

# **LENOIR-RHYNE** **UNIVERSITY**

## **DISABILITY** **SERVICES**

**FACULTY**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED**  
**QUESTIONS!**



## **What are accommodations?**

Accommodations are changes and adjustments to policies and procedures based on a disability related need. Accommodations are designed to ensure that students have equal access to the classroom setting and do not give a student an unfair advantage. They should not alter the manner in which you normally conduct your course.

ACCOMMODATION EXAMPLES HERE AT LRU—

CLASSROOM RELOCATION--- Although LR is accessible in many ways, not all of our classrooms are accessible. Therefore, you may be asked to relocate your class. Relocation will be to a classroom that is similarly equipped for your use.

NOTE-TAKERS—For many students, it may be necessary to get copies of class notes from lectures, therefore we may need assistance in locating a note -taker in your course. The Disability Services Office would appreciate your assistance in locating students.

ACCESSIBLE MATERIALS—It is necessary for some students to obtain the class materials in an accessible format (Braille, large print, electronic texts etc...). If this service is needed, it is important that handouts and other materials for classes be obtained in advance for this purpose. If needed, you will be contacted in advance to make the necessary arrangements.

TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS: Extended time and private testing areas may be approved for those students that qualify. It is up to the professor and student to work out a mutually agreeable arrangement for each test.

\*\*\*NOTE: As technology becomes an integral part of the teaching environment in the classroom, faculty should assure that their websites & materials are accessible to students who use alternative access (such as screen readers, captioning etc...). If you are not sure if the technology and/or websites that you utilize are accessible, please contact the Disability Services Office for an assessment.

## **Why do I have to provide academic accommodations?**

Federal law requires reasonable accommodations. Since the passage of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), individuals with disabilities are attending colleges and universities in increasing numbers. The Rehabilitation Act states that:

“No otherwise qualified handicapped individual...shall, solely by means of handicap be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance...”

With the passage of the ADA, this mandate was expanded to any public or private institution. Subpart E of the Rehabilitation Act requires an institution to be prepared to make reasonable academic accommodations to allow students with disabilities full access to the same programs and activities available to students without disabilities.

### **Who is responsible for determining appropriate accommodations?**

The Office of Disability Services on campus determines appropriate accommodations for students with documented disabilities. The office bases decisions upon documentation collected from the student, the student's functional limitations, and the student's clarification about specific needs and limitations. In addition, the faculty and department may be contacted for consultation when needed.

### **What if I cannot implement a requested accommodation?**

If you have a question, or think you will have difficulty providing any accommodation requested, the first step is to contact the Disability Services Office. The Director of Disability Services will clarify any information, as well as assist you with obtaining the resources needed to provide the accommodation/s. In many cases, clarification will involve working with the student and the Director to adjust the recommendations for your particular academic situation.

### **Do I have any recourse if I disagree about requested accommodations?**

To clarify any disagreement about a requested accommodation, first contact the Disability Services Office at extension 7296. We do have specific laws to follow in providing accommodations. However, we do have flexibility in HOW we do it. We can always discuss other options or additional ideas regarding specific requested accommodations.

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

You may ask the student to provide you with the letter of accommodation from the Disability Services Office to verify that he/she is registered with the office and has been approved for accommodations. The Disability Services Office requires documentation of the disability for every student who is registered with the office prior to issuing a letter of accommodation.

### **As a faculty member, can I know a student's disability?**

The Disability Services Office cannot disclose disability related information to faculty. When deemed necessary, some pertinent information may be released if the individual with the disability signs a release of confidentiality. Also, students may choose to disclose their disability to their faculty on an individual basis. However, they are not required to do so and may not choose to do so.

### **Am I required to provide exam accommodations to students who request it?**

Yes. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, as well as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) protect students with disabilities. These laws require that qualified students with disabilities get equal access to an education, including exam accommodations. This is required only if it is documented on their letter of accommodation from the Disability Services Office.

### **Why is extended time on tests approved as an accommodation so often?**

Students attending the University may have a variety of disabilities. Extended test time is the most common accommodation for students with disabilities because many disabilities affect processing time. For example, a student with a learning disability cannot process information in the same manner as a typical student. Therefore, additional time is needed to rephrase the questions in a way the student can understand and answer. A student with a disability affecting motor control of extremities may need additional time to write the answers. Examinations need to allow students with disabilities the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities, not the limitations of their disabilities.

### **Who is responsible for arranging for extended time and private testing areas for students with disabilities?**

Since LR has an extremely small testing center, the responsibility of arranging for extended time and private testing areas falls mainly to the faculty member. Some students arrive early to take the test or are allowed to stay later to complete it to meet the extended time accommodation. Other faculty members set up a separate time and location that is proctored during their office hours or by an administrative assistant within the department. The exact details are to be arranged between the faculty and student prior to each test where these accommodations are needed. If students need special assistance or technology, the Disability Services Office will be available to proctor those tests if requested in advance.

**I've been debating about what book I want to use for my class, but the Disability Services Office keeps asking me to select a book ASAP. Why do I need to do this?**

Textbook conversion for students with disabilities is a time-consuming, labor-intensive task, and the Office of Disability Services has many books and other reading assignments to convert to electronic formats, audio tapes, enlargements or Braille,—depending on the individual need. Students who have difficulty reading need to be able to access their textbooks at the same time as other students in the class. By delaying the selection of textbooks, students with disabilities may have to start class without an accessible textbook. This contributes to a student getting behind from the beginning of the semester and we want to avoid that when possible.

**A student in my class asked for my assistance in getting a note-taker. I made the necessary arrangements, but the student now has missed most of the lectures! Should the student be getting notes?**

If a student with a disability regularly skips class, then he/she has no right to get notes on the days skipped. The note taker should be informed of this. If the student has a legitimate excuse for the absence, (i.e. illness, death in family etc...), handle this situation as you would with all other students.

**I have a student who is having difficulty in my class. I think he may have a disability. What should I do to help him?**

It is fine for you to set up an appointment to talk privately with the student to discuss your observations. The student may reveal that he/she has a disability. If this is the case and the student is registered with the DSO, suggest that he/she talk to the Director in the DSO office. If the student is NOT registered with the Disability Services Office, suggest that they contact the office as soon as possible. However if a student does not choose to request assistance, there is nothing else that we can do regarding a possible disability.

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

NO! 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 in writing may produce an essay exam by using a computer or scribe rather than writing out an answer without these accommodations. The quality of the work and expectations should be the SAME!

**I have a student with a disability who is behind in her schoolwork. This student has missed a number of classes and has not handed in several assignments. Although she has taken a midterm and used accommodations, she received a D for midterm. At this point, she is not passing the class. Do I have a right to fail a student with a disability?**

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 helpful to discuss the situation with the student just as you would any other student that is experiencing difficulty in your course. However, they are expected to meet the same requirements/expectations as all other students in the course.

**Do I need to place information on my syllabus informing students with disabilities that accommodations are available?**

Yes. The university is obligated to notify students that accommodations are available. Examples of disability statements for syllabi are available on the syllabus template provided by the Provost's office or from the Disability Services office.

**Are students REQUIRED to identify as a student with a disability or provide information/documentation to the Disability Services Office?**

No, the decision to self-identify as a student with a disability is totally up to each individual student. If they do NOT want to disclose this information, they do not have to. However, a student on our campus cannot qualify or receive accommodations without identifying and providing documentation to the Disability Services Office.

**If a student has “flexibility of attendance policy” as an accommodation, can the student miss as much as they want to in the course?**

No. The student for which this is an approved accommodation usually has a chronic health problem which may cause them to be absent from class. Since faculty set their own attendance policies, the accommodation is a request for some flexibility in that policy. The amount of flexibility will depend on the nature of your course. This is NOT a blank check to allow the student to miss as much as they want. The Disability Services Office encourages students with this accommodation to consult with the faculty member if attendance becomes an issue during the semester. Then the faculty can discuss the need to drop the class or receive an incomplete where appropriate. If attendance becomes an issue for a student with a disability in your course, please notify the Disability Services Office.

# WEB RESOURCES FOR FACULTY

## WORKING WITH STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Link to University of Washington's DO-IT Faculty Room

[www.washington.edu/doit/faculty/](http://www.washington.edu/doit/faculty/)

Link to Center for Applied Special Technology:

[www.cast.org](http://www.cast.org)

Link to the Association on Higher Education and Disability

[www.ahead.org](http://www.ahead.org)

Link to the U.S. Department of Education—Office of Civil Rights

<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html?src=mr>

Link to NASPA Accommodation Resources

[Http://naspa.org/constituent-groups/kcs/disability/resources](http://naspa.org/constituent-groups/kcs/disability/resources)

Link to DO-IT brochure: Working Together: Faculty and Students with Disabilities

[www.washington.edu/doit/brochures/PDF/teachers.pdf](http://www.washington.edu/doit/brochures/PDF/teachers.pdf)

North Carolina Assistive Technology Program

<http://www.ncatp.org>

FacultyWare, University of Connecticut

<http://www.facultyware.uconn.edu/home.cfm>