Teaching Guide for Faculty and Staff

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Disability Rights/Laws: [http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/cguide.htm](http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/cguide.htm)
I. TEACHING AND ACCOMMODATING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

General Strategies for Optimizing Learning:

Many teaching strategies that assist students with disabilities are also known to benefit students without disabilities. Instruction provided in an array of approaches will reach more students than instruction using one method. DS offers the following suggestions to assist instructors in meeting the growing diversity of student needs in the classroom, particularly those with disabilities. DS welcomes any additional strategies instructors have found helpful.

Syllabus and Textbook:

• Make class syllabus and list of required texts available by request to students before the start of the semester. This allows time for students to obtain materials in alternative formats and to begin reading assignments.

• If available and appropriate, select a textbook with an accompanying study guide for optional student use.

Early in the Semester:

Place a statement in your syllabus and make an announcement at the first meeting of the class such as: “If you are a student with a disability or believe you might have a disability that requires accommodations, please contact the disability coordinator at your School/Division or Ms. Abigail Hurson, University Disability Services Officer at 410-516-8949 / (TTY) 410-516-6225 / ahuron1@jhu.edu to discuss reasonable and appropriate accommodations.

- This approach preserves students’ privacy and also indicates your willingness to provide accommodations as needed.

- Because many students with disabilities need additional time to process and complete assignments, convey expectations in the syllabus (e.g., grading, material to be covered, due dates).

- Announce reading assignments and list in the syllabus well in advance for the benefit of students using taped materials or other alternative formats. Recording an entire book takes an average of six weeks; DS can produce the materials in installments when informed of the sequence in which the materials will be used.

General strategies for Teaching and Presenting:

• Begin class with a review of the previous lecture and an overview of topics to be covered that day. At the conclusion of the lecture, summarize key points.

• Highlight major concepts and terminology both orally and visually. Be alert for opportunities to provide information in more than one sensory mode.

• Emphasize main ideas and key concepts during lecture and highlight them on the blackboard or overhead.

• Speak directly to students; use gestures and natural expressions to convey further meaning.

• Diminish or eliminate auditory and visual distractions.

• Present new or technical vocabulary on the blackboard or overhead, or use a handout.

• Use visual aides such as diagrams, charts, and graphs; use color to enhance the message.

• Give assignments both orally and in written form; be available for clarification.

• Provide adequate opportunities for participation, questions and/or discussion.

• Provide timelines for long-range assignments.
• Use sequential steps for long-range assignments; for example, for a lengthy paper
  1) select a topic
  2) write an outline
  3) submit a rough draft
  4) make necessary corrections with approval
  5) turn in a final draft.
• Give feedback on early drafts of papers so there is adequate time for clarification, rewrites, and refinements.
• Provide study questions and review sessions to aid in mastering material and preparing for exams.
• Give sample test questions; explain what constitutes a good answer and why.
• To test knowledge of material rather than test-taking savvy, phrase test items clearly. Be concise and avoid double negatives.
• Facilitate the formation of study groups for students who wish to participate.
• Encourage students to seek assistance during your office hours and to use campus support services.

Points to Remember:

• When in doubt about how to assist, ask the student directly and check the Instructor Contact letter provided by Disability Services. If you still have questions, call a DS coordinator at the appropriate campus.
• Flexibility may be necessary when applying attendance and promptness rules to students with health-related or mobility difficulties. Please discuss any concerns that arise with the student and, if necessary, with a DS coordinator.
• Confidentiality of all student information is essential. At no time should the class be informed that a student has a disability, unless the student makes a specific request to do so.
• The Student Code of Conduct regarding disruptive behavior applies to all students. Clearly state behavioral expectations for all students; discuss them openly in your classroom, on your syllabus, and with individual students as needed.
• If you require assistance or guidance concerning a student with a disability, please contact the appropriate DS coordinator.

Accommodations:

Accommodations make it possible for a student with a disability to learn the material presented and for an instructor to fairly evaluate the student’s understanding of the material without interference because of the disability.

A student needs official authorization before receiving accommodations. The student is responsible for providing the Disability Services (DS) office with current documentation from qualified professionals regarding the nature of the disability. After talking with the student and, if necessary, the instructor, the DS coordinator determines appropriate accommodations based on the nature and extent of the disability described in the documentation. The DS coordinator constructs an Instructor Letter specifying authorized accommodations. The student is responsible for delivering the letters to the instructors and discussing accommodations based on the contents of the letter. The process of requesting and receiving accommodations is interactive; all people involved—the student, the instructor and the DS coordinator—have a responsibility to make sure the process works.

Examples of Reasonable Accommodations, which students with disabilities may require:
• Use of interpreters, scribes, readers, and/or note takers
• Taped classes and/or texts
• Enlarged copies of notes, required readings, handouts and exam questions
• Extended time on exams
• Quiet, distraction-free environment for taking exams
• Use of aids, such as calculators or desk references, during exams
• Use of computers in class or access to computers for writing assignments and exams
• Taped or oral versions of exams
• Preferential seating in the classroom
• An accessible website following the guidelines of Section 508

Testing Arrangements and Note Taking:

The need for note takers will be documented in the Instructor Letter. Students who cannot take notes or who have difficulty taking adequate notes, can be accommodated in a number of ways, including: taping lectures, using an in-class volunteer note taker, and/or providing an outline of lecture materials. The student may ask the instructor for assistance in finding a classmate who would act as a volunteer note taker. Instructors can also be of great assistance in quality assurance by occasionally reviewing copies of the notes, especially early in the term, and giving feedback to the note taker.
II. TYPES OF DISABILITIES

Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) / Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Terminology:
ADD and ADHD are neurological conditions affecting both learning and behavior. They result from chronic disturbances in the areas of the brain that regulate attention, impulse control, and the executive functions, which control cognitive tasks, motor activity, and social interactions. Hyperactivity may or may not be present. Treatable, but not curable, ADD and/or ADHD affects three to six percent of the population.

Characteristics (may include):
• Inability to stay on task
• Easily distracted
• Poor time management skills
• Difficulty in preparing class assignments, keeping appointments, and attending class on time.
• Reading comprehension difficulties
• Difficulty with math problems requiring changes in action, operation and order
• Inability to listen selectively during lectures, resulting in problems with note taking
• Lack of organization in work, especially written work and essay questions
• Difficulty following directions, listening and concentrating
• Blurtling out answers
• Poor handwriting

Considerations and Instructional Strategies:
• Since these students often also have learning disabilities, effective accommodations may include those also used with students with learning disabilities.
• Effective instructional strategies include providing opportunities for students to learn using visual, auditory and hands-on approaches.

Accommodations (may include):
• Copies of classmates and/or instructor’s notes or overheads
• Extended time for exams
• Exams in a quiet, distraction-free environment
• Breaks during exam; exam given by page or by section
• Clear arrangement of test items on paper
• Calculator, spellchecker, thesaurus, reader, and/or scribe during exams
• Use of blank card or paper to assist in reading
• Tape recorders and/or laptop computers
• Taped texts and classroom materials
• Use of handouts and visual aids
• Extended time for in class assignments to correct spelling, punctuation, grammar
• Word processor with spell check and/or voice output to provide auditory feedback
• Instructions or demonstrations presented in more than one way
• Concise oral instructions
• Syllabus provided before the start of the semester
Blindness/Low Vision

Terminology:
The following terms are used in an educational context to describe students with visual disabilities:

- "Totally blind" students learn via Braille or other nonvisual media.
- "Legally blind" indicates that a student has less than 20/200 vision in the more functional eye or a very limited field of vision (20 degrees at its widest point).
- "Low vision" refers to a severe vision loss in distance and near vision. Students use a combination of vision and other senses to learn, and they may require adaptations in lighting or the print size, and, in some cases, Braille.

Considerations and Instructional Strategies:

- If needed, introduce yourself at the beginning of a conversation and notify the student when you are exiting the room.
- Nonverbal cues depend on good visual acuity. Verbally acknowledging key points in the conversation facilitates the communication process.
- A student may use a guide dog or white cane for mobility assistance. A guide dog is a working animal and should not be petted.
- When giving directions, be clear: say "left" or "right," "step up," or "step down." Let the student know where obstacles are; for example, "the chair is to your left" or "the stairs start in about three steps."
- When guiding or walking with a student, verbally offer your elbow instead of grabbing his or hers.
- Allow the student to determine the most ideal seating location so he or she can see, hear and, if possible, touch as much of the presented material as possible.
- Discuss special needs for field trips or other out-of-class activities well in advance.
- Assist the student in labeling lab materials so that they are easily identifiable.
- Familiarize the student with the layout of the classroom or laboratory, noting the closest exits, and locating emergency equipment.
- Ask the student if he or she will need assistance during an emergency evacuation and assist in making a plan if necessary.

Accommodations (may include):

- Reading aloud materials from overheads, blackboards or handouts
- Verbal description of class activity, such as when a show of hands is requested, stating how many hands were raised
- Tape recorders, laptop computers or slates and styluses for note taking
- A lab assistant
- Develop reading lists and syllabi in advance to permit time for transfer to alternate formats
- Use of black print on white or pale yellow paper to allow for maximum contrast
- Advanced notice of class schedule and/or room changes
- Adapted computer with features such as, large print, speech synthesizer and Braille printer output
- Alternative test formats such as taped, large print or Braille; use of readers, scribes, tape recorded responses, extended time, adapted computer or closed circuit TV
- Extra time to complete tests when adaptive technology or a reader/scribe is required
- Class assignments available in electronic format, such as computer disk, to allow access by computers equipped with voice synthesizers or Braille output devices
- Assistive lab equipment (e.g., talking thermometers and calculators, light probes, and tactile timers)
- Raised line drawings and tactile models of graphic materials
- Videos with audio description
- Accessible websites
Brain Injuries

Terminology:
Brain injury may occur in many ways. Traumatic brain injury typically results from accidents; however, insufficient oxygen, stroke, poisoning, or infection may also cause brain injury. Brain injury is one of the fastest growing types of disabilities, especially in the age range of 15 to 28 years.

Characteristics:
Highly individual; brain injuries can affect students very differently. Depending on the area(s) of the brain affected by the injury, a student may demonstrate difficulties with:

- Organizing thoughts, cause-effect relationships, and problem solving
- Processing information and word retrieval
- Generalizing and integrating skills
- Social interactions
- Short-term memory
- Balance or coordination
- Communication and speech

Considerations and Instructional Strategies:
- Brain injury can cause physical, cognitive, behavioral, and/or personality changes that affect the student in the short term or permanently.
- Recovery may be inconsistent. A student might take one step forward, two back, do nothing for a while and then unexpectedly make a series of gains.
- Effective teaching strategies include providing opportunities for a student to learn using visual, auditory and hands-on approaches.
- Ask the student if he or she will need assistance during an emergency evacuation and assist in making arrangements if necessary.

Accommodations (may include):
- Tape recorders and/or laptop computers
- Copies of classmates and/or instructor’s notes or overheads
- Extended time for exams
- Exams in a quiet, distraction-free environment
- Breaks allowed during exam; exam given by page or by section
- Clear arrangement of test items on paper
- Calculator, spellchecker, thesaurus, reader, and/or scribe during exams
- Alternative form of exam, such as an oral test or an essay instead of multiple choice format
- Use of blank card or paper to assist in reading
- Extended time to complete assignments
- Taped texts and classroom materials
- Use of handouts and visual aids
- Extended time for in class assignments to correct spelling, punctuation, and/or grammar
- Word processor with spell check and/or voice output to provide auditory feedback
- Instructions or demonstrations presented in more than one way
- Concise oral instructions
- Syllabus provided before the start of the semester
**Deaf/Hard of Hearing**

**Terminology:**
Students who are deaf or hard of hearing require different accommodations depending on several factors, including the degree of hearing loss, the age of onset, and the type of language or communication system they use. They may use a variety of communication methods, including lip reading, cued speech, signed English and/or American Sign Language.

**Characteristics:**
Deaf or hard of hearing students may:
- be skilled lip readers, but many are not; only 30 to 40 percent of spoken English is distinguishable on the mouth and lips under the best of conditions
- also have difficulties with speech, reading and writing skills, given the close relationship between language development and hearing
- use speech, lip reading, hearing aids and/or amplification systems to enhance oral communication
- be members of a distinct linguistic and cultural group; as a cultural group, they may have their own values, social norms and traditions
- use American Sign Language as their first language, with English as their second language

**Considerations and Instructional Strategies:**
- American Sign Language (ASL) is not equivalent to English; it is a visual-spatial language having its own syntax and grammatical structure.
- Look directly at the student during a conversation, even when an interpreter is present, and speak in natural tones.
- Make sure you have the student’s attention before speaking. A light touch on the shoulder, wave or other visual signal will help.
- Recognize the processing time the interpreter takes to translate a message from its original language into another language; the student may need more time to receive information, ask questions and/or offer comments.

**Accommodations (may include):**
- Seating which allows a clear view of the instructor, the interpreter and the blackboard
- An unobstructed view of the speaker’s face and mouth
- Written supplement to oral instructions, assignments, and directions
- Providing handouts in advance so the student can watch the interpreter rather than read or copy new material at the same time
- Visual aids whenever possible, including captioned versions of videos and films
- Using a small spotlight to allow view of the interpreter while showing films and slides
- Repeating questions and comments from other students
- Note taker for class lectures so the student can watch the interpreter
- Test accommodations may include: access to word processor, use of interpreter for directions
- Providing unfamiliar vocabulary in written form, on the blackboard, or in a handout
- Use of e-mail, fax, or word processor for discussions with the instructor
- Visual warning system for building emergencies
- A real-time transcription requiring instructor to use a microphone. The text transcript is visible on a computer screen for student.

**Communicating with Students who are Deaf:**
Students who are deaf communicate in different ways depending on several factors: amount of residual hearing, type of deafness, language skills, age at onset of deafness, speech abilities, speech reading skills, personality, intelligence, family environment and educational background. Some are more easily understood than others. Some use speech only or a combination of sign language, finger spelling, and speech, writing,
body language and facial expression. Students who are deaf use many ways to convey an idea to other people. The key is to find out which combination of techniques works best with each student. The important thing is not how you exchange ideas or feelings, but that you communicate.

To communicate with a person who is deaf in a one-to-one situation:

- Get the student’s attention before speaking. A tap on the shoulder, a wave, or another visual signal usually works. Clue the student into the topic of discussion. It is helpful to know the subject matter being discussed in order to pick up words and follow the conversation. This is especially important for students who depend on oral communication.
- Speak slowly and clearly. Do not yell, exaggerate, or over enunciate. It is estimated that only three out of 10 spoken words are visible on the lips. Overemphasis of words distorts lip movements and makes speech reading more difficult. Try to enunciate each word without force or tension. Short sentences are easier to understand than long ones. Look directly at the student when speaking. Even a slight turn of your head can obscure the speech reading view. Do not place anything in your mouth when speaking. Mustaches that obscure the lips and putting your hands in front of your face can make lip reading difficult.
- Maintain eye contact. Eye contact conveys the feeling of direct communication. Even if an interpreter is present, speak directly to the student. He or she will turn to the interpreter as needed. Avoid standing in front of a light source, such as a window or bright light. The bright background and shadows created on the face make it almost impossible to speech read.
- First repeat, and then try to rephrase a thought rather than repeating the same words. If the student only missed one or two words the first time, one repetition will usually help. Particular combinations of lip movements sometimes are difficult to speech read. If necessary, communicate by paper and pencil or by typing to each other on the computer, email, or fax. Getting the message across is more important than the method used. Use pantomime, body language, and facial expression to help communicate.
- Be courteous during conversation. If the phone rings or someone knocks at the door, excuse yourself and tell him or her that you are answering the phone or responding to the knock. Don’t ignore the student and talk with someone else while he or she waits.
- Use open-ended questions, which must be answered by more than “yes”, or "no." Do not assume that the message was understood if the student nods his or her head. Open-ended questions ensure that your information has been communicated.

Participating in group situations with people who are deaf:

- Seat the student to his or her best advantage. This usually means a seat opposite the speaker, so that he or she can see the person’s lips and body language. The interpreter should be next to the speaker, and both should be illuminated clearly. Be aware of the room lighting.
- Provide new vocabulary in advance. It is difficult, if not impossible, to speech read or read finger spelling of unfamiliar vocabulary. If new vocabulary cannot be presented in advance, write the terms on paper, a blackboard, or an overhead projector. If a lecture or film will be presented, a brief outline or script given to the student and interpreter in advance helps them in following the presentation.
- Avoid unnecessary pacing and speaking when writing on a blackboard. It is difficult to speech read a person in motion and impossible to speech read one whose back is turned. Write or draw on the blackboard, then face the group and explain the work. If you use an overhead projector, don’t look down at it while speaking. Make sure the student does not miss vital information. Provide in writing any changes in meeting times, special assignments, or additional instructions. Allow extra time when referring to manuals or texts since the student who is deaf must look at what has been written and then return attention to the speaker or interpreter.
- Slow down the pace of communication slightly to facilitate understanding. Allow extra time for the student to ask or answer questions. Repeat questions or statements made from the back of the room. Remember that students who are deaf are cut off from whatever happens outside their visual area. Use hands-on experience whenever possible in training situations. Students who are deaf often learn quickly by doing. A concept, which may be difficult to communicate verbally, may be explained more easily by a hands-on demonstration.
- Use of an interpreter in large, group settings makes communication much easier. The interpreter will be a few words behind the speaker in transferring information; therefore, allow time for the student to obtain all the information and ask questions.

**Using an Interpreter:**
- Speak clearly and in a normal tone, facing the person using the interpreter (do not face the interpreter).
- Do not rush through a lecture or presentation. The interpreter or the deaf student may ask the speaker to slow down or repeat a word or sentence for clarification. Allow time to study handouts, charts or overheads. A deaf student cannot watch the interpreter and study written information at the same time.
- Permit only one person at a time to speak during group discussions. It is difficult for an interpreter to follow several people speaking at once. Since the interpreter needs to be a few words behind the conversation, give the interpreter time to finish before the next person begins so the deaf student can join in or contribute to the discussion.
- If a class session is more than an hour and a half, two interpreters will usually be scheduled and work on a rotating basis. It is difficult to interpret for more than an hour and a half, and following an interpreter for a long time is tiring for a deaf student. Schedule breaks during lengthy classes so both may have a rest.
- Provide good lighting for the interpreter. If the interpreting situation requires darkening the room to view slides, videotapes, or films, auxiliary lighting is necessary so that the deaf student can see the interpreter. If a small lamp or spotlight cannot be obtained, check to see if lights can be dimmed, but still provides enough light to see the interpreter. If you are planning to present any video taped materials in your classroom, please order tapes that are closed captioned. Please request equipment that will display closed captioning, or request a VCR with a closed captioning decoder from Information Technology.
- You may ask the student to arrange for an interpreter for meetings during office hours. Often your classroom interpreter can schedule this time with you. For field trips and other required activities outside of regularly scheduled class time, the student must make a written request to the DS office as soon as possible, but at least two weeks before the event.
- Some courses require frequent use of a textbook during class time. Providing a desk copy to the interpreter for the semester will often facilitate communication. For technical courses, it can allow interpreters time to prepare signs for new vocabulary before interpreting the lecture.
- Bound by a professional code of ethics, interpreters are hired by the University to interpret what occurs in the classroom; interpreters are not permitted to join into conversations, voice personal opinions, or serve as general classroom aides. Do not make comments to interpreters that are not intended to be interpreted to the deaf student.

Adapted from: Communicating with a Student who is Deaf, Seattle Community College; Regional Education Center for Deaf Students.

An Online Orientation to serving students who are deaf or hard of hearing is available through the Postsecondary Education Programs Network (PEPNET) at: [http://www.pepnet.org/](http://www.pepnet.org/). The training takes about one hour and upon completion, participants may download and print a certificate issued by PEPNet.
Learning Disabilities

Terminology:
Learning disabilities are neurologically based and may interfere with the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical skills. They affect the manner in which individuals with average or above average intellectual abilities process and/or express information. A learning disability may be characterized by a marked discrepancy between intellectual potential and academic achievement resulting from difficulties with processing information. The effects may change depending upon the learning demands and environments and may manifest in a single academic area or impact performance across a variety of subject areas and disciplines.

Characteristics:
Difficulties may be seen in one or more of the following areas:

- oral and/or written expression
- reading comprehension and basic reading skills
- problem solving
- ability to listen selectively during lectures, resulting in problems with note taking
- mathematical calculation and reasoning
- interpreting social cues
- time management
- organization of tasks, such as in written work and/or essay questions
- following directions and concentrating
- short-term memory

Considerations and Instructional Strategies:
Instructors who use a variety of instructional modes will enhance learning for students with learning disabilities. A multi-sensory approach to teaching will increase the ability of students with different functioning learning channels—auditory, visual and/or haptic (hands-on)—to benefit from instruction.

Accommodations (may include):
- Tape recorders and/or laptop computers
- Copies of classmates and/or instructor’s notes or overheads
- Extended time for exams
- Exams in a quiet, distraction-free environment
- Breaks allowed during exam; exam given by page or by section
- Clear arrangement of test items on paper
- Calculator, spellchecker, thesaurus, reader, and/or scribe during exams
- Alternative form of exam, such as an oral test or an essay instead of multiple choice format
- Use of blank card or paper to assist in reading
- Extended time to complete assignments
- Taped texts and classroom materials
- Use of handouts and visual aids
- Extended time for in class assignments to correct spelling, punctuation, and/or grammar
- Word processor with spell check and/or voice output to provide auditory feedback
- Concise oral instructions
- Instructions or demonstrations presented in more than one way
- Syllabus provided before the start of the semester
Medical Disabilities

Terminology:
Other disabilities include conditions affecting one or more of the body's systems. These include respiratory, immunological, neurological, and circulatory systems.

Examples:
- Cancer
- Chronic Fatigue Syndrome
- Epilepsy/Seizure Disorder
- Fibromyalgia
- Lupus Erythmatosis
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Chemical Dependency
- Diabetes
- Epstein Barr virus
- HIV + AIDS
- Multiple Chemical Sensitivity
- Renal Disease

Considerations and Instructional Strategies:
- The condition of a student with a medical disability may fluctuate or deteriorate over time, causing the need for and type of accommodation to vary.
- Fatigue may be a significant factor in the student's ability to complete required tasks within regular time limits.
- Some of these conditions will cause the student to exceed an attendance policy. A reasonable accommodation should reflect the nature of the class requirements and the arrangements initiated by the student for completing the assignments. If you need assistance or guidance in determining a reasonable standard of accommodation, consult with a DS coordinator.
- A student may need to leave the classroom early and unexpectedly; the student should be held accountable for missed instruction.
- Ask the student if he or she will need assistance during an emergency evacuation and assist in making a plan if necessary.

Accommodations:
Similar to those for other disabilities, depending upon the student's particular condition, and may include:
- Conveniently located parking
- Extended time for exams
- Enlarged printed materials
- Recorded course materials
- Use of scribes and readers
- Use of computers or other assistive technology
- Modified course load
- Exam modifications, such as increased frequency, shorter testing sessions, or administering the test by page or by section
- Careful scheduling of the use of cleaning compounds or pesticides
Physical Disabilities

Terminology:
A variety of physical disabilities result from congenital conditions, accidents, or progressive neuromuscular diseases. These disabilities may include conditions such as spinal cord injury (paraplegia or quadriplegia), cerebral palsy, spina bifida, amputation, muscular dystrophy, cardiac conditions, cystic fibrosis, paralysis, polio/post polio, and stroke.

Characteristics:
Are highly individual; the same diagnosis can affect students very differently.

Considerations and Instructional Strategies:
- When talking with a person who uses a wheelchair, try to converse at eye level; sit down if a chair is available.
- Make sure the classroom layout is accessible and free from obstructions.
- If a course is taught in a laboratory setting, provide an accessible workstation. Consult with the student for specific requirements, then with DS if additional assistance or equipment is needed.
- If a student also has a communication disability, take time to understand the person. Repeat what you understand, and when you don’t understand, say so.
- Ask before giving assistance, and wait for a response. Listen to any instructions the student may give; the student knows the safest and most efficient way to accomplish the task at hand.
- Let the student set the pace when walking or talking.
- A wheelchair is part of a student’s personal space; do not lean on, touch, or push the chair, unless asked.
- When field trips are a part of course requirements, make sure accessible transportation is available.
- Ask the student if he or she will need assistance during an emergency evacuation, and assist in making a plan if necessary.

Accommodations (may include):
- Accessible location for the classroom and place for faculty to meet with student
- Adaptive seating in classrooms
- Note takers, tape recorders, laptop computers or copies of instructor and/or classmate’s notes
- Assistive computer equipment/software: voice activated word processing, word prediction, keyboard and/or mouse modification
- Test accommodations: extended time, separate location, scribes, access to adapted computers
- Some flexibility with deadlines if assignments require access to community resources
- Adjustable lab or drafting tables
- Lab assistant or classroom aide
- Activities that allow the student to participate within his or her physical capabilities, yet still meet course objectives
- Taped texts
- Advance planning for field trips to ensure accessibility
Psychiatric Disabilities

Terminology:
Psychiatric disabilities refer to a wide range of behavioral and/or psychological problems characterized by anxiety, mood swings, depression, and/or a compromised assessment of reality. These behaviors persist over time; they are not in response to a particular event. Although many individuals with psychiatric disabilities are stabilized using medications and/or psychotherapy, their behavior and affect may still cycle.

Considerations and Instructional Strategies:
- Students with psychiatric disabilities may not be comfortable disclosing the specifics of their disability.
- If a student does disclose, be willing to discuss how the disability affects him or her academically and what accommodations would be helpful.
- With treatment and support, many students with psychiatric disabilities are able to manage their mental health and benefit from college classes.
- If students seem to need counseling for disability-related issues, encourage them to discuss their problems with a Disability Coordinator.
- Sometimes students may need to check their perceptions of a situation or information you have presented in class to be sure they are on the right track.
- Sequential memory tasks, such as spelling, math, and step-by-step instructions may be more easily understood by breaking up the tasks into smaller ones.
- Drowsiness, fatigue, memory loss, and decreased response time may result from prescription medications.

Accommodations (may include):
- Extended time for exams
- Quiet, distraction-free testing area
- Exams divided into segments with rest breaks
- Note takers, readers, or tape recorders in class
- Use of a computer or scribe for essay tests
- Extensions, incompletes, or late withdrawals in the event of prolonged illness
- Some flexibility in the attendance requirements in case of health related absences
- Modification of seating arrangement (near the door or at the back of the classroom)
- Beverages allowed in class due to medications which may cause extreme thirst
- Referral to a counselor for assistance with time management and study skills
Speech and Language Disabilities

Terminology:

Speech and language disabilities may result from hearing loss, cerebral palsy, learning disabilities, and/or physical conditions. There may be a range of difficulties from problems with articulation or voice strength to complete absence of voice. Included are difficulties in projection, fluency problems, such as stuttering and stammering, and in articulating particular words or terms.

Considerations and Instructional Strategies:

- Give students opportunity—but do not compel speaking in class. Ask students for a cue they can use if they wish to speak.
- Permit students time to speak without unsolicited aid in filling in the gaps in their speech;
- Do not be reluctant to ask students to repeat a statement.
- Address students naturally. Do not assume that they cannot hear or comprehend.
- Patience is the most effective strategy in teaching students with speech disabilities.

Accommodations (may include):

- Modifications of assignments such as one-to-one presentation or use of a computer with voice synthesizer
- Alternative assignment for oral class reports
- Course substitutions
III. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is a disability?

An individual with a disability is defined as any person who:

- "has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities (including walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, caring for oneself, or performing manual tasks),
- has a record of such an impairment, or
- is regarded as having such an impairment."

2. What is meant by "is regarded as having such an impairment" in the definition of disability?

For example, a person with a facial disfigurement may not have an impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, but others may regard him or her as having one due to how he or she appears.

3. Isn’t "disability" and "handicap" the same thing?

A "disability" is a condition caused by accident, trauma, genetics or disease that may limit a person’s mobility, hearing, vision, speech, or mental function. A person may have more than one disability.

A "handicap" is a physical or attitudinal constraint imposed upon a person; for example, stairs, narrow doorways, and curbs are handicaps imposed upon people with disabilities who use wheelchairs.

4. What is a reasonable accommodation?

A reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment to a course, program, service, job, activity, or facility that enables a qualified individual with a disability to have an equal opportunity to attain the same level of performance or to enjoy equal benefits and privileges as are available to an individual without a disability. Some common academic accommodations include extended time on tests, use of peer note takers, use of computer with spell check, and provision of sign language interpreters.

5. How does a person become eligible to receive accommodations?

To become eligible, a person must have a documented disability and inform the University that he/she is requesting accommodations based on that disability. The student must:

1. Contact Disability Services (DS)/or Human Resources/Supervisor,
2. Provide DS with documentation of the disability from a qualified professional, and
3. Consult with a DS coordinator to determine appropriate accommodations.

6. Who determines the accommodation?

DS coordinators determine the accommodations using:

- Documentation of the disability from qualified professionals provided by the student,
- Information gathered from an intake process, and
- Information from University personnel regarding essential standards for courses, programs, services, job, activities, and facilities.

The determination of reasonable accommodations considers the following:

- Classroom or physical barriers
- The array of accommodations that might remove the barriers;
- Whether or not the person has access to the course, program, service, job, activity, or facility without accommodations; and
- Whether essential elements of the course, program, service, job, activity, or facility are not compromised by the accommodations.

7. Won’t providing accommodations on examinations give an unfair advantage to a student with a disability?

"Accommodations don’t make things easier, just possible; in the same way eyeglasses do not improve the strength of the eyes, they just make it possible for the individual to see better. Accommodations are interventions that allow the learner to indicate what they know. Without the accommodations, the learner may not be able to overcome certain barriers."  (Samuels, M. 1992 - Asking the Right Questions. The Learning Center, Calgary)

Accommodations are designed to lessen the effects of the disability and are required to provide fair and accurate testing to measure knowledge or expertise in the subject. Careful consideration must be given to requests for accommodations when the test is measuring a skill, particularly if that skill is an essential function or requirement of passing the course, such as typing at a certain speed or turning a patient for an x-ray. In such cases, please contact a DS coordinator for guidance.

The purpose of academic accommodations is to adjust for the effect of the student's disability, not to dilute academic requirements. The evaluation and assigning of grades should have the same standards for all students, including students with disabilities.

For many test takers, the most common accommodation is extended time. In specific circumstances, students may also require the use of readers and/or scribes, a modification of test format, the administration of examinations orally, or an alternative time for testing. For out-of-class assignments, the extension of deadlines may be justified, especially if the student is relying heavily on support services (readers for term papers, etc.).

8. What do I do when a student discloses a disability?

Ask for the Instructor’s Letter from the student; this letter describes the accommodations that faculty are legally mandated to provide. During an office hour or at another convenient time, discuss the letter and the accommodations with the student. Students MUST present a letter from DS to receive accommodations. If the student does not have a letter, he or she should be referred to the appropriate DS office to request services. The DS counselors will determine the appropriate accommodations after reviewing documentation of the disability provided by the student.

9. What if a student doesn’t tell me about a disability until late in the semester?

Students have a responsibility to give instructors and DS adequate time to arrange accommodations. DS Coordinators encourage students to identify early in the semester. Instructors can help by announcing in class and in the syllabus an invitation for students to identify themselves early in the
semester: “Any student who may need an accommodation due to a disability, please make an appointment to see me during my office hours. A letter from Disability Services authorizing your accommodations will be needed.”

Once a student has identified to the instructor and requests disability-related accommodations authorized by DS, the University has a legal responsibility to make reasonable attempts to accommodate the need, even late in the semester. There is no responsibility to provide accommodations prior to identification; for example, allowing the student to re-take exams with extended time.

10. Can I review the student’s documentation of the disability?

DS is the office designated to receive and interpret documentation of the disability. DS coordinators certify eligibility for services and determine accommodations. Disability information is confidential and students are not required to disclose this information to instructors.

11. What if I suspect that a student has a disability?

Talk with the student about your concerns regarding his or her performance. If the concern seems disability-related, ask if he or she has ever received assistance for a disability. If it seems appropriate, refer the student to the DS office to apply for services. Whether to self-identify to DS is the decision of the student; however, to receive accommodations, disclosure to DS with proper documentation is required. If the student has never been evaluated for a learning disability and/or Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, the DS office will provide a list of local resources where the student may be screened or tested.

12. What if a student with a disability is failing?

Treat the student as you would any student who is not performing well in your class. Invite the student to your office hour to discuss reasons for the failing performance and what resources the student may use to improve. Encourage the student to see a DS coordinator to discuss some additional strategies to improve his or her grades. Contact the DS counselor who initialed the Instructor’s Letter to discuss any additional concerns.

13. What if a student with a disability is often absent?

Talk with the student to discuss your concerns that absences are affecting class performance. Remind him or her of your policy on class absences. Determine with the student whether the missed work can be made up and make arrangements with the student to do so. Refer the student to the DS coordinator if too much class work has been missed.

14. What is a note taker?

A note taker is usually another student in class who agrees to provide copies of lecture notes taken during class. The note taker may make copies of notes at the DS office or use carbonless note taker paper available at no charge from DS.
15. How can I assist a student with getting notes?

The Instructor’s Letter will document the need for note takers. Students who cannot take notes or have difficulty taking notes adequately due to the effects of their disability can be accommodated in a number of ways including: allowing them to tape record lectures, assisting them in obtaining an in-class volunteer note taker, and providing them with an outline of lecture materials and copies of overhead transparencies.

16. What should I do if a student who is deaf or hard of hearing shows up in my class without an interpreter?

In the unlikely event that a student shows up for the first day of class without an interpreter, the student should be referred to DS. DS will then attempt to schedule an interpreter or work with the student to rearrange his or her schedule into classes where an interpreter is already provided.

17. Who is responsible for requesting an interpreter?

Students requiring an interpreter for class must make the request to DS at the appropriate office. For outside class requirements, such as field trips or other assigned activities, as well as office hours, students should request the interpreter DS at least two weeks ahead of time or more, depending on the event. DS cannot guarantee an interpreter when requests are made less than two weeks before the event.

18. Do I need to alter my teaching style with an interpreter present?

Interpreters are professionals who facilitate communication between hearing individuals and people who are deaf or hard of hearing. The role of the interpreter is similar to that of a foreign language translator: to bridge the communication gap between two parties. Some adaptations in presentation style may be helpful when using a sign language interpreter. The interpreter will let you know if you need to slow down your rate of speaking or if they need you to repeat any information. A desk copy of the book is especially helpful for the interpreter when the class is using examples or doing exercises from the text. Please realize that if students are looking at the interpreter, they cannot be reading a book, writing, or taking notes; a pause for the students to finish their task may be required before continuing the lecture.

19. What can I expect if there is an interpreter in my classroom?

- Interpreters are bound by the code of ethics developed by the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, which specifies that interpreters are to serve as communication intermediaries who are not otherwise involved.
- When an interpreter is present, speak directly to the deaf or hard of hearing person rather than to the interpreter, and avoid using phrases such as "tell him" or "ask her."
- Speak normally, noting that there may be a lag time between the spoken message and the interpretation.
- When referring to objects or written information, allow time for the translation to take place. Replace terms such as "here" and "there" with more specific terms, such as "on the second line" and "in the left corner."
- In a conference room or class environment, the deaf student and interpreter will work out seating arrangements, with the interpreter usually located near the speaker.
- Inform the interpreter in advance if there is an audiovisual element in a presentation, so arrangements can be made for lighting and positioning.
• In sessions that extend longer than one hour, the interpreter may require a short break to maintain proficiency in interpreting.

20. What should I do if my class needs to evacuate the building due to an emergency?

Students should let you know at the beginning of the semester if they will need assistance during an emergency.

• Students who are blind or have low vision may need a "buddy" to assist them exit the building.
• Some students with head injuries or psychiatric disabilities may become confused or disoriented during an emergency and may also need a "buddy."
• Students who use wheelchairs should NOT use the elevator but should wait for Security to safely assist them to exit the building. Security has the schedules of students who will need emergency evacuation. To prevent injuries, instructors or other untrained personnel should NOT attempt to evacuate a student who uses a wheelchair. Please wait for trained emergency personnel.

21. What if a student has a seizure in my classroom?

DS encourages students with seizure disorders to inform their instructors about what should be done if a seizure occurs during class time. Some students request that Security be called immediately, others request action as listed below.

Seizures happen when there is a sudden electrical discharge in the brain. Each individual has a unique reaction. A seizure can result in a relatively slight reaction, such as a short lapse in attention, or a more severe reaction known as a grand mal, which involves convulsions. Seizure disorders are generally controlled by medication, so the possibility of a seizure in the classroom is rare. If one does occur, the following actions are suggested:

• Keep calm. Ease the student to the floor and open the collar of the shirt. You cannot stop a seizure. Let it run its course and do not try to revive the student.
• Remove hard, sharp, or hot objects that may injure the student, but do not interfere with his or her movements.
• Do not force anything between the student’s teeth.
• Turn the student’s head to one side for release of saliva. Place something soft under the head.
• Make sure that breathing is unobstructed, but do not be concerned if breathing is irregular.
• When the student regains consciousness, let him or her rest as long as desired.
• To help orient the student to time and space, suggest where he or she is and what happened.
• Speak reassuringly to the student, especially as the seizure ends. The student may be agitated or confused for several minutes afterward.
• Don't leave the student alone until he or she is clearheaded. Ask whether you can call a friend or relative to help him or her get home.
• If the seizure lasts beyond a few minutes, or if the student seems to pass from one seizure to another without regaining consciousness, contact the campus Safety and Security office. This rarely happens, but when it does, it should be treated immediately.