

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY



Faculty Handbook: Working with Students with Disabilities



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FACULTY HANDBOOK: WORKING WITH STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. The Law and the College Student with Disabilities

In 1973, Congress passed the **Rehabilitation Act. Section 504** of the Act [as amended] states that "no qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall be excluded from, denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity that either receives Federal financial assistance..." A program or activity is inclusive of "a college, university, or other postsecondary institution, or a public system of higher education." With respect to postsecondary educational services, "**otherwise qualified**" means a person with a disability who meets the academic and technical standards requisite to admission or participation.

Additionally, in 1990, President George H.W. Bush signed the **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** into law. Title II of the ADA covers state and local governments and "any department, agency, special purpose district, or other instrumentality of a State or States or local government." The ADA, like the Rehabilitation Act before it, disallows discrimination of people with disabilities "from participation in...the services, programs, or activities of a public entity." The ADA, however, has a broader definition of those who are covered by the law, further including individuals who *have a record of an impairment* and those who are *regarded as having an impairment*. The ADA also has a stronger legal remedies than the Rehabilitation Act.

What does Section 504 require of postsecondary institutions?

It is not the intent of this legislation to abridge the freedom of an institution of higher education to establish academic requirements and standards; rather, the Rehabilitation Act requires that colleges and universities make those reasonable adjustments necessary to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability. For example, classes enrolling students with mobility impairments may have to be relocated due to inaccessible facilities; and interpreters should be provided for a hearing impaired student who uses sign language and requests an interpreter.

What are the students' responsibilities?

Accommodations are not solely the responsibility of the institution. Students need to request accommodations in a timely manner and provide appropriate documentation of their disability which supports the need for any given accommodation. What is considered timely will vary depending on the specific accommodation being requested.

The student has responsibility to make his or her abilities and limits known and to meet the instructor's expectations concerning attendance, class participation, and performance and work standards. Specific accommodations will vary according to the student and the severity of the disability. It is important that the student meet with the instructor early in the semester to discuss course procedures and the specific accommodations that will be provided by the University.

It is generally to everyone's advantage if students with disabilities identify themselves and request accommodations early in the semester. However, they are under no obligation to disclose their disability outside of the DSS office, if they so choose, when requesting accommodations.

The following are suggested statements for faculty to use on their syllabi to encourage students with disabilities to identify themselves.

" Any student with a disability that needs a classroom accommodation, access to technology or other assistance in this course should contact Disability Support Services and/or their instructor. "

OR

"Any student with a disability who needs an accommodation or other assistance in this course should make an appointment to speak with me as soon as possible."

B. Who Qualifies for Services?

According to federal guidelines, a person with a disability:

- has a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more of the person's major life activities;
- has a record of such an impairment; or
- is regarded as having such impairment.

Major life activities include functions such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, and learning.

II. ARRANGING APPROPRIATE ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

A. Documentation of Disability

Students with disabilities are asked to provide documentation of their disability to Disability Support Services. Documentation guidelines can be found at www.ksu.edu/dss. DSS will review documentation with the student. Based upon the student's documentation, DSS will work with the student to determine reasonable accommodations.

B. Letters for Students to Faculty

Students requesting academic accommodations through DSS are asked to deliver a letter written by DSS to each instructor. This letter verifies that the student has a documented disability and describes the accommodations recommended by the DSS staff. This service is available to any student with a documented disability. Students requesting academic accommodations should provide their instructors with this letter before DSS contacts the instructor to arrange accommodations. When delivering the letter to an instructor, DSS encourages students to introduce themselves and to discuss any questions the instructor may have related to the recommended accommodations.

Students taking credit courses through the Division of Continuing Education will not receive a paper copy of their accommodation letter. Instead, DSS will e-mail a copy of the letter to the instructor and to the student. The student should contact the instructor to arrange these accommodations.

Students may request letters at any time during the semester. Those students who qualify for test-taking accommodations are asked to inform instructors of their disability in advance of any test in order to allow sufficient time to arrange for this accommodation.

III. ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The ADA defines a person with a disability as one who, "with or without reasonable modifications to rules, policies, or practices...or the provision of **auxiliary aids** and services, meets the essential eligibility requirements for the receipt of services or the participation in programs or activities provided by a

public entity.”

A postsecondary student with a disability who is in need of auxiliary aids is obligated to provide notice of the nature of the disabling condition to the college and to assist it in identifying appropriate and effective auxiliary aids.

Auxiliary aids and services include such things as:

- qualified interpreters or other effective methods of making aurally delivered materials available to individuals who are deaf or have hearing impairments;
- qualified readers, alternative texts, or other effective methods of making visually delivered materials available to individuals with visual impairments;
- acquisition or modification of equipment or devices; and other similar services and actions (including notetakers, scribes, etc.).

A. Test-Taking Accommodations

Students with disabilities who demonstrate a need for test-taking accommodations and have disability documentation that supports it should receive the accommodation, which may be provided by the instructor or via DSS. Test-taking accommodations may include extended time, distraction reduced room, exams administered auditorially, scribes, enlarged print, or the use of a computer.

1. Extended time

In some cases, students may be allowed extended time in which to complete examinations. Students who request extended time will be allowed time-and-a-half in which to complete the exam. Accordingly, for a 50-minute class, time-and-a-half is 1 hour and 15 minutes; for a 1 hour and 15 minute class, time-and-a-half is 1 hour and 53-minutes. In any instance when a student feels time-and-a-half will not be sufficient for a specific examination, the student is asked to discuss the need for additional time with a staff member in DSS prior to the date the test has been scheduled.

2. Distraction reduced environment

Students with disabilities that affect their ability to concentrate or who are easily distracted may be provided headphones and/or a quiet room in

which to complete exams.

3. Exams administered auditorially

Students with specific reading or visual disabilities may take tests auditorially using a computer with screen reader. Students will be provided with a copy of the test along with the test on the computer screen. This will enable students to write answers directly on the exam (i.e. will not have to speak into a recorder.)

4. Scribes

Students with specific types of physical or learning disabilities may need a scribe. The scribe will be appointed by either DSS or the instructor. The scribe writes the examinee's response word-for-word. The scribe does not add to the response. It is the student's responsibility to proofread the exam for content and grammar.

5. Enlarged print

Students with visual disabilities may request that the test be enlarged and/or made available on the computer using a large font. A CCTV is also available for students to use when taking tests.

6. Word Processor

Use of a computer with spelling and grammar check on essay tests for students with a writing disability.

Procedures for Requesting Test Taking Accommodations

1. Responsibility of the Student

Students are asked to deliver letters written by Disability Support Services to instructors verifying a disability and recommending appropriate accommodations, including test taking accommodations. The student is responsible for contacting each instructor to complete a Test Request Form and providing DSS with the dates of all tests. The Test Request Form provides instructors with an opportunity to inform DSS about your preferred method of test delivery.

2. Responsibility of Disability Support Services

After receiving the student's completed Test Request Form, DSS will e-mail a reminder about the test to the faculty member approximately one week prior to the test. Whenever possible, we ask that you deliver the test to 202 Holton Hall,

fax it to us at 532-6457, or send the exam by e-mail attachment to tst@ksu.edu. If you are unable to deliver the test, please inform our office when the exam will be available for pick-up at your departmental office. When the student has completed the test, it will be returned to your departmental office.

If the student's instructor requests DSS to administer the test, the student should plan to take the test at the scheduled time unless prior approval was given by the instructor. Students should report to the Testing Center, 203 Holton Hall. Students are asked not to leave the test site until the test has been completed.

3. Responsibility of the Faculty

Some faculty prefer to administer their own tests. If you will be administering the examination, please discuss the recommended accommodations and arrangements for the test with your student prior to the examination date. The faculty member is expected to administer the test to the student with the appropriate accommodations. Tests should be administered in a quiet setting. A noisy office or hallway is not suitable.

If DSS arranges administration of the test, faculty members are expected to provide a copy of the test in a reasonable time frame in order for DSS to prepare the necessary accommodations. If the test is to be given auditorially, please send the exam by e-mail attachment to tst@ksu.edu. If faculty prefers to send a paper copy of the exam, then DSS must have the test at least 48 hours in advance of the time it is scheduled to be taken. This provides the time necessary to scan the test and set it up on a computer with screen reader for the student. If an instructor is unable to provide the test within this time frame, the instructor will be asked to administer the test.

Academic Dishonesty

Tests administered in the Testing Center are proctored. Only materials, i.e., calculators, books, notes, etc. specified by the instructor on the Test Request Form will be allowed in the testing room.

Any time a student is found to have materials in the testing room that were not specified by the instructor, the following procedure will be followed: 1) Unauthorized materials will be removed from the testing room. 2) The student will be permitted to complete the test. 3) The test proctor will return the unauthorized materials with the test to the instructor with a description of the incident and the amount of time the student spent working on the test with unauthorized materials.

In accordance with the University's policy on academic honesty, an instructor

who is convinced there is evidence of cheating should follow the procedures for handling a breach of academic honesty that are outlined in the student life handbook.

B. Notetakers

Some disabilities limit the student's ability to take accurate or complete notes. Disabilities which may warrant the use of notetakers include: writing disabilities, Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, Attention Deficit Disorder, traumatic brain injury, visual impairments, and hearing impairments. In these cases, it is helpful to have a person in the classroom taking notes to supplement the student's notes. The decision to use notetakers is made by the student and DSS staff based on documentation of the student's disability.

A memo requesting a notetaker and an information sheet to be given to students who volunteer to be notetakers are included in the letter that is given to the instructor which recommends academic accommodations. The instructor is asked to read the memo to the class which states that there is a student in the class who is unable to take complete notes and has asked for a volunteer notetaker. The notetaker should have the following characteristics: well-organized and detailed notes, legible handwriting, and regular attendance. The instructor should help the student identify and connect with the volunteer. Students who already know a classmate who has the characteristics described above should inform the instructor that they have already found a person to take notes.

Notes can be photocopied without charge in the Business Office, room 7A, Holton Hall. Any student who chooses to photocopy notes is asked to provide DSS with the name of the notetaker and course for which notes are being taken.

Notes are provided as a supplement to the student's own notes not as a substitute to note taking. It is the understanding of DSS and the notetaker that the student will attend class regularly. Notes will not be given to a student who repeatedly misses class. An exception may be made for students who are hospitalized due to health difficulties.

C. Audio Books

Students who are blind or visually impaired as well as some students who are print disabled may need to have their textbooks in audio format. A revolution has begun whereby DSS is now able to obtain many textbooks directly from the publisher on a CD ROM. These electronic textbooks can be accessed by students using screen reading software (ReadPlease or Adobe 6.0 or above).

Obtaining audio books from publishers is a labyrinthine process which takes considerable time and effort by the DSS staff. When DSS receives a request for a textbook in audio format for a course you are scheduled to teach, DSS will contact you well in advance of the semester to request information about the text including: complete title, author, copyright, edition, ISBN and publisher. Your help in providing this information in a timely manner is essential if the university is to be successful in its efforts to obtain textbooks in audio format for students who rely on them.

IV. SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

There are additional supportive services that DSS offers to students that are not required by law. They are tutorial and editorial assistance, and a shuttle service which provides transportation on campus for students with either temporary or permanent disabilities.

Please feel free to contact Andrea Blair, Director of Disability Support Services, or any DSS staff member if you have questions or concerns.