

Office for Students with Disabilities and Deaf Services Donahue 147, X2417

Most Frequently Asked Questions -Faculty

The following is a list of frequently asked questions regarding the roles and responsibilities of faculty in providing accessible learning for students with disabilities. Although these questions address the most common concerns, the issue of faculty responsibility is situation-specific and as such can be difficult to define. For additional information on OSDDS services please see our webpage at: www.hcc.edu/osdds

If you have concerns, keep in mind that the Office for Students with Disabilities and Deaf Services (OSDDS) is the office on campus that determines appropriate accommodations and works with staff and faculty to create accessible services, materials and environments. The College cannot fulfill this mandate without the full participation of the entire HCC community. Hopefully the following questions will serve as a useful resource guide. We encourage you to contact the OSDDS at 552 2417, Donahue 147, when you have a question about how best to meet the needs of a student with a disability.

OSDDS ROLE

Q: Who is responsible for determining appropriate accommodations?

A: The Office for Students with Disabilities and Deaf Services (OSDDS) is the office on campus that determines appropriate accommodations. The office bases their decision upon documentation collected from a student with a disability and the student's functional limitations.

Q: Is OSDDS responsible for assuring that the College is fully compliant with the legal mandates of inclusion and access under ADA and Section 504? Are barriers to inclusion solely the charge of OSDDS?

A: No. The College is legally mandated to assure full access to all programs/services and instruction. This is the responsibility of the College as a collective and must be achieved through the collaborative effort of all staff and faculty. Students with disabilities should be afforded equal access to inquiry and opportunity for guidance from any staff member. Removing barriers to inclusion is the responsibility of every Division, every Department and every employee of the College.

Q: Are all students with disabilities registered with OSDDS?

A: No, it is likely that many students with disabilities have chosen not to be registered with OSDDS or they may not have met the eligibility criteria for services. In either instance, faculty do not need to provide these students with accommodations.

FACULTY ROLE

Q: What is the best way to inform students in the class that I would like to help in facilitating exam accommodations or any classroom accommodations?

A: It is important that all faculty put a statement about accommodations in their syllabus. It should go something like this: "Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please also contact the Office for Students with Disabilities and Deaf Services Disability Services at 552 2417 / Donahue 147 to coordinate your approved accommodations."

Q: I have a student who is having difficulty in my class. I think this student may have a disability. What should I do to help the student?

A: Talk privately with the student to discuss your observations in general without identifying a suspected disability. When comfortable the student may reveal s/he has a disability. If this is the case and the student is registered with OSDDS, suggest that the student talk to his/her counselor in this office. The student may also be referred to OSDDS for information on external diagnostic testing for a suspected learning disability. Suggest that the student call OSDDS at 552 2417 for further information.

Q: What can I do to create an inclusive classroom for students with physical disabilities?

A: Prior to the start of classes facilities and OSDDS staff set universally designed furniture and equipment in place for students who need this. We also check to be certain access into the classroom and navigation within the classroom are possible for all. Inevitably within a day has changed and arrive to find it tucked in a corner. Their ability to integrate into the classroom is immediately impacted.

In your classroom look to see -

- Is the accessible seating integrated into the classroom (vs. tucked away in a corner)?
- Is there aisle access that is easily navigated using a wheelchair or other assistive device? Look to see if accessible routes from the doorway to your classroom seating are accessible. Help educate students to assist in assuring adequate aisle width for wheelchair users. Remove protruding objects for the safety of those who are visually impaired.

Assuring that this aisle is available before and at the end of your class means assuring students are included. Making students aware of classroom access is a great start.

TESTING

Q: Am I required to provide exam accommodations to students who request it?

A: Yes, you are. Students with disabilities are protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Section 504. This law requires that qualified students with disabilities get equal access to an education, and this includes exam accommodations.

Q: What are some of the types of exam accommodations available to students with disabilities?

A: First of all, the exam accommodations are based upon the student's functional limitations and the documentation of disability that the student has provided OSDDS. Some of these accommodations include but are not limited to: extra time for exams (usually double time), a reader or scribe, a computer with assistive technology, a Brailled exam, an enlarged exam, a distraction-reduced space,

Q: A student with a disability has requested that s/he take an exam at the Kittredge Testing Center in Kittredge 204. How do I know that my exam will be safe and that the student will get no unfair advantage?

A: The Kittredge Testing Center (KTC) and OSDDS have developed a very systematic and secure procedure for collecting exams from faculty and securely storing these until the faculty pick up. There are very rigid checking in and checking out procedures for exams, and no student is able to take an exam with appropriate accommodations without authorization. Exams are kept in a locked file. Students are required to leave their belongings in a locker during the exam. All exams are monitored by a test administrator.

Q: Is a student required to take the accommodated exam at the same time as his/her classmates?

A: When students request a KTC exam OSDDS staff schedule their test as close to the class exam period as possible. Keep in mind students must schedule a block of time that allows for their time extension and observe the schedule of other courses. Students must schedule 48 hours in advance of the exam. Given these factors sometimes the exam is scheduled on a different day.

Q: Students or the KTC ask me to fill out cover sheets for each exam. I have a million things to do. I will assist with exam accommodations, but do I have to fill out that form?

A: Yes, you do. In order for students to arrange for exam accommodations at OSDDS, and in order for KTC to administer your exam to your student, you must fill out the cover sheet. It is often very helpful to meet with the student so that you and the person

requesting accommodations can fill the sheet out together and are on the same wavelength. The cover sheet helps facilitate the exam accommodation process and helps the KTC administer the test using your specific requirements for the exam.

Q: A student in my college course needs computer accommodations for test taking. Doesn't this give her an unfair advantage over other students?

A: If the student has a documented disability, is registered with OSDDS, and requires the adaptive technology to access the test, using a computer is an accommodation not an advantage. The student and disabled student services staff can work with you to assist with setting up the test accommodations, location, and proctor if needed.

ACCOMMODATION AGREEMENT

Q: A student has asked for accommodations. How do I know the student truly has a disability and needs accommodations?

A: You may ask the student to provide you with an accommodation agreement verifying that s/he has a disability. The student, if registered with the OSDDS will be given an accommodation letter verifying their eligibility for specific services.

Q: I have a student in class who told me that s/he has a disability, but since that time has never requested any accommodations. Am I still responsible for accommodations?

A: No, you are only responsible for accommodations if requested. In this situation, it would be appropriate to speak to the student privately to let the student know that you welcome the opportunity to discuss their accommodations if the student is interested. You may also refer the student to OSDDS for an accommodation agreement.

Q: Many accommodation agreements look the same. Is there a standard template that applies to all students?

A: Many basic accommodations are suggested for students whose disabilities look quite different while their accommodations look similar. Many of the accommodations that are suggested are universal as they successfully remove barriers for students whose access is blocked when confronted with traditional methods of evaluation and instruction. These students may have a specific learning disability, a neurological disability, an orthopedic disability, a sensory disability or a psychological disability that impacts their performance in certain environments. Every student's profile is different but the success of some basic accommodations is well documented.

Q: Do I have any recourse if I disagree about requested accommodations?

A: To clarify any disagreement about a requested accommodation, you should first contact the student's disability counselor, but you are also free to talk to the director of OSDDS. If there continues to be conflict, you can contact the Vice President of Academic Affairs or the Vice President of Student Affairs, HCC's ADA Compliance Officer, to discuss the issue.

Q: Can I deny an accommodation agreement if I do not agree with the terms?

A: No. Discuss the accommodation agreement with the OSDDS counselor and student. Perhaps there are elements of the agreement that may impact your course requirements. During the discussion a reasonable remedy is usually found. Denying an accommodation request is a decision with potentially significant legal implications for the College as a whole. Refusal to provide reasonable accommodations in a timely manner is a form of disability discrimination.

COURSE MATERIAL

Q: I've been debating about what book I want to use for my class, but my Academic Dean keeps asking me to select a book ASAP. Do I have to?

A: Yes you do. Students who are print impaired have a legal right to equal access to all instructional materials at the same rate as their peers. They need to be able to listen to taped or scanned textbooks at the same time as others in the class. By delaying the selection of a textbook the search for an accessible copy is also delayed. The student will not receive books converted to an appropriate format in time for the start of the term.

Q: How can I be sure that my textbook complies with the legal mandates for accessibility?

A: Publishers should be fully cooperative with disability related access requests. They should offer their publications through acesstext.org (an online clearing house that provides electronic copies of texts without delay) for educational institutions working with students with documented print related disabilities.

Q: What if my book is not accessible can I still assign this?

A: If your publisher is not sharing your text with [acesstext](http://acesstext.org) nor offering immediate support to provide an electronic version of their texts they are ignoring a legal mandate to offer access to individuals with disabilities. HCC cannot ignore this legal mandate. Given this, the only option is for OSDDS to cut books and scan them individually. This destroys the book rendering the copy valueless. This is unnecessary, time consuming and requires HCC to take on the responsibility of the publishers.

Q: I am planning to show videos in my courses this term. Do they have to be captioned?

A: Yes, all videos are required to be captioned. If your video, found on Utube, is not captioned you may go to the video captioning option in Utube and caption the video. You may also request to have a video captioned through HCC's partnership with **3Play** Media. Visit the Faculty Lounge in Moodle & fill out the video captioning request form.

Q: I use a variety of sources for print material and some may not be readily available in electronic format. Will OSDDS assist me with scanning these materials to pdf or Word documents?

A: OSDDS can assist with scanning some print material if all other options are not available for this resource. We need a clean, first run copy of the document and require a minimum of one week advanced notice to complete scanning projects.

INTERPRETERS AND C PRINT CAPTIONISTS

Q: When I have a Deaf student in class, am I required to have an interpreter or real time captionist in the class too? My class is very crowded and also, the students sometimes watch the interpreter instead of me.

A: There is no question about it. You are required by law to have what is essential for the student to have equal access to an education, and this includes a sign language interpreter or real time captionist.

COURSE NOTES

Q: A student with a disability has asked me for a copy of my notes and overheads. Do I have to give this to the student?

A: Some students with disabilities are not able to take their own notes. If your notes are only a brief outline of the actual lecture given they may not help the student. If you feel your notes are good and fully reflective of your lecture/match what other students may have written, sharing your notes would be quite helpful. Many faculty have developed and posted notes for all students that can be accessed through Moodle.

It is important that you assist the student in getting access to class notes. You may be asked to help to recruit a note taker by making an announcement in class without revealing the student's name. Any interested note takers can visit our main office in Donahue 147 to discuss note taking and sign up for a \$100 stipend. This simple accommodation is essential to many students who lack the ability to take their own notes. It may also be appropriate for some students to tape a class. Note taking and tape recording will be noted on the student's accommodation agreement.

COURSE STANDARDS

Q: Am I required to lower the standards of a required assignment because the student has a disability?

A: No, the standards should be the same for all students; however, some students with disabilities may exhibit their knowledge, production, and other course expectations differently than their peers. For example, a student with a learning disability may produce an essay exam by using a computer or scribe rather than writing out an answer without the use of accommodations. The quality of the work should be the same.

Q: I have a student with a disability getting behind in his/her schoolwork. This student has missed a number of classes and has not handed in several assignments. Although s/he has taken a midterm and used accommodations, the student is not passing the class. Do I have a right to fail a student with a disability?

A: The student with a disability has the same right to fail as anyone else. Their work should be equivalent to their peers. It may be a good idea to discuss your observations with this student just as you would with anyone else in your class who is experiencing difficulty.

Q: I have a student with a documented disability who is consistently disruptive in class. Is the student protected because of his disability? Can I withdraw the student?

A: Students with disabilities must abide by the College's code of conduct. A student with a disability is not exempt from these rules. Having said that, if the student's disability is a factor in his disruptive actions these should be addressed through an interactive process and potential resolutions should be considered. All of this requires due process so a withdrawal without such is not allowable.

Q: I have a student who is blind in my chemistry lab. How is s/he going to participate and be graded in his/her lab work?

A: If possible, assist the student in getting a lab partner or contact OSDDS to discuss additional support. In either situation, the student who is blind should direct the assistant to carry out the essential functions of the lab assignment. If a volunteer lab partner cannot be found, suggest to the student that s/he needs to contact OSDDS as soon as possible for assistance in getting a lab assistant. The speed in making these arrangements is critical so that the student will not get behind.

Q: How can a student with a disability fully access technology?

A: The Assistive Technology Center ATC in Donahue 150, 552- 2156 provides training for students who utilize accessible technology software. Contact Robert Baran in

the ATC for information about commonly used and supported products and with questions you may have about formatting documents for accessible use.

Q: Are Universal Instructional Design guidelines the new ADA standard?

A: Universal design promotes access through the practice of designing instruction, facilities and services that meet the needs of the broadest audience. When materials and physical sites are created following Universal Instructional Design practices many standard accommodations are eliminated. For example if all videos are captioned the need to request a captioned film after the fact is eliminated. UDL has not replaced ADA standards.

Thanks to OSU and U.S. Department of Education Partnership grant for excerpts

