

# University of South Carolina Upstate Disability Services

## Helping you make your course accessible to our students with visual impairments!

This document is designed to offer an overview of several important considerations as you plan and prepare for the upcoming semester. It is not intended to be inclusive of all possible circumstances that may arise. Please contact Disability Services (DS) if you need any assistance, if you have any questions or concerns about any of the considerations presented in this document or if there are items you would like to see included in this document.

→ Access to course-related documents and materials

- \*Textbooks
- \*Syllabus
- \*Handouts and other class materials
- \*Notes
- \*Tests
- \*Research materials

→ Testing Procedures

→ Use of Blackboard/WebCT

→ Referral/Use of campus support services

### A. Access to course-related documents and materials

Disability Services provides document conversion of textbooks, syllabi, handouts, classroom notes, tests and research materials. In order to convert a document to a format that is accessible, it must first be scanned into a computer and edited for accuracy. Our students with visual impairments use a variety of assistive technology (a student who is totally blind uses a computer with JAWS, a screen reading software program while a student with low vision may use ZoomText, a screen magnification software program) to access the converted documents. If the document is being provided to the student in electronic format, it is saved on a CD Rom or sent to the student via e-mail. If the document is being provided in Braille, it is scanned into a computer and edited, translated into Braille by Duxbury, a Braille translation software program, and then printed. With the advent of quality software programs like JAWS, Braille is no longer the best/preferred option for providing large documents (e.g. textbooks) to students.

#### 1. Textbooks

Textbooks are made accessible using one or more of the following methods:

### a. Scanned textbooks

i. **If you** have a “clean” (see **Note** at the end of this document) copy of the textbook(s) you will be using and do not mind loaning it to DS in advance of the semester, please let us know. The student will still purchase your required textbook(s). **Please note that this option may allow us to have the textbook ready for the student by the first day of class.** DS will provide the textbook(s) to the student on a CD Rom.

ii. When we are unable to scan a textbook in advance of the semester, DS will scan students’ textbooks in prioritized order. DS considers three factors when establishing this prioritized order: order of receipt of textbooks from students, input from the student about perceived use of the textbook and initial indication of textbook use in the syllabus. DS prefers to scan the entire textbook, but will scan the initial portions of a textbook, if needed, and then complete the remainder of the textbook later. DS will provide the textbook(s) to the student on a CD Rom.

### b. Electronic text from publisher

When requested, some publishers are willing to make their textbooks available in electronic format. **If you** feel comfortable contacting your publisher representative to inquire about the availability of a given textbook(s) in electronic format, that would be most appreciated. Please let us know if you prefer to have us contact the publisher. **Please note that this option may allow us to have the textbook ready for the student by the first day of class.** DS will make the textbook(s) available to the student on a CD Rom.

### c. Books on Tape (tape and/or CD version) / Bookshare (electronic version)

DS uses these two sources when either of the sources already has an alternative format of the textbook available or when students need access to public domain books, specifically classic literature books. *Bookshare* books are provided to the student on a CD Rom.

## 2. Syllabus

**If your** syllabus is available in electronic format, please forward the syllabus to DS as soon as it is ready for the semester. DS prepares a “Syllabus” CD Rom for the student. If the syllabus is not available in electronic format, please provide DS a “clean” copy of the syllabus so that we can scan it in order to make it available in electronic format or in Braille.

## 3. Handouts and other class materials

**If your** handouts and other class materials (e.g. copies of any overheads) are available in electronic format, please forward them to DS. These materials do not need to be provided in their entirety at the beginning of the semester and can be forwarded during the course of the semester. If the materials are not available in electronic format, please provide DS with “clean” copies of these documents so that we can scan them in order to make them available in electronic format or in Braille.

#### 4. Notes

**Please assist** DS in the identification of a note-taker as soon as possible in the semester. DS hires a transcriptionist/typist to type the notes from the note-takers. These notes are either forwarded electronically to the student or converted to Braille. This process may take a day or more to complete. We do our best to ensure that notes are made available as quickly as possible.

#### 5. Tests

**If your** tests are available in electronic format, please forward them to DS as appropriate. If the test is not available in electronic format, please provide DS a “clean” copy of the test so that we can scan it in order to make it available in electronic format or in Braille. This process may take a day or more to complete. As a result, please provide the test to DS *at least two days* in advance of the test date.

#### 6. Research materials

As background information for you, the research process can be an extremely time-consuming process for our students who are blind:

- a. If a source is not an electronic source, the student needs personal assistance to preview the source in order to determine the appropriateness of the source. Additionally, the source must then be copied, scanned and provided to the student in electronic format.
- b. If the source is an electronic source, the student does not have the ability to quickly preview the source to determine appropriateness. Since the student will be using JAWS, the student will need to listen to the article in its entirety.
- c. Internet searches can be very awkward and time consuming depending on the accessibility of the website and the technological skills of the student.

#### B. Testing Procedures

1. DS will proctor tests in different ways depending on the student and the type of test:
  - a. DS may read the questions aloud to the student and transcribe the student's answers (primarily with multiple choice, true/false and/or fill in the blank type tests).
  - b. DS may provide the student a Braille or electronic version of the test for the student to complete on the computer with the use of assistive technology (primarily for short answer or essay type tests). DS has a computer with JAWS, a screen reading program, and ZoomText, a screen enlargement program, in our testing center.
  - c. DS may provide for the use of the closed circuit television (CCTV). The CCTV will enable a student with low vision to take a test directly on the test paper using this magnification system.

2. The DS *Student Policy and Procedure Handbook* indicates the “definition of ‘extended time’ is normally ‘50% more time’ or ‘time and a half’ of the regular test time. This time period can vary depending on the type of test, the student’s disability and the instructor’s input.” Our experience indicates that our students with visual impairments, and specifically our students who are blind, may need access to more than 50% more time. DS will work with you to ensure that this can be facilitated in the most appropriate manner.

3. If you have any questions about our testing procedures or would like a demonstration of any of the assistive technology in our testing center, please let us know.

### **C. Use of Blackboard/WebCT**

DS has had limited experience with Blackboard and WebCT. We realize that more instructors are using Blackboard and WebCT as a means of facilitating classroom instruction. We are currently researching an unofficial Blackboard user’s guide for individuals who use screen readers like JAWS. To the best of our knowledge a WebCT user’s guide is not available. A student may need time to develop a familiarity with the necessary commands and corresponding JAWS key strokes to navigate either Blackboard or WebCT.

### **D. Referral/Use of Support Services**

Our office makes all students with disabilities aware of the many and varied support services on campus (e.g. Writing Center, math tutoring lab, Center for Student Success, Opportunity Network, Peer Academic Coaching, Counseling Services, Health Services). Please feel comfortable in referring/offering these services to students, as needed. You are the best source of how a particular student is performing in your class and what support services may be necessary and beneficial. We will offer our assistance to these services, as necessary, if there are questions/concerns regarding accessibility.

**NOTE:** A “clean” document is an original document that is free of extraneous marks, such as highlighting and margin notes. Documents that are not “clean” will not produce scanned documents that are usable (or readable), without extensive editing. Following are several options to provide a “clean” version of a document:

- \*provide the student or DS a site location if the document is available electronically
- \*determine if the document is available from another source
- \*arrange for the document to be retyped prior to providing it to the student