

## **Dear Faculty Member:**

Welcome to the *Faculty Resource Guide*! This guide was created as a means of providing you with information selected to increase your understanding and awareness of how best to serve students with disabilities.

Please use this guide as it was intended, as an “**as needed**” reference. If, for instance, you are a new faculty member who would like to learn about the legal basis for serving students with disabilities or you are a faculty member with a student with low vision enrolled in the upcoming semester who would like to learn about classroom accommodations, the guide can provide you with valuable information.

As technology and its use continues to grow, so does the array of mediums in which to present information to students. Technology has been beneficial to students with disabilities. Inherent in that growth, however, is a need to be increasingly aware of the limitations that it may impose for students with certain disabilities, especially students with hearing and visual impairments. The University is expanding its technological capabilities to meet these varied needs.

Again, the hope is that this guide will be a useful reference to you. Please forward any comments about the contents of this guide or suggestions for information that would be valuable to include in future versions of this guide to the Office of Disability Services at 503-5123/5199.

**- Office of Disability Services**

# Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Legal Perspective	2
Rights and Responsibilities	3
The Accommodation Process	5
Health Impairments	7
Hearing Impairments	9
Learning Disabilities	12
Mobility Impairments	15
Psychiatric Impairments	17
Visual Impairments	19
Other Impairments: ADHD/TBI	21
Electronic/Print Resources	24
Acknowledgments	25

# Introduction

The purpose of this resource guide is fourfold:

1. To provide an overview of legal responsibilities in serving students with disabilities.
2. To provide an overview of faculty, student, and Office of Disability Services Rights and Responsibilities.
3. To provide an overview of the accommodation process that students with disabilities must follow in order to access the Office of Disability Services.
4. To provide an overview of seven major disability categories:

- a. **Health Impairments**
- b. **Hearing Impairments**
- c. **Learning Disabilities**
- d. **Mobility Impairments**
- e. **Psychiatric Impairments**
- f. **Visual Impairments**
- g. **Other Impairments: Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)**

- ☛ Each “major disability category” section is formatted as follows:
  - \* an introduction of the disability category
  - \* examples of common impairments and sample accommodations
  - \* examples of common accommodations for students with that particular disability
  - \* examples of general classroom considerations that would be helpful for all students
- ☛ There are accommodations included in the overview of “**common accommodations**” that may be unique to students of just one major disability category. There also may be particular accommodations that will work well with students of several major disability categories. The Office of Disability Services considers each student’s needs on an individual basis and attempts to provide accommodations that meet the specific needs of each student.
- ☛ The overview of “**general classroom considerations**” is a reference to “**universal design**” considerations - “good teaching practices” that are applicable to **all students** and not just to a particular student with a particular disability.

# Legal Perspective

***Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 are the primary pieces of legislation that impact postsecondary institutions and students with disabilities.***

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was designed to empower individuals with disabilities to gain employment, economic self-sufficiency, independence, inclusion and integration into society. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was designed to ensure that any program or activity receiving federal assistance did not discriminate on the basis of disability for “otherwise qualified” individuals. *No “otherwise qualified” individuals, solely by reason of their disabilities can “be denied the benefits of, be excluded from participation in, or be subjected to discrimination” in these programs.*

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

1. Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, for example: walking, hearing, seeing, speaking, learning or caring for oneself
2. Has record of such impairment or
3. Is regarded as having such an impairment.

Some impairments, such as health or mobility impairments like cancer or multiple sclerosis, are readily apparent or “visible” while other impairments, such as learning disabilities or psychiatric impairments like a math learning disability or depression, are not as readily apparent or “invisible”. Factors such as chronic fatigue, pain, or medication side effects can also impact an individual’s ability to perform specific life and academic-related tasks. In all cases, postsecondary institutions have a responsibility to provide program access to qualified students with disabilities.

The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 expanded many of the provisions of Section 504 to the public and private sector who did not receive federal funding. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 specifically addressed programs and services provided by state and local governmental entities. The ADA requires that individuals with disabilities be provided equal access to public programs and services. The ADA upholds and expands the standards of compliance to employment practices, communications and all policies, procedures and practices that impact the treatment of individuals with disabilities.

Making programs and services accessible is the responsibility of the provider of the specific program or service. Specific to postsecondary institutions, access includes not only physical access such as accessible parking, ramps and curbcuts, but classroom access through the assignment of reasonable accommodations such as modifying testing requirements, providing accessible classroom locations and providing written communication in alternative formats.

More recent legislation, such as Section 508 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 expanded the federal government’s responsibility to provide electronic and information technology that is accessible to, and usable by, individuals with disabilities. Additionally, the Telecommunications Act of 1996 addressed regulatory reform including the need for Internet and website accessibility standards, as well as captioning and audio description of video and access to telephone services.

# **Rights and Responsibilities**

## **Students**

### **Rights:**

- \* **T**o access academic courses, programs, services, activities and facilities offered at the University.
- \* **T**o receive reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids/services in a timely manner.
- \* **T**o maintain confidentiality of all information about their disability, except as disclosures are required or permitted by law.
- \* **T**o choose whether to disclose the nature of their disability and other specific information about their disability to faculty/staff/others.

### **Responsibilities:**

- \* **M**eet qualifications and maintain the essential standards for academic courses, programs, services and activities.
- \* **S**elf-identify to the Office of Disability Services (ODS) as an individual with a disability and seek information, accommodations and advocacy when necessary.
- \* **P**resent current documentation to ODS that supports the need for accommodations, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids/services.
- \* **F**ollow established policy and procedures as outlined in the “Student Policy and Procedure Handbook” for obtaining and maintaining accommodations.
- \* **R**equest accommodations in a timely fashion and ensure instructors are aware of needed accommodations (i.e. initial face to face meeting, discussing test accommodations through the completion of the “Request for Alternative Test Administration” form, etc.).

## **Faculty**

### **Rights:**

- \* **T**o expect students with disabilities to initiate accommodation requests through the ODS.
- \* **T**o receive verification of a student’s documented disability from the ODS in the form of an accommodation letter.
- \* **T**o contact the ODS to discuss appropriateness of accommodations, if needed.
- \* **T**o expect the ODS to maintain test security and to proctor tests in a secure and monitored environment for students taking tests in the Office of Disability Services’ testing area.

### **Responsibilities:**

- \* **M**aintain the same standards, including behavioral expectations, for students with disabilities

- \* **I**nform students of procedures for accessing accommodations at the beginning of each semester preferably through a statement in the syllabus.
- \* **P**rovide and arrange for accommodations addressed in the accommodation letter in a timely manner.
  - NOTE:** 1. *It is not* a faculty member's responsibility to provide accommodations for students who have not provided an accommodation letter from the ODS.
  - 2. *It is not* a faculty member's responsibility to provide accommodations not addressed in a student's accommodation letter.
- \* **C**onsult with students to ensure there is a clear understanding of requested accommodations.
- \* **K**eep all disability-related information regarding a student confidential (i.e. not discussing a student's disability with other faculty without the student's permission, inadvertently identifying a student as a student with a disability during class discussion, etc.).
- \* **E**nsure instructional materials (i.e. textbooks, lecture notes, handouts, videos, etc.) are available in alternative formats, as needed.

## **Office of Disability Services**

### **Rights:**

- \* **T**o identify and establish appropriate accommodations for academic courses, programs, services, activities and facilities.
- \* **T**o request and receive current documentation from students with disabilities that support the need for accommodation, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids/services.
- \* **T**o deny a request for accommodation if the documentation demonstrates that the request is not warranted or if the individual fails to provide appropriate documentation.

### **Responsibilities:**

- \* **E**stablish and communicate to students, faculty, and staff clear policy and procedure for students needing to access accommodations, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids/services.
- \* **P**rovide and arrange for reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids/services.
- \* **M**aintain confidentiality of records and communication, except where permitted or required by law.
- \* **M**ake appropriate referrals to the Center for Student Success, Opportunity Network, Counseling Services, Health Services, other on-campus sources of support/service and off-campus sources of support/service.
- \* **F**acilitate access to academic courses, programs, services, activities and facilities.

# The Accommodation Process

Students with disabilities follow the basic procedures outlined below to access accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids/services from the Office of Disability Services.

## Accessing Services

\* **Intake:** In order to request accommodations, students must complete an intake form, provide documentation and schedule a collaborative interview. Since some accommodations require significant pre-planning, students are advised to begin the intake process well in advance of the start of their first academic semester.

\* **Documentation:** Our office requires current documentation from a qualified physician or other licensed professional in a field related to the disability. Since each disability is unique, our office can provide details of what constitutes appropriate documentation for a particular disability. At a minimum, the documentation must address:

- Verification of disability/statement of diagnosis
- Substantial functional limitations noted as a result of the disability on a major life activity (for example, learning, hearing, seeing, etc.)
- Recommendations of possible accommodations

\* **Collaborative Interview:** During the interview, students should be prepared to discuss the impact of their disability in the academic environment, their history of accommodations and the accommodations being requested. This information, together with the results of the documentation review, will help determine reasonable accommodations.

\* **Accommodation:** Once a decision has been made regarding accommodations, our office will prepare accommodation letters for students to provide their instructors. Additionally, students should be prepared to discuss with their individual instructors the impact of their disability and how the requested accommodations will support them in the classroom. Students must request accommodation letters for each successive semester.

## Typical accommodations provided by our office include:

- \* Alternative Test Administration
- \* Books on Tape/Scanned Textbooks on CD
- \* Interpreting Services
- \* Note-Taking Services
- \* Priority Registration

Not all students with disabilities will request accommodations or even register with the Office of Disability Services. If a student does not provide an accommodation letter, it is not a faculty member's responsibility to provide accommodations. The faculty member, however, should inform the student about the Office of Disability Services. Additionally, it is not a faculty member's responsibility to provide accommodations not addressed in an accommodation letter.

Temporary disabilities, such as a period of illness, recovery from surgery or temporary injuries suffered as the result of an accident, are not covered under Section 504 or the ADA because recovery is generally attainable. Our office may provide consultation and assistance in obtaining some services. Documentation may be required.

### **Issues/Resolving Issues**

Students are responsible for contacting our office if accommodations are not implemented in a timely and effective manner or if other problems arise. Our office will work with individual students and the appropriate faculty and staff members in an attempt to resolve the issue. If resolution is not obtained, students may file a grievance. Students may contact the Office of Civil Rights if they feel an issue is not being resolved or handled properly.

Faculty should contact the Office of Disability Services should there be a question/concern regarding the appropriateness of a requested accommodation.

## Health Impairments

There are a range of medical diagnoses and subsequent health problems that may have a temporary or chronic impact on a student's academic performance. Several common health impairments include:

- \* **Cancer** - malignant growth that can affect any part of the body
- \* **Chronic Fatigue Syndrome** - extreme fatigue that does not improve with rest; characterized by muscle pain, sleep problems, loss of appetite, memory problems, and/or decreased ability to think clearly and concentrate
- \* **Diabetes Mellitus** - inability of the body to regulate blood sugar; during a diabetic incident an individual may experience confusion, sudden personality changes, or loss of consciousness; common symptoms include fatigue, increased thirst, and blurred vision; frequently controlled by medication
- \* **Epilepsy** - group of disorders characterized by recurrent seizures; symptoms depend on type of epilepsy and location of disturbance; an individual may experience loss of consciousness and may have memory problems as a result of seizure activity; frequently controlled by medication
- \* **Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)** - gradual deterioration of the immune system leaving the body with an inability to fight off illness and infections; symptoms vary greatly
- \* **Multiple Chemical Sensitivity** - sensitivity to chemicals found in everyday environment; reactions vary, but typical reactions include nausea, rashes, light-headedness, and respiratory distress

Unless the impairment is neurological in nature, health impairments are not likely to directly affect learning. **However, the secondary effects of the impairment (i.e. possible psychiatric impairments) and the side effects of medication can have a significant impact on memory, attention, strength, endurance, and energy levels.** A student's physical ability will vary; therefore the need for accommodations, as well as the specific accommodations needed, will change. Some health impairments, such as chronic fatigue syndrome, can be classified as "invisible" disabilities because they are not as readily apparent as other types of disabilities such as mobility impairments or sensory impairments.

Health impairments can result in a range of academic challenges for a student, for example:

- \* A student with chronic fatigue syndrome may find sitting for prolonged periods of time difficult and may require a stretch break during class.
- \* A student with epilepsy who is at risk for seizure activity may need instructions provided to his/her instructors to make them aware of how to respond if the student should have a seizure during class.
- \* A student with HIV who has many medical complications may need consideration for additional absences.

## **Common accommodations:**

- \* note-taking services/access to class notes
- \* tape recording class lecture
- \* additional absences
- \* additional time to complete assignments
- \* extended test time
- \* availability of lecture notes, learning materials, practice tests, etc. in electronic format
- \* accessible classrooms and classroom locations
- \* access to computers with speech recognition software

## **General classroom considerations:**

- \* syllabi with clear and well organized information regarding materials, readings, test dates, assignment/project deadlines, etc. can help students plan, organize, and prioritize requirements

# Hearing Impairments

Functional hearing loss can range from mild to profound. Depending on the amount of hearing loss individuals are referred to as either hard of hearing (hearing loss of 25 dB to 90 dB) or deaf (hearing loss greater than 90 dB). Being hard of hearing or deaf can affect students in different ways as presented in the following examples:

\* A student who is hard of hearing may have difficulty following lectures in large classrooms, particularly if the acoustics cause echoes or if the speaker talks quietly, rapidly, or unclearly.

\* A student who is hard of hearing may have difficulty simultaneously watching demonstrations, following verbal descriptions, or taking notes if they are watching a speaker's lips, a sign language interpreter, or a captioning screen.

\* A student who is deaf may have difficulty following or participating in classroom discussions, particularly if the discussion is fast-paced and unmoderated, since there is often lag time between a speaker's comments and the interpretation/captioning.

\* A student who is deaf and has used sign language most of his/her life may have not mastered the grammatical subtleties of English and may need additional support or tutoring for written work.

**Students who are hard of hearing** may typically only hear specific frequencies or sounds within a certain volume range. They rely heavily on hearing aids and/or lip reading. Students may use amplification systems such as an FM amplification system which requires an instructor to wear a small microphone to transmit amplified sound to the student. Students who are hard of hearing may or may not use sign language. Students who are hard of hearing may have a speech impairment due to the inability to hear his/her own voice clearly.

**Students who are deaf** may have little or no speech depending on the severity of the hearing loss and the age of onset. Not all students who are deaf are fluent users of all communication modes used by the deaf community. For example, not all students who are deaf lip read; many use sign language. There are several types of sign language:

- \* American Sign Language (ASL) is widely used and has its own grammar and word order.
- \* Fingerspelling is the use of the manual alphabet to form words.
  
- \* Sign Language Transliteration is the combination of sign language and mouth movements using elements of ASL and English.

Students who have sign language skills will usually have an interpreter in the classroom environment. The interpreter serves as a "communications intermediary" between the instructor and the student. A student who is deaf and does not have sign language skills may use captioning. Captioning is the typing of the spoken word which is then projected onto a screen for the student to read.

Accommodations for students who are hard of hearing or deaf can be classified as "visual" or "aural".

Visual accommodations rely on a student's sight, examples of which are sign language interpreters and captioning. Aural accommodations rely on a student's hearing, an example of which is an FM amplification system.

### **Common accommodations:**

- \* note-taking services/access to class notes
- \* alternative test arrangements (i.e. extended test time, reader, etc.)
- \* amplification systems
- \* interpretive services
- \* captioning services
- \* provision of written lecture outlines, copies of overheads, etc., when possible
- \* provision of a script or outline of films, videos, or slides; captioned films are extremely helpful, if available

### **Classroom considerations when working with students with hearing impairments:**

- \* make sure you have the student's attention (a wave or other visual signal) before you begin speaking
- \* speak clearly and at a normal rate
- \* make sure the student can see your face; avoid obscuring your lips or face with your hands or a book, avoid facing the board when speaking, etc.
- \* avoid unnecessary pacing and moving
- \* avoid standing in front of a light source as the glare from behind may make it difficult for a student to read your lips
- \* write discussion questions/answers on the board or overhead
- \* repeat discussion questions and statements made by other students
- \* use visual aids with large images and few words in large fonts
- \* assure the conveyance of important information such as class cancellations, classroom relocation, assignment and test date reminders, etc. in writing either in a handout or on the board

## **Considerations when working with an interpreter:**

- \* speak directly to the student
- \* avoid using phrases such as “tell him” or “ask her”
- \* relax and talk normally noting that there may be a lag time between the spoken word and the interpretation
- \* when referring to objects or written information, allow time for the translation to take place; replace terms such as “here” or “there” with more specific terms such as “on the second page” or “in the left hand corner”
- \* provide the interpreter access to course materials so that he/she will be able to preview materials, ask questions, research technical vocabulary, etc. to aid in smoother translation
- \* work out a seating arrangement with the student and the interpreter so that the interpreter can be 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
- \* be sensitive to classes that extend longer than one hour; the interpreter may require a short break to maintain proficiency

# Learning Disabilities

Students with learning disabilities generally have average to above average intelligence, but have specific difficulties acquiring and demonstrating knowledge and understanding. Students with learning disabilities have significant difficulties in one or more specific skill areas (math computation, written expression, etc.) and have deficit information processing mechanisms. Learning disabilities are sometimes classified as “invisible” disabilities because they are not as readily apparent as other types of disabilities such as mobility impairments or sensory disabilities.

The National Joint Committee for Learning Disabilities (NJCLD) defines learning disabilities as a

“heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, writing, reasoning or mathematical abilities. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual, presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction, and may occur across the life span”.

The effects of a learning disability can range from mild to severe. Often students with learning disabilities may also have Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Other disabilities such as psychiatric impairments may also be present. Specific types of learning disabilities include:

- \* Visual perception problems - letter and word reversals, may confuse letters, numbers or symbols that are similar (i.e. b and d, g and q)
- \* Auditory perception problems - difficulty differentiating between sounds, unable to screen out background noise when listening to lecture
- \* Motor coordination problems - poor fine motor coordination, poor ability to listen and take notes at the same time
- \* Spatial perception problems - difficulty judging distances, difficulty following directions
- \* Memory problems - difficulty retrieving information stored in the brain; more likely difficulty with short-term memory than long-term memory
- \* Sequencing problems - difficulty with the order and arrangement of letters and numbers, difficulty understanding the structure of a lecture, a reading passage, or a mathematical equation

For students with learning disabilities, auditory, visual, or tactile information can become jumbled at any point during the acquisition, storage, organization, retrieval, use, and/or demonstration of verbal or non-verbal abilities and skills, as presented in the following examples:

- \* A student with a learning disability may take longer to process written information and may need additional time to complete a test.
- \* A student with a learning disability may find it difficult to organize and articulate ideas in a classroom environment and may need to make a video of a required in-class presentation.

\* A student with a learning disability may experience difficulties with specific processes and/or subject areas, such as understanding and being able to apply complex steps to solve algebraic equations or understanding and being able to readily apply verb conjugations in a foreign language and may require consideration of an appropriate math or foreign language substitution.

\* A student with a learning disability may have difficulty spelling and subsequently have difficulty creating or editing text or communicating in writing and may require the use of a laptop computer during an essay test or an essay portion of a test.

**A student with a learning disability typically has the intelligence to be a *successful student*, but may not have the necessary skills or strategies to be a *successful learner*.**

### **Common accommodations:**

- \* note-taking services/access to class notes
- \* tape recording class lecture
- \* use of laptop computer for note-taking purposes
- \* extended test time and/or testing in a low distraction room
- \* alternative test formats/arrangements (i.e. enlarged print, being able to answer questions on the test paper instead of a scantron sheet, being able to dictate responses, etc.)
- \* Books on Tape/access to materials on audiotape
- \* availability of lecture notes, learning materials, practice tests, etc. in electronic format
- \* alternative evaluation methods (i.e. portfolio, video presentation, etc.)
- \* use of computers for word processing capability with specific access to spelling and grammar checkers
- \* use of spell checker or calculator, if appropriate

### **General classroom considerations:**

- \* concise course syllabus
- \* providing written lecture outlines, copies of overheads, study guides before tests
- \* breaking large amounts of information or new or difficult concepts into smaller parts or steps
- \* starting each class with an overview of materials to be presented; concluding each class with a brief summary/review of key points; providing a time for questions

\* reinforcing written directions verbally

\* providing print copies of project descriptions, detailed instructions for a research paper, etc. not already specified in the course syllabus

\* including use of board, overhead projector, handouts, videos, group discussion, role-playing, etc. when presenting (**All students benefit from seeing, hearing, and experiencing information, especially new information, when presented in such a manner.**)

\* visual, aural, and tactile demonstrations incorporated into instruction

# Mobility Impairments

Most mobility impairments result from a broad range of neuromuscular and orthopedic conditions. Several common mobility impairments include:

- \* Arthritis - inflammation of one or more joints characterized by pain and loss of mobility; periods of reappearance (flares) and remission
- \* Cerebral Palsy - disorder of body movement and posture that develops as a result of a disruption in brain development; may include presence of a limp, uncoordinated walking, or inability to control various parts of the body; an individual's condition does not deteriorate over time
- \* Multiple Sclerosis - disruption of signals transmitted throughout the central nervous system caused by destruction of the myelin that insulates nerve fibers; characterized in early stages by numbness, weakness, and loss of coordination and in later stages by fatigue and changes in thought processes or perception; progression varies for each individual
- \* Muscular Dystrophy - progressive weakening of the muscles that control movement typically in the legs, arms, and hands, but can also affect the heart, throat, and eyes
- \* Paraplegia - paralysis of the lower extremities and lower trunk as a result of disease or injury
- \* Spina Bifida - improper formation of the vertebrae in the spine resulting in the spinal cord bulging out of the spine; when severe there can be problems with walking, body control, and coordination

It is important not to generalize about the specific limitations of students with mobility impairments and not to assume that students with mobility impairments also have other impairments. Functional abilities vary widely not only among the different impairments, but also among students with the same impairment. General conditions that affect the degree of limitation may include: age of onset, progression rate, level and extent of injury, and response to treatment. A student's physical ability may vary from day-to-day. Some impairments are progressive (muscular dystrophy); other are not (cerebral palsy). Limitations associated with some impairments fluctuate with periods of remission and exacerbation (multiple sclerosis); some may remain constant (cerebral palsy), and others may improve with time and therapy (paraplegia).

Mobility impairments can be permanent or temporary. Cerebral Palsy and paraplegia are permanent mobility impairments. A broken bone, an injury, or a surgical procedure can temporarily impact a student's ability to walk or write independently.

Examples of how a student may be impacted by a mobility impairment include:

- \* A student with arthritis may have a decreased endurance for writing for extended periods of time and may need access to a laptop for note-taking purposes or for completing an essay test or an essay portion of a test.
- \* A student with multiple sclerosis may not be able to manipulate small laboratory equipment and may require a laboratory assistant.

\* A student with paraplegia who is confined to a wheelchair may require preferential seating and access to a table instead of a student desk in the classroom.

**Common accommodations:**

- \* orientation to campus
- \* accessible classrooms and classroom locations
- \* access to accessible parking, restrooms, and elevators
- \* note-taking services/access to class notes
- \* tape recording class lecture
- \* use of laptop computer for note-taking purposes
- \* extended test time
- \* alternative test arrangements (i.e. scribe, being able to dictate responses, etc.)
- \* additional time to complete assignments
- \* lab assistants
- \* access to computers with speech recognition software

# Psychiatric Impairments

There is a broad range of psychiatric impairments from mild depression to chronic disorders such as Bipolar Disorder or Schizophrenia. Psychiatric impairments are sometimes classified as “invisible” disabilities because they are not as readily apparent as other types of disabilities such as mobility impairments and sensory disabilities. Several common psychiatric impairments include:

- \* **Anxiety Disorder** - disorder in which anxiety is the prominent disturbance; individuals feel anxious without any apparent reason and cannot identify the source of threat; characterized by depression, avoidance, inability to concentrate, and procrastination; examples of anxiety disorders include panic disorder and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)
- \* **Bipolar Disorder** - disorder in which individuals experience periods of both mania (inflated self-esteem and decreased need to sleep) and depression (lack of energy and motivation); an individual’s ability to concentrate, organize, and study are affected
- \* **Depression** - disorder characterized by a depressed mood, fatigue, insomnia, an increased need to sleep, low self-esteem, difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- \* **Schizophrenia** - disorder which can cause individuals to lose touch with reality, often experiencing delusions and hallucinations and having disorganized behavior and speech; an individual’s ability to concentrate, organize, and study are affected

Negative stereotypes about these impairments may impact a student’s decision to self-disclose his/her disability. The episodic and unpredictable onset and recurrence of illness can also interrupt the educational process; therefore the need for accommodations, as well as the specific accommodations needed will change. Additionally, side effects from medication may impact memory, attention, alertness, and activity level.

Students with psychiatric impairments can be affected in different ways, as presented in the following examples:

- \* A student with bipolar disorder who has a history of hospitalization may need consideration for additional absences.
- \* A student with depression with a lessened ability to concentrate due to the depression and side effects of medication may need extended test time.

Students with psychiatric impairments may be treated with a combination of medication, counseling, and/or behavioral therapy. Additionally, students with psychiatric impairments may be more susceptible to the common stressors of college life: increased academic demands, forming new interpersonal relationships, living away from home or alone for the first time, etc.

## Common accommodations:

- \* note-taking services/access to class notes

- \* tape recording class lecture
- \* additional absences
- \* extended test time and/or testing in a low distraction room
- \* availability of lecture notes, learning materials, practice tests, etc. in electronic format

**General classroom considerations:**

- \* an encouraging, validating classroom environment
- \* syllabi with clear information regarding test dates, assignment/project deadlines, etc. can help students plan, organize, and prioritize requirements
- \* breaking large amounts of information or new or difficult concepts into smaller parts or steps
- \* starting each class with an overview of materials to be presented; concluding each class with a brief summary/review of key points; providing a time for questions

# Visual Impairments

Visual impairments vary greatly from individuals who have some form of partial sight to individuals who are totally blind. Individuals who are legally blind have visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with the use of corrective lenses or have a field of vision restricted to 20 degrees or less. Individuals who have low vision have a best corrected vision of 20/70 to 20/200. Individuals with low vision may also be identified as such due to the effects of a wide range of eye diseases (i.e. glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, etc.). As a result these individuals may experience a loss of central vision, impaired peripheral vision, overall blur, or some combination of these effects. Visual impairments can affect students in different ways as presented in the following examples:

- \* A student with low vision may have difficulty viewing items through a microscope in the laboratory and may require the use of a projection system.
- \* A student who is legally blind who may not be able to tolerate reading enlarged print for extended periods of time may require the use of readers, audiotaped materials, or screen readers.

**Students with partial sight** may find that standard written materials are too small to read and small objects are difficult to see. Other students may see objects only within a specific field of vision or see an image with sections missing or blacked out. It is important to remember that there is a wide range of visual abilities among students with partial sight. Visual abilities may fluctuate or deteriorate over time. Visual abilities may vary depending on the situation (i.e. time of day, aspects of natural lighting in the classroom, physical aspects of the classroom, etc.).

**Students who are blind** have difficulty referring to written materials. Students who are totally blind may have visual memory - its strength will depend on the age when vision was lost. Consequently, a student who has been blind since birth may have difficulty understanding verbal descriptions of visual materials and abstract concepts. Some students who are blind use Braille, while others may have little or no knowledge of Braille.

Since students with visual impairments have such varied needs they may use a variety of auxiliary aids such as a closed circuit television (CCTV), a Braille 'n Speak, or Books on Tape. These aids assist in gaining access to the classroom; however, they do not ensure access. The instructor is responsible for ensuring that instructional materials, i.e. textbooks, lecture notes, overheads, handouts, videos, course websites, etc. are available in alternative formats, as needed.

## Common accommodations:

- \* orientation to campus
- \* preferential seating with full view of instructor and visual aids
- \* large print materials (handouts, syllabus, etc.)  
(NOTE: large print is generally defined as 16 to 18 point bold in a basic font)
- \* access to printed materials (i.e. syllabus, handouts, etc.) on computer disk can allow a student

access those materials using adaptive technologies

- \* Books on Tape/access to materials on audiotape
- \* note-taking services/access to class notes
- \* tape recording class lecture
- \* use of laptop for note-taking purposes
- \* extended test time
- \* alternative test formats/arrangements (i.e. use of adaptive or Braille technologies, reader/scribe, access to a CCTV, etc.)
- \* access to magnifying equipment, such as a CCTV
- \* access to adaptive technologies, such as a computer with a screen reader or enlargement software
- \* access to Braille technologies

### **Classroom considerations when working with students with visual impairments:**

- \* provide a script with verbal descriptions of films, videos, slides, charts and graphs, etc.
- \* use descriptive language
- \* repeat aloud what is written on the board or on an overhead
- \* avoid phrases such as “look at this” or “examine that”
- \* If a student uses a guidedog, keep in mind that a guidedog is a working dog that must be allowed access to campus. Refrain from talking, petting, or feeding the dog as this distracts it from its learned purpose.

## Other Impairments: Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Students with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and students with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) are sometimes confused with students with a learning disability because of similar learning profiles. There are some significant differences, however, among students with learning disabilities, ADHD, and TBI.

**Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)** is a neurological condition that affects learning and behavior. ADHD is sometimes classified as an “invisible” disability because it is not as readily apparent as other types of disabilities such as mobility impairments and sensory disabilities. ADHD is characterized by inattention, impulsivity, and/or hyperactivity. Students with ADHD may have a learning profile typical of a student with a learning disability, i.e. auditory perception problems, memory problems, etc. Often students with ADHD also have a learning disability. Other disabilities such as psychiatric impairments may also be present. **The student’s primary diagnosis, however is ADHD.** Following are examples of **difficulties** that a student with ADHD may experience:

- \* staying focused for a given period of time
- \* being easily distracted by extraneous stimuli
- \* organizing information, tasks, and self
- \* establishing and maintaining a routine
- \* following through and completing tasks, projects, etc.
- \* attending to detail

ADHD may impact a student in a variety of academic activities, such as attending to lectures, participating in discussions, studying, taking tests, preparing written work, etc. Some students with ADHD may take medication. Some students with ADHD will need academic accommodations to succeed as seen in the following examples:

- \* A student with ADHD who has difficulty attending to listening to lecture and taking notes for extended periods of time may need to tape record portions of lecture in order to have a complete set of classroom notes.
- \* A student with ADHD who is easily distracted by extraneous stimuli (i.e. pencil tapping, throat clearing, chair squeaks, etc.) may need a low distraction room for testing purposes.
- \* A student with ADHD with lessened processing speed skills as a side effect of medication may need extended test time.
- \* A student with ADHD may need to negotiate additional time to complete specified assignments if there are several competing deadlines within a short span of time.

**A student with ADHD typically has the necessary skill and strategies to be a *successful learner*, but may not have the ability to develop an environment for keeping him/herself focused and on-track.**

### **Common accommodations:**

- \* preferential seating near the front of class and away from other possible sources of distraction such as open doors, windows, etc.
- \* note-taking services/access to class notes
- \* tape recording class lecture
- \* Books on Tape/access to materials on audiotape
- \* extended test time and/or testing in a low distraction room
- \* additional time to complete assignments
- \* availability of lecture notes, learning materials, practice tests, etc. in electronic format

### **General classroom considerations:**

- \* concise course syllabus
- \* providing written lecture outlines, copies of overheads, study guides before tests
- \* breaking large amounts of information or new or difficult concepts into smaller parts or steps
- \* starting each class with an overview of materials to be presented; concluding each class with a brief summary/review of key points; providing a time for questions
- \* reinforcing written directions verbally
- \* providing print copies of project descriptions, detailed instructions for a research paper, etc. not already specified in the course syllabus
- \* including use of board, overhead projector, handouts, videos, group discussion, role-playing, etc. when presenting **(All students benefit from seeing, hearing, and experiencing information, especially new information, when presented in such a manner.)**
- \* visual, aural, and tactile demonstrations incorporated into instruction

**Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)** is a neurological impairment as a result of an injury to a part or parts of the brain often resulting in physical, mental, and emotional difficulties. Though not always visible and sometimes seemingly minor, a brain injury is often complex. Effects can be temporary or permanent. Depending on the extent and location of the injury, symptoms can vary widely. Some common symptoms

- \* loss of coordination
- \* difficulties with speech
- \* lessened social skills
- \* loss of memory
- \* limited ability to concentrate
- \* loss of reasoning skills

Students with TBI may have the profile of a student with a learning disability; however, the weakness and strengths may be more pronounced depending on the area(s) of brain injury. Additionally, students with TBI may have psychiatric impairments, as well as physical impairments (i.e. mobility or sensory) and/or chronic health problems.

### **Common accommodations:**

- \* note-taking services
- \* tape recording class lecture
- \* extended time on tests
- \* alternative test formats
- \* alternative evaluation methods (i.e. portfolio, video presentation, etc.)
- \* access to lecture notes, learning materials, practice tests, etc. in electronic format

### **General classroom considerations:**

- \* concise course syllabus
- \* providing written lecture outlines, copy of overheads, study guides before tests
- \* breaking large amounts of information or new or difficult concepts into smaller parts or steps
- \* starting each class with an overview of materials to be presented; concluding each class with a brief summary/review of key points; providing a time for questions
- \* including use of board, overhead projector, handouts, videos, group discussion, role-playing, etc. when presenting **(All students benefit from seeing, hearing, and experiencing information, especially new information, when presented in such a manner.)**

## Electronic/Print Resources

1. **“The Faculty Room” website**, the University of Washington’s Project DO-IT (Disabilities Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology), US Department of Education Grant #P33A990042. Topics on the “Faculty Room” website include:

- \* Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
- \* Universal Design of Instruction
- \* Computer Technology and Web Accessibility

Website url: <http://www.washington.edu/doi/Faculty/>

2. **“Fast Facts for Faculty” series**, The Ohio State University Partnership Grant “Improving the Quality of Education for Students with Disabilities”, US Department of Education Grant #P33A990046. Developed “Fast Fact” sheets within the series include:

- \* “Universal Design for Learning”
- \* “Writing in the University”
- \* “Guidelines for Creating Web Content Accessible for All”

Website url: <http://telr.osu.edu/dpg/fastfact/index.html>

3. **HEATH Resource Center** at The George Washington University, Graduate School of Education and Human Development, is the National Clearinghouse on Postsecondary Education for Individuals with Disabilities. The HEATH Resource Center was established to “serve as an information exchange for educational support services, procedures, adaptations, and opportunities at American campuses, career and technical schools, and other postsecondary training institutions and centers”. The HEATH website at <http://www.heath.gwu.edu> provides access to HEATH resource papers, the HEATH Resource Directory, HEATH Fact Sheets, as well as links to other related web locations. Website users can download and print any publications from the site.

4. **“Teaching Students with Disabilities: Strategies and Guidance for Faculty”**, a tri-annual document published by LRP Publications, provides information on best practice accommodations and legalities surrounding disability issues in the classroom.

Upon receipt of each new issue, the Office of Disability Services will provide an e-mail synopsis to all faculty. The current academic year’s issues will be available on electronic reserve through the Library. Previous years’ issues are available in the bound journal section of the Library.

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