To Assure Educational Access for Students with Disabilities

INTRODUCTION

Educational access is the provision of classroom accommodations, auxiliary aids and services to ensure equal educational opportunities for all students regardless of disability. Creating equal educational opportunities is a collaborative effort among the student, faculty member, and the Office of Disability Services (DS).

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 protect students with disabilities from discrimination that may occur as a result of misconceptions, attitudinal barriers, and/or failure of the institution to provide appropriate accommodations, auxiliary aids, or services. Examples of accommodations and auxiliary aids include, but are not limited to: qualified interpreters, note takers, extra time for exams, and educational materials in alternate format (i.e. Braille, audiotape, electronic format, enlarged print).

WHO BENEFITS

Students with Disabilities
A disability includes any physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or major life activity.

Faculty
Instructors are assisted in their responsibility to teach all students in their classes and to provide equal access to education.

Disability Services Office
The office provides a system for service coordination in order to better meet student needs.

Owens Community College
By providing educational access for all students, the college meets its mandated responsibilities and enhances campus diversity.

PRINCIPLES OF ACCESS

A - Accessibility
Faculty members play a major role in making their classrooms accessible to all students.

C - Communication
It is imperative that students with disabilities, faculty members, and DS communicate on a regular basis.

C - Confidentiality
All instructors and DS staff must respect a student’s right to confidentiality.

E - Eligibility for Accommodations
DS is the office designated to determine eligibility for federally mandated academic accommodations and services.

S - Student Responsibility
Students have a responsibility in ensuring they get the necessary services.

S - Support
Both faculty and DS work together to support students in their legal right to access an education.

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Definitions of Terms

Alternative media: Print material that has been converted to a format that enables a print impaired person to read the materials. This includes but is not limited to: taped materials, Braille, electronic text, and enlarged print.

Auxiliary aids: Services, equipment, and procedures that allow students with disabilities access to learning and activities in and out of the classroom. They include but are not limited to: sign language interpreters, real time captioning services, adaptive technology, alternative media, exam accommodations, etc.

Exam accommodations: Legally mandated services that allow students with disabilities to exhibit their knowledge on exams by using auxiliary aids which include but are not limited to: extra time, a reader or scribe, computers, large print, CCTV, distraction reduced environment, etc.

Universal design: An approach to designing course instruction, materials, and content to benefit people of all learning styles without adaptation or retrofitting. Universal design provides equal access to learning, not simply equal access to information. Universal design allows the student to control the method of accessing information while the teacher monitors the learning process and initiates any beneficial methods.

DISABILITY SERVICES RIGHTS

Documentation
- Receive the appropriate documentation from the student prior to the services being initiated.

Accommodations
- Expect students and faculty to work cooperatively with DS to facilitate academic accommodations.
- Deny unreasonable academic accommodations, adjustments, and/or auxiliary services. Accommodations cannot impose undue hardship to, or fundamentally alter, a program or an activity of the college.
- Deny academic accommodations/services if appropriate documentation has not been provided.

Confidentiality
- Treat and protect all disability-related information as confidential medical information.
- Meet with the student privately in an accessible location to discuss disability-related needs.

Accommodations
- Provide appropriate accommodations in collaboration with the instructor and student.
- Provide print materials in accessible format once the faculty member and student identifies them.

Communication
- Communicate procedures clearly to the student and the faculty.

Advocacy
- Assist students with disabilities in understanding their strengths and functional limitations. Provide them with the skills to become self-advocates.

Fast Facts For Faculty

Students with Disabilities
- Students have a responsibility in ensuring they get the necessary services.

Faculty
- Faculty members play a major role in making their classrooms accessible to all students.

Disability Services Office
- The office provides a system for service coordination in order to better meet student needs.

Owens Community College
- By providing educational access for all students, the college meets its mandated responsibilities and enhances campus diversity.

For more information, call the Office for Disability Services at (540) 646-7307.
This publication is funded by the U.S. Department of Education under grant #P033A190044.
Developed by Patricia Carlton, Jennifer Hirtfeld and Amy Yurcisin, The Ohio State University Partnership Grant.
**FACULTY RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**FACULTY RIGHTS**

**Documentation**
- Request verification of a student’s eligibility for any requested accommodations. Such verification will be in the form of a letter written by a DS Representative and delivered by the student or mailed directly to you. DS is the only office designated to review disability documentation and determine eligibility for appropriate accommodations. Faculty should not view this documentation.

**Accommodations**
- Expect the student to initiate accommodation requests.
- If the student is taking their tests at DS, expect DS to administer exams in a secure and monitored environment.

**Important Note**
Faculty do not have the right to ask students if they have a disability. For those students with documented disabilities, faculty do not have the right to ask about the nature of the disability. However, if students choose to disclose their disability, this information should be treated confidentially.

**FACULTY RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Accommodations**
- Identify and establish essential functions, abilities, skills, and knowledge of their courses and evaluate students on this basis. Students with disabilities should meet the same course expectations as their peers.
- Provide accommodations only to students who are registered with DS. It is not your responsibility to provide accommodations to students who are not registered with DS.
- Use a syllabus statement and class announcements to invite students to disclose their needs.
- Act immediately upon getting a student’s request for accommodations by contacting DS (if unsure about request), by providing the service or by meeting with students. If you have questions, please contact DS at (567) 661-7007.
- If a student needs alternative media, please provide DS with syllabi, textbooks, course packets etc, well before classes begin in order for students with disabilities to use alternative media when all other students have course materials. With such timely consideration, students with disabilities who have alternative media needs for accommodations and instructional access will be best served. Converting print materials is both labor and time intensive. Alternative media may be print material in Braille, on audiotapes, scanned onto discs, or enlarged.
- Work to ensure that all audio-visual materials used in class are accessible (e.g., that videos shown are captioned for students with hearing impairments and that the VCR equipment used has captioning capabilities, that videos shown will be made with auditory description in some way or that written transcripts will be provided, etc.)

**Confidentiality**
- Treat and protect all disability-related information as confidential medical information.

**Communication**
- Consult with students with disabilities and DS in providing appropriate accommodations.

**STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**STUDENT RIGHTS**

**Confidentiality**
- Expect all disability-related information to be treated confidentially.

**Accommodations**
- Receive appropriate accommodations in a timely manner from faculty or DS. Students should have the opportunity to meet privately with faculty to discuss needed accommodations and any other concerns. Please keep in mind that DS is the only office designated to review disability documentation and determine eligibility for the appropriate accommodations.
- Appeal decisions regarding accommodations and auxiliary aids. For more information, see the current College Catalog.

**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Documentation**
- Provide DS with appropriate documentation of the disability.

**Confidentiality**
- Go to the instructor’s office hours or make an appointment with the instructor to facilitate privacy when requesting accommodations.

**Accommodations**
- Initiate requests for specific accommodations in a timely manner, preferably early in the semester.
- Inform DS of the materials you need in alternative format as soon as possible.
- Notify faculty/DS immediately when an accommodation is not being provided completely or correctly.
- Notify faculty/DS immediately when a decision has been made to not use an accommodation or the accommodation is no longer needed.
- Provide for their own personal independent living needs or other personal disability-related needs. For example, coordinating services of personal care attendants or acquiring homework assistance are student responsibilities and are not the responsibilities of Disability Services.

**Communication**
- Act as your own advocate. Work on developing advocacy skills and communicating your specific needs and accommodations to faculty.