, would you like to elaborate?"

51 substantive text responses were received and coded. The most common reasons for classroom attendance impacts listed here were nausea (16 mentions), mental impacts (11), severe pain (8), fatigue (6), and fainting and severe dizziness (6), often in combination. Three respondents mentioned endometriosis.

Responses of note:

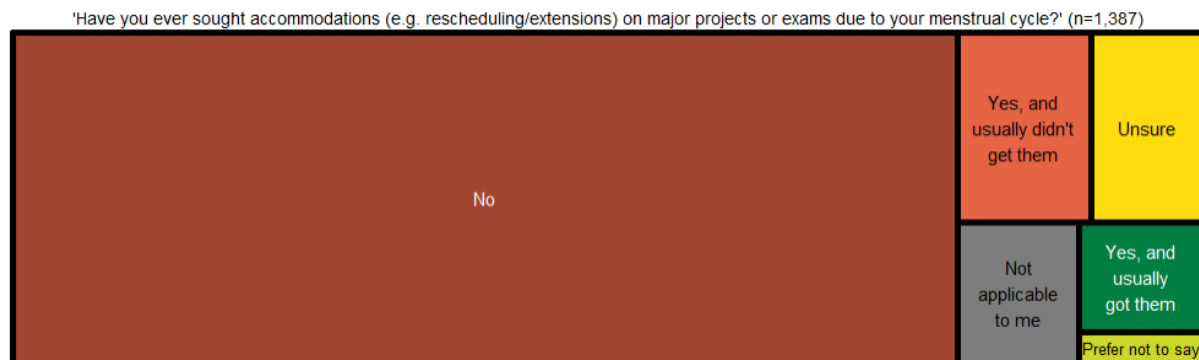
- Back pain, general period pain, I get nausea from my periods so feeling like I'm going to faint or puke for extended periods of time.
- Debilitating period pain, and intense mood swings (from PMDD).
- For some reason I have started to get incredibly nauseous when on my period to the point where I literally can't move because any motion at ALL makes me feel like I'm about to throw up. It's miserable.
- I don't like going to the washroom during class so I lowkey just pray that my pad doesn't leak.

- I have a condition called Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD); a mood disorder with many additional physical symptoms that is linked to the female hormonal cycle. Half of the month, I am functionally disabled, and this has had a significant impact on my school experience. Period justice involves all health concerns related to our reproductive systems, not just the menstrual phase!
- I have a disorder related to my ovaries and it makes it painful to walk sometimes; there's such a stigma surrounding women's health that our pain isn't seen as legitimate.
- I have severe pain in my periods, sometimes cannot even get up from bed.
- I will miss full days of lectures and labs due to my menstrual cycle, cramps are a big one but also the hormone fluctuations mean I don't make it out the door without crying.
- Large waves of fatigue and bloating. Was so tired I couldn't keep my eyes open but in too much pain to sleep. Bloating to the point of pain. And sometimes my strength would waver to the point where if I was standing I'd have to grip a railing so I wouldn't fall.
- Lower back and leg pain that was bad enough that moving was not fun, and concentration was near impossible, combined with cramps, bloating, headaches, dizziness, nausea, and epic levels of fatigue.

"Have you ever sought accommodations (e.g. rescheduling/extensions) on major projects or exams due to your menstrual cycle?"

- Yes, and usually got them: 3.5%
- Yes, and usually didn't get them: 6.4%
- Unsure: 5.4%
- No: 79.3%
- Not applicable to me: 4.4%

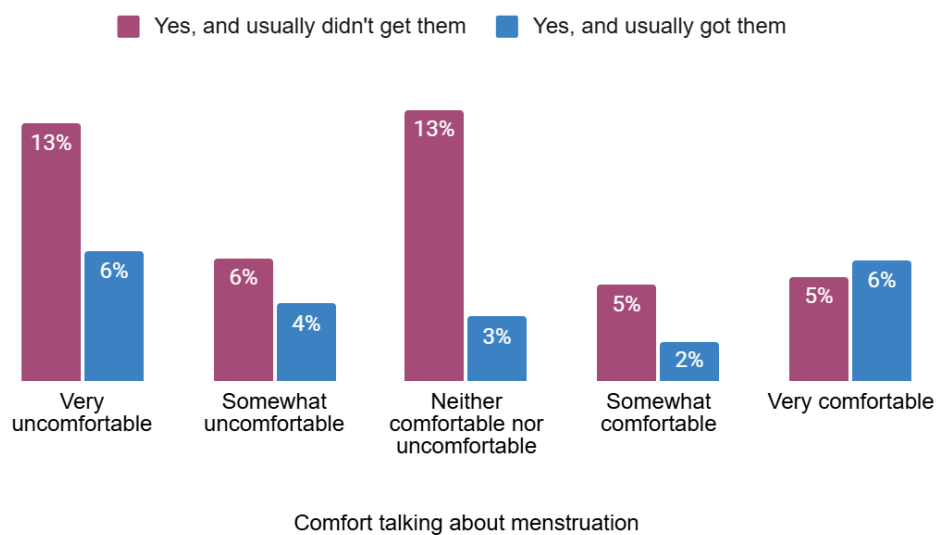
10% of respondents had sought accommodations due to their menstrual cycle. Of those, two-thirds felt they usually did not receive accommodations they had sought.



Pearson's  $r$  and Spearman's  $\rho$  tests (with 'Prefer not to say' excluded) suggested weak negative correlations (-0.061 and -0.053, not statistically significant) between having sought accommodations and comfort talking about menstruation. Overall, comfort levels did not impact likelihood of seeking accommodations.

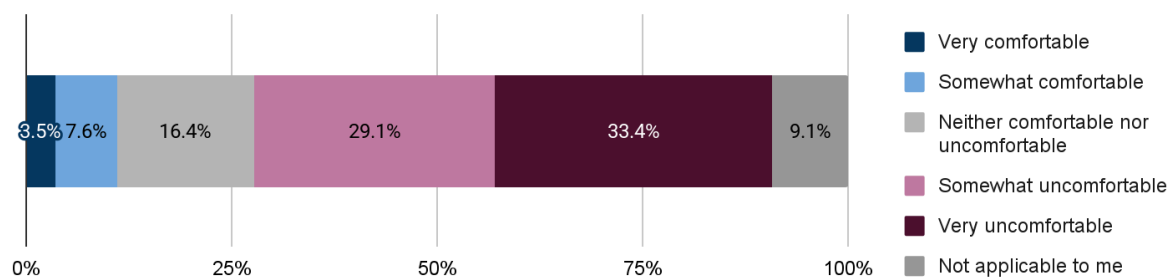
However, a high level of comfort talking about menstruation did appear to impact relative levels of success when seeking accommodations. A Spearman's  $\rho$  test found a correlation ( $\rho = 0.21$ ,  $p=0.013$ ) between comfort level and whether the outcome of seeking accommodations was usually success or failure.

### Rate of seeking academic accommodations for major projects or exams due to menstrual cycle

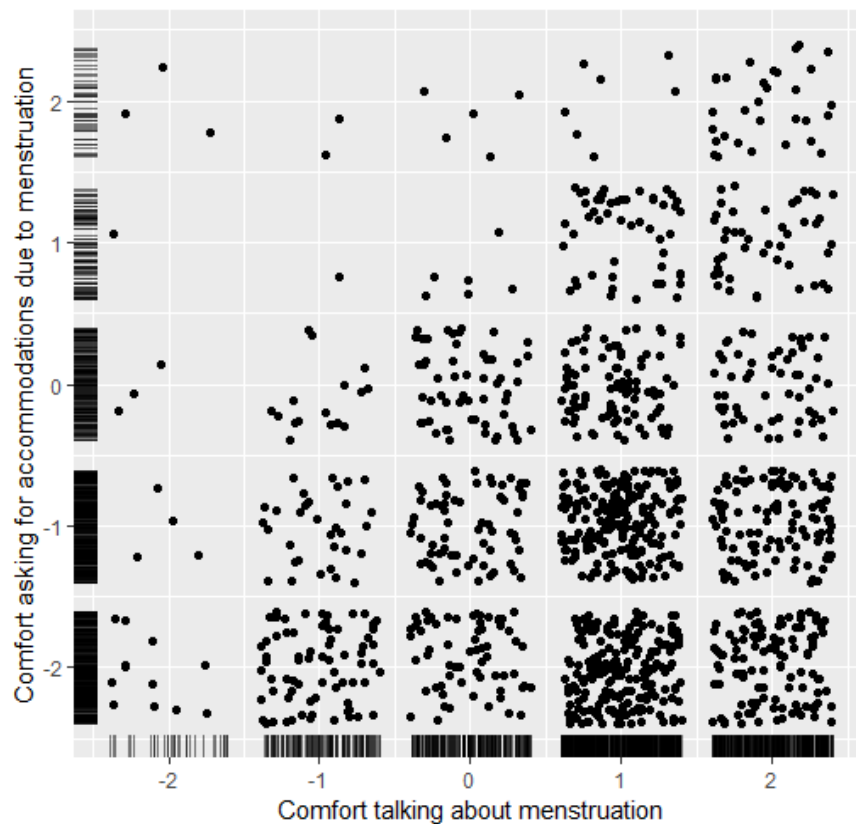
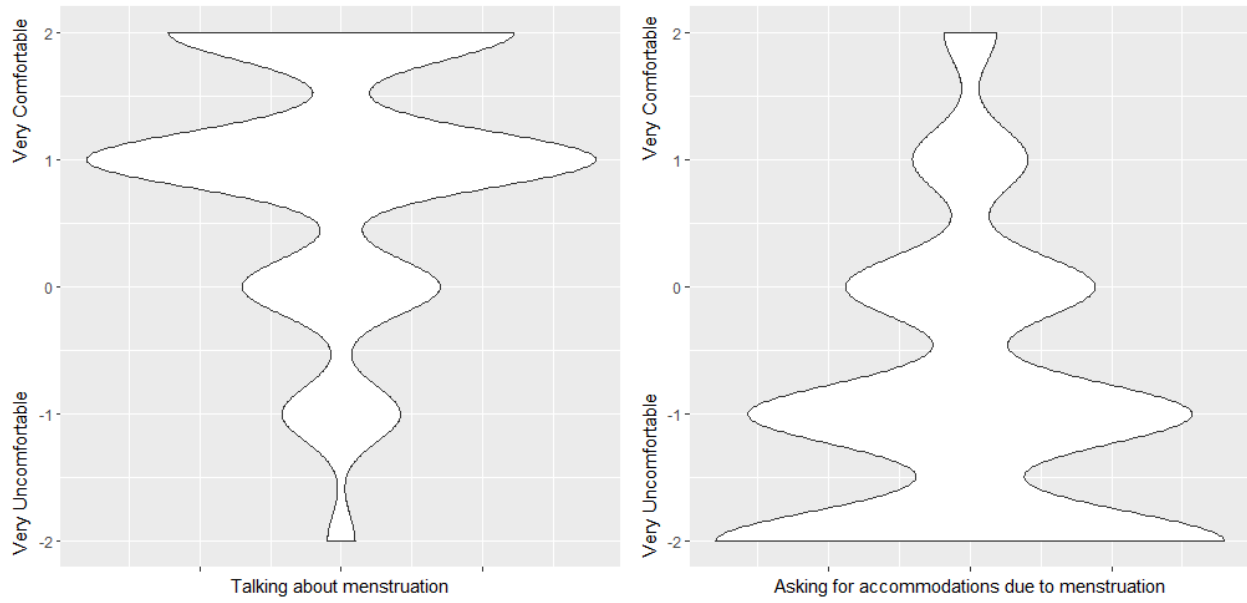


"How comfortable are you with seeking accommodations (e.g. rescheduling/extensions) on major projects or exams due to your menstrual cycle?"

After removing 'Not applicable to me' respondents (whose coursework might not involve major projects or exams, for example), 69% were somewhat or very uncomfortable.



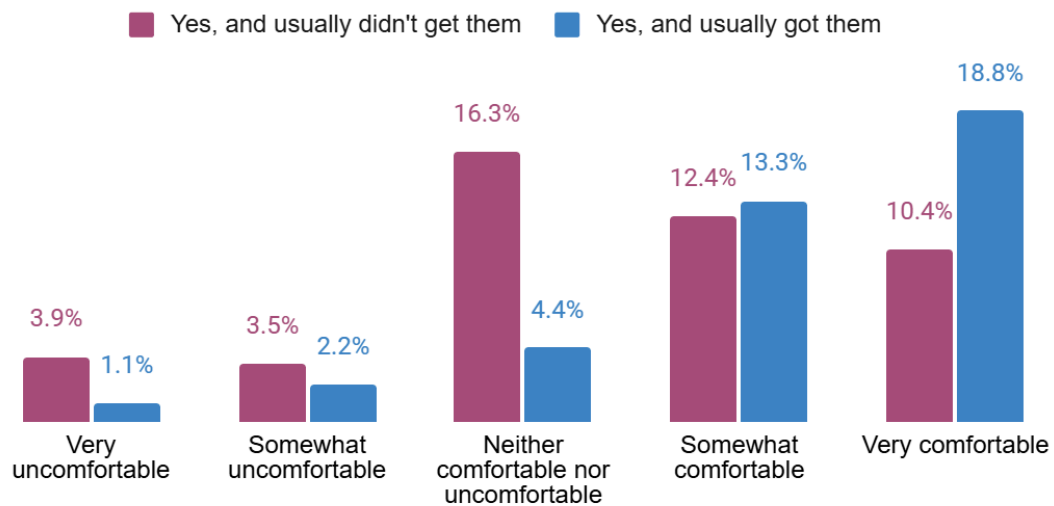
This question contrasted strongly with comfort talking about menstruation. Many students who were comfortable with the topic were not comfortable discussing it as grounds for accommodation. The following charts show how most respondents are comfortable with the topic, but also that most respondents are uncomfortable seeking accommodations for major projects or exams, on parallel 'Very comfortable' to 'Very uncomfortable' Likert scales.



As hypothetical comfort is a latent variable that cannot be objectively measured, comparing these results with past behaviour was useful. A clear relationship emerged between comfort approaching this situation and experiences of success in this situation.

Even respondents who were only somewhat comfortable approaching this situation had relatively strong experiences of success. The causal relationship for this correlation would vary person by person: comfort leading to success and/or successful experiences leading to comfort.

### Rate of seeking academic accommodations for major projects or exams due to menstrual cycle



Comfort seeking accommodations on major projects due to menstrual cycle

A Spearman's rho test found a modest negative correlation (-0.07) with a proxy for severity: the sum of the physical symptoms for class attendance disruption (i.e. whether a respondent selected 0 to 4 of 'Menstrual cramps,' 'Menstrual impacts on bowel movements,' 'Headaches,' and/or 'Unable to concentrate'). The correlation was significant at  $p=0.012$ : on average, broader physical impacts went hand in hand with less comfort seeking accommodations for those impacts. Causally, this correlation could be because of fear of discussing impacts, negative past experiences seeking accommodation, or both, in any given student's case.

## "Is there anything else you'd like to recommend or request regarding academic success and period equity?"

82 substantive text responses were received. 34 discussed wanting more information (for themselves and/or instructors) about menstrual accommodations, often noting they wish they could trust instructors to take the topic seriously. 14 requested more, and more regularly available, menstrual products on campus, and several highlighted a need for disposal options within bathroom stalls.

Representative and noteworthy responses are included below, with a sketch of the respondent:

- Because it's so often dismissed in a medical setting I have no desire to attempt talking about it or getting help in an academic setting with prick profs. *(Third-year, multiple physical attendance impacts, has not sought accommodations.)*
- Can people apply for consistent accommodations for their period? If so I want to know how??? *(Fourth-year, multiple physical attendance impacts, has sought case-by-case accommodations.)*
- Disposal stations in men's and more gender neutral bathrooms. Also, y'all are phenomenal, keep up the fantastic work :) *(Attendance impacts, uncomfortable asking for accommodations.)*
- Do some programming specific to AASUA about the barriers to success regarding periods and school. *(Part-time student, very uncomfortable seeking accommodations, multiple physical attendance impacts.)*
- For most classes you can miss up to one or two assignments. However, period cramps don't really last one day, in my case it's five so it becomes a matter of which assignment am I sacrificing since my work piled up. *(Second-year, multiple physical attendance impacts, has sought case-by-case accommodations.)*
- For the prior question, when I requested accommodations I never specified it was due to my period. Instead I explained it as a "mental health crisis". Which was true. But it was a mental health crisis caused by my menstrual cycle. Maybe menstrual pain/distress could be classified as a reason for academic accommodations? Like a missed exam or something. I realize that it says "health reasons", but I think most people assume that to mean sudden illness or injury, not menstrual issues. *(Very comfortable talking about menstruation, very uncomfortable requesting accommodations but has sought them case-by-case, multiple physical attendance impacts.)*
- Having an option to seek accommodations while on my period to be known as a possibility. Most profs and exams/assignments are explained to students as only being available due to a serious incapacitating illness, usually that of something "more serious" than a period cramp. *(Second-year, multiple physical attendance*

*impacts, very uncomfortable seeking accommodations but has sought them case-by-case.)*

- Having period products in all female bathrooms and making sure that professors take menstrual complaints or reasons for issues with school seriously because sometimes it can be brushed off as not an issue...I know for a fact my period symptoms do NOT just last a week, it's more like pre period emotional and physical symptoms then the actual period then the week after if trying to get back to being a normal human before it all starts again...those of us that are unlucky and have fucked up periods sometimes get them every 2 weeks. There is no recovery time in between. *(Fourth year, multiple physical attendance impacts, very comfortable discussing menstruation, very uncomfortable seeking accommodations, has not sought accommodations.)*
- I am very very happy that the bathroom signs in SUB were changed to "Menstrual Products"! *(Third year, serious academic impacts but has not sought accommodations.)*
- I do wish there was proper accommodation for students that have severe period problems like me, where I am physically and mentally incapable of doing anything on my period — I should not be expected to take an exam, since I cannot even stand properly. It makes me nervous sometimes when my period might align with an important date such as an exam because I know that it will drastically impact my performance. *(Second year, multiple physical impacts, serious academic impacts, attendance impacts, very uncomfortable seeking accommodations.)*
- I don't even know, if I were to get accommodations, how much help it would lend to my success at school. It eats into my class time and study time regardless of how supportive my teachers are. Also our class schedules are structured in a way that I can't refill my water bottle and have a normal bathroom break in the 10 min it takes for me to get to my next class. It's just such a steep climb to even get accommodations for health issues that are already continually denied medical attention. *(Third year, serious academic impacts but has not sought accommodations, multiple physical impacts.)*
- I don't know if it's a valid reason to get accommodations. *(Second year, serious academic and attendance impacts but has not sought accommodations.)*
- I don't really get why the school is trying to make a big deal of this, people have dealt with it forever. As a menstruating individual, I have spent only \$25 on sanitary products over the last 4 years and I don't think I (or anyone) should have to have any fees in tuition to help others. If independent groups want to do something else then that's fine. *(No impacts.)*
- I feel like most people I know, myself included, feel like in a lot of settings periods don't count as serious enough to be accommodated for (even when we are seriously struggling). They aren't really assumed to fall under the "suddenly becoming ill" during an exam category (at least from how my friends and I have

felt that is interpreted) and so we normally just take the hit if we don't do as well on an exam or school work due to periods. I have one friend who has had to rush through exams several times due to a period starting in the middle or sudden cramping and I normally just force myself to write through discomfort instead of asking if I can get a painkiller from my bag mid exam (don't want to be accused of cheating). Recognizing that serious period difficulties might occur in exam settings could be helpful. (Even just that a bathroom break to go put on a pad even if they are to be avoided or a more accepted attitude to getting a pain killer to manage cramping during exams would probably help people.) *(Very comfortable discussing menstruation, very uncomfortable seeking accommodations, serious academic impacts but has not sought accommodations.)*

- I wish it was normalized to understand that for folks who go through this monthly (some twice a month if their hormones are really in flux!!), it can be so physically and emotionally difficult to do things we normally do. I would LOVE to seek accommodations for this, but fear I will be written off as weak, lazy, apathetic, emotional, etc., and not taken seriously. Just because you do not hear about it, does not mean it is not hard. It simply means we are not made to feel comfortable discussing this and/or seeking supports. *(Serious academic and attendance impacts, multiple physical impacts, has not sought accommodations, very uncomfortable seeking them.)*
- I'd love to see "period equity" expanded to discuss the all four phases of the female hormonal cycle; not just the part that men can see! ;) *(Graduate student, multiple physical impacts, serious academic and attendance impacts, has sought accommodations and usually got them.)*
- I'm new to the UofA so I haven't needed to make these particular requests myself, but in the past missing classes/leaving classes early/needing assignment extensions due to menstrual cramps were definite issues. To promote academic success/period equity here I would suggest ensuring waste bins in individual stalls, not being penalized for leaving class early/missing class for period-related reasons, and allowing assignment extensions for period-related reasons. *(First year, attendance impacts, has not sought accommodations, very uncomfortable seeking them.)*
- It would be helpful to have more places around campus I can get ibuprofen as I sometimes have cramps that suddenly come on and make it very difficult to walk to class and focus. *(Serious academic and attendance impacts, multiple physical impacts.)*
- It would be helpful to know if there is academic support available for those of us who suffer from debilitating period pains and other effects. Personally, I get bad cramps on the first day, and hormonal headaches on the first and mid/last day of my period. These affect my ability to get work done on time, to study, and other academic factors, but I have never sought academic assistance for them in any way. More information on how people like me might be able to get help for this

would be great! *(Third year, multiple physical impacts, serious academic and attendance impacts, has not sought accommodations.)*

- It would be really great if students with menstrual issues such as endometriosis, ovarian cysts, etc (with medicinal documentation) could reschedule their exam within 48 hours of knowing. If it was considered a legitimate medical concern, it wouldn't be so stressful or shameful having these issues. As well, having digital recordings of lectures readily available. *(Fifth year, serious academic and attendance impacts, has sought accommodations and usually got them.)*
- More awareness about it? I am currently in the process of getting a diagnosis of endometriosis and so I felt I wasn't able to get accommodations because my previous gynecologist was very unhelpful and did not believe my periods were as bad as they were so I didn't think I could ask her for a doctors letter for accommodations. I just had to rely on asking profs and it feels unprofessional to do so. *(Fifth year, serious academic and attendance impacts, has sought accommodations and usually got them.)*
- More clarity about supports available to students who suffer from dysmenorrhea or endometriosis. I struggle a lot personally with significant impacts to my day to day life due to my menstrual cycle and often feel at a loss of what to do when it begins to impact my academics and participation in classes...There are a lot of psychological and emotional impacts from having painful periods and it can feel overwhelming to try to plead your case when you feel like you won't be taken seriously, don't know where to turn, or what might be available in the first place. *(Serious academic and attendance impacts, multiple physical impacts, has sought accommodations and usually got them.)*
- North Power plant needs a menstrual product disposal, there is not one. Also I think it would be great to have more discussions on campus about periods and related issues. *(First year, serious academic and attendance impacts, multiple physical impacts, very uncomfortable seeking accommodations, has not sought them.)*
- That it be taken seriously from male and women professors. Some women who have cycles that I have talked to dismissed my pain and or looked down at me for using Advil because it's not "natural." And men think I am being "dramatic." It's a real thing and it should be understood. I even had a UOFA doctor say that even if I had endo he didn't really care cause there is not a cure just treatments to make me more comfortable. I also didn't try getting accommodations because I didn't think that would count without a diagnosis. *(Serious academic and attendance impacts, multiple physical impacts, very uncomfortable seeking accommodations and has not sought them, very comfortable discussing menstruation.)*