

Accommodating Students with Disabilities: A Handbook for Instructors

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Our Mission

The University of Mary Washington is committed to ensuring that all qualified students with disabilities have the opportunity to take part in its educational programs and Resources on an equal basis with other students. The goal of the Office of Disability Resources is to provide this opportunity in an integrated setting that fosters independence and meets the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Both of these laws prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities.

According to these laws, no otherwise qualified individual with a disability shall, solely by reason of his/her disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity of a public entity.

“Person with a disability” means “any “person who 1) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities - including walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working, 2) has a record of such impairment, or 3) is regarded as having such an impairment.”

Disabilities covered by legislation include (but are not limited to) AIDS, cancer, cerebral palsy, diabetes, epilepsy, head injuries, hearing impairments, specific learning disabilities, loss of limbs, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, psychiatric disorders, speech impairments, spinal cord injuries, and visual impairments.

Because of ADA and Section 504, the University of Mary Washington is required to do the following:

- Allow participation in and benefits of all Resources, programs, and activities of the college. The college is not required to remove physical barriers in every building or in every part of a single building, but it is required to make every program, viewed in its entirety, accessible. All new construction must be accessible.
- Make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, and procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability, unless the college can demonstrate that making the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity or constitute undue hardship.
- Administer Resources, programs, and activities in the most integrated setting appropriate without a surcharge.
- Furnish appropriate auxiliary aids and Resources where necessary to afford an individual an equal opportunity to participate and enjoy the benefits of Resources, programs, or activities conducted by the college.
- Allow the student with a disability the right to refuse an accommodation, aid, service, opportunity, or benefit.
- Allow participation in programs and activities operated in collaboration with other agencies or businesses.

Restructuring Our Attitudes

Everyday, persons with disabilities face physical barriers. A person who uses a wheelchair may encounter a ramp that is too steep to safely navigate, or may encounter a stairway where no ramp exists. A person who is deaf may be in a building with no visual alarm during an emergency such as a fire. A blind person may attempt to use an elevator for which there is no tactile signage.

Physical barriers can be removed. Ramps can be built or modified, a visual alarm can be purchased and installed and signage can be added. The major barriers that students with disabilities face are not architectural, but *attitudinal* barriers. Attitudinal changes cost nothing, and are the types of changes that people with disabilities would like most from others. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) states that the following are considered discriminatory under the law:

- Denying someone with a disability the opportunity to participate in, or benefit from, the goods, Resources, facilities, privileges, advantages or accommodations provided to others.
- Providing people with disabilities unequal benefits, such as a lesser program or service. For example, people with disabilities cannot be limited to attend only certain performances at a theater.
- Providing a separate, segregated service. The law requires that persons with disabilities be served in integrated settings. In the event that a "special" service is offered, the person with a disability has a right to refuse the "special" service and opt for the standard service provided to others. For example, in a hotel, a person has the right to refuse the first floor "accessible" room offered, and opt to use a standard room.

What about those of us working on college campuses? How does changing attitudinal barriers apply to us?

Any group or individual offering courses or administering exams must offer them in a place and manner accessible to individuals with documented disabilities.

The manner in which the course is conducted, or the nature of the materials distributed, may be altered to accommodate the needs of one or more students with disabilities.

The law does not require that the essential elements of the course be altered, nor that academic standards be changed. We must, however, make appropriate reasonable accommodations. For example, deaf students may need to use an interpreter. Someone with partial sight may need to tape lectures. Individuals who use wheelchairs may need to use an alternative type of table, and would appreciate being able to choose where the table is located within the class, just as other students may choose their own seat.

The Office of Disability Resources will recommend the appropriate accommodations for each individual with a disability. If you are unsure what to do, talk to the person with the disability and/or contact the Office of Disability Resources. The staff will be happy to assist you.

If working with people with disabilities makes you nervous, admit it. If you are unsure of what to do in a situation, ask. Tell the student with a disability that you would like to get to know him better. Attending workshops on disability and diversity topics will assist you in learning the norms and etiquette.

On a daily basis, people with disabilities face attitudinal barriers. Finding a friendly person with a positive attitude, patience, an open mind, and flexibility will be a welcome change of pace. Begin with a basis of respect: treat persons with disabilities with the same dignity and respect you have come to expect of others toward you. With a climate of respect for each person as an individual, we can create acceptance toward, and comfort for, people with all differences in our college community.

(Written by Monica Hebert and Mary Ann Price of St. Louis Community College)

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Working with Students with Disabilities

Each student brings a unique set of strengths and experiences to college. Students with disabilities are no different. While many learn in a different way, their differences do not imply inferior abilities. Students with disabilities have qualified for your course because of their abilities. They met the same standard of admission and the same prerequisites as any other student.

When working with students who have disabilities, it is important to remember the following:

- Treat them like the intelligent adults they are.
- Respect their privacy; do not make them discuss their needs in front of others.
- Keep an open mind and avoid skepticism or hostility.
- Keep all shared disability information confidential.
- Be direct in your communication and, when unsure about something, ask the student directly.

Most students with disabilities will present you with their accommodation letter either before the semester starts or during the first two weeks. Others, especially those with “hidden” disabilities, may delay disclosure. Students delay exposure for a variety of reasons. They may not anticipate the need for accommodations because they are unfamiliar with the discipline’s demands, they may be embarrassed, or they may fear the instructor will not believe the legitimacy of their need for accommodation. These students may delay disclosure until just before an examination or until they have academic difficulty.

Students with disabilities are entitled to the same opportunities as any other students in the course. This includes the right to demonstrate excellence and the right to fail. However, if a student with a disability fails your examination, you might ask yourself whether he or she failed to learn the material or simply failed to understand the format of your test.

Words with Dignity

Acceptable	Not Acceptable
Person with a disability/disabled/disability	Cripple/handicapped/handicap/invalid
Person who has cerebral palsy	Victim (e.g., victim of cerebral palsy)
Person who experienced	Afflicted by/afflicted with
Person who uses a wheelchair	Restricted, confined to a wheelchair/wheelchair bound. The chair enables mobility. Without the chair the person is confined to bed.
Non-disabled	Normal (referring to non-disabled persons as "normal" insinuates that people with disabilities are abnormal)
Deaf/without speech/nonverbal	Deaf mute/deaf and dumb
Disabled since birth	Birth defect
Emotional disorder/mental illness	Crazy/insane
Seizures	Fits
Developmental delay	Slow

Other terms which should be avoided because they have negative connotations and tend to evoke pity include:

abnormal	disfigured	physically challenged
burden	incapacitated	spastic
condition	imbecile	stricken with
deformed	palsied	suffer
differently abled	pathetic	unfortunate

Preferred Terminology:

Blind (no visual capability)

Visually impaired (some visual capability)

Deaf/profoundly deaf (no hearing capability)

Hearing impaired (some hearing capability)

Hemiplegia (paralysis of one side of the body)

Quadriplegia (paralysis of both arms and legs)

Paraplegia (loss of function in lower body only)

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Role of Faculty

Faculty have the following responsibilities:

- To make an announcement at the beginning of each semester regarding the willingness to discuss accommodations with students.
- To include a statement in all syllabi regarding your willingness to accommodate students with disabilities. See Appendix A for an example of a syllabus statement.
- To meet as quickly as possible with students who request an appointment to discuss their accommodation letter.
- To hold students with disabilities to the same academic and behavior standards as all students.
- To insure that the proposed accommodation does not substantially alter curriculum standards. Following are questions to ask in order to do so:
 - What is essential to the course or program of study in content, teaching procedures, format of class presentation, and requirements?
 - What are accepted levels of performance on these measures?
 - Are the accommodations requested preserving or compromising the above-defined elements?
- To contact the Office of Disability Resources if there are questions about the appropriateness of a required accommodation (654-1266).
- To contact the ADA Compliance Officer, Sabrina Johnson, if issues regarding appropriateness are not resolved with the Office of Disability Resources.
- To continue to provide the accommodation until a resolution has been determined.
- To uphold the confidentiality of students' disability related issues. See Preserving Confidentiality.
- To assist the student in contacting the Office of Disability Resources when a student requests an accommodation without an accommodations letter from the Office of Disability Resources.

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Accommodation Letters

Once the Office of Disability Resource has determined that a student has a disability and has conferred with the student about reasonable and appropriate accommodations for the disability that are both reasonable and appropriate, they will write a letter to the student's instructors. The director and the student will sign the letter. The student must make an appointment with the instructor in order to present the letter and discuss the accommodations listed in the letter. The student is not required to present the accommodation letter at the start of the semester. However, the instructor is not required to provide an accommodation until he/she receives the letter. Students must provide instructors with accommodation letters each semester.

The letter will not specify the student's disability, since this would be a violation of the student's right to privacy. The student may or may not choose to divulge his/her disability to the instructor. The letter WILL specify the accommodations that the Office of Disability Resources has agreed upon with the student. If you, the instructor, do not understand the accommodations requested, please call the Office of Disability Resources as soon as possible for clarification.

For samples of the accommodation cover letter and accommodation request form, Please see Appendix B.

For brief descriptions of common disabling conditions, please see Appendix C.

Examples of Academic Accommodations

Blindness

- Verbal descriptions of visual aids
- Raised-line drawings and tactile models of graphic materials
- Braille lab signs and equipment labels, auditory lab warning signals
- Adaptive lab equipment (e.g., talking thermometers and calculators, light probes, and tactile timers)
- Computer with optical character reader, voice output, Braille screen display and printer output

Health Impairment

- Note taker
- Flexible attendance requirements and extra exam time
- Assignments made available in electronic format; use of E-mail to facilitate communication

Hearing Impairment

- Interpreter, real-time captioning, FM system, and/or note taker
- Closed-captioned films, use of visual aids
- Written assignments, lab instructions, demonstration summaries
- Visual warning for lab emergencies
- Use of e-mail for class and private discussions

Learning Disability

- Note takers and/ or audio-taped class sessions, captioned films
- Extra exam time, alternative testing arrangements
- Visual, aural, and tactile instructional demonstrations
- Computer with voice output, spellchecker, and grammar checker

Mobility Impairment

- Note taker/ lab assistant; group lab assignments
- Classrooms, labs, and field trips in accessible locations
- Adjustable tables; lab equipment located within reach
- Class assignments made available in electronic format
- Computer equipped with special input device (e.g., voice input or alternative keyboard)

Visual Impairment

- Seating near front of class
- Large print handouts, lab signs, and equipment labels
- Computer equipped to enlarge screen characters and images

Preserving Confidentiality: Discussing Accommodation Needs

Where:

Because students have differing attitudes regarding their disability, it is best to be on the safe side and ask if they would like to discuss accommodation needs in your office rather than in the classroom.

How:

It is best to talk in terms of how the student will function or is functioning rather than talking about the specific disability. Some students will disclose their specific disability freely and others prefer to discuss only their accommodation needs. The student has the right to withhold information or details of their disability.

Discussion of Disability with Staff of the Office of Disability Resources:

Disclosure of the student's specific disability can only be made by the student or with the student's permission.

Discussion of Disability with Other Staff:

Oftentimes other faculty have encountered the same accommodation dilemmas. It is a wonderful idea to brainstorm and problem-solve access issues. Remember to talk in terms of functions and refrain from mentioning the student's name.

Accommodation Letters - Confidentiality:

The information on accommodation letters is confidential and is to be shared only with the student. Please destroy them after you have read them or temporarily store them in a confidential place and destroy them later.

Student Disclosure of Disability:

If a student tells you about his/her disability, you are then obligated to maintain confidentiality regarding the student's disability. He/she is not obligated to answer any questions you may have about their disability such as types of medication they are taking, treatment, or history.

Classroom Confidentiality:

Instructors should request volunteer note takers in class without any indication of who needs the notes. The instructor should not ask the student to make the request in front of class. Testing accommodations should be kept confidential as well.

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Tips on Providing Classroom Accommodations

Accessible desk/writing surface in lecture halls, labs, and computer labs

The Office of Disability Resources has special tables placed in classrooms for students who need them. These tables have a “handicapped” symbol fastened to them. Please make sure that the students who are given this accommodation are allowed to sit in them. If the student uses a wheelchair, make sure that there are no obstructions that prevent the student from getting to the table.

Closed-captioned videos

Please see Appendix D.

Copies of transparencies

Please give hard copies to the student before the class in which the transparencies are used so that the student can follow along.

Discount spelling errors on in-class and hand-written assignments

Please see Appendix E.

Enlarged handouts

Ask the student what font size he/she prefers. If you need to make an enlargement of a document that can't be enlarged by changing the font in a computer file, you may need to enlarge it on a photocopier. Please give these copies to the student before the class in which the handouts are used so that he/ she can follow along.

Extended test time

Discuss with the student before the exam how this will be provided. For example, in some cases, the classroom will be available after the class and the student can stay there longer to finish the exam. In other cases, you will need to make arrangements for the student to take the exam in another location and/or at another time.

Occasional exceptions to absentee/ tardiness policies

Discuss this with the student before the absences occur, such as how you expect the student to make up the work. If there is no way to make up a particular activity (such as critiquing other students' presentations) and you can make a case for that being an essential element of the course, please call the director to discuss the matter.

Occasional extension of due dates

Discuss this with the student before the situation occurs, such as how you expect the student to make up the work. If there is no way to make up a particular activity (such as presentations) and you can make a case for that being an essential element of the course, please call the director to discuss the matter.

One final per day

You may need to schedule your final for this student for another time. It is acceptable, however, to insist that the exam be taken before the scheduled exam.

Preferential seating

Ask the student where he/ she prefers to sit. At the beginning of the semester, you may need to assist the student in asking other students to move so that the required seat is available.

Provide assignments in writing

This is self-explanatory. However, this also applies to exams. If you give verbal instructions about the exam, you should have written instructions for the student with this accommodation.

Scantron – permission to write on test

Grade this student's exam manually or transfer the answers to a Scantron sheet for the student.

Special straight-backed chair

The Office of Disability Resources will place chairs in classrooms when a student needs them. These chairs will have a sign with the "handicapped" symbol attached. Please make sure that this chair is reserved for the student who is given this accommodation.

Testing in a distraction-reduced environment

Locate a private, quiet space in your classroom building where the student can take exams. Distractions can be either from noise or from visual stimuli. If you cannot locate such a space, call the director for advice.

Use of calculator during tests

This is self-explanatory. However, if you can make a case that computation is an essential element of the course, please call the director to discuss the matter.

Use of CCTV or enlarged printout of test

A CCTV is a closed circuit television that enlarges documents placed under its camera. One such device is available in the Computer Access Center for the Visually Impaired in Monroe 208. Call the director to make reservations for the student. For enlarged printouts, ask the student the font size preferred. If you need to make an enlargement of a test that can't be enlarged by changing the font in a computer file, you may need to enlarge it on a copier.

Use of a class note taker

Please see Appendix F.

Use of computer with spell check/grammar check during essay exams

This is self-explanatory. Usually, the student will bring a laptop computer to class. In some cases, you will need to find a computer in a computer lab for the student to use.

Use of scribe for Scantron sheets

The Office of Disability Resources will provide someone to transfer the student's answers to a Scantron sheet.

Use of a sign language interpreter or cued speech transliterator

Please see Appendix G.

Use of a tape recorder in the classroom

Please see Appendix H.

Useful Teaching Techniques

There is no need to dilute curriculum or reduce course requirements for students with disabilities. However, reasonable accommodations may be needed, as well as modifications in the way information is presented and in methods of testing and evaluation.

Below you will find examples of teaching techniques in the classroom, laboratory, examinations, and fieldwork that benefit all students, but are especially useful for students who have disabilities.

Classroom

- Select course materials early so that students (those who need to do so) and the Office of Disability Resources have enough time to translate them to electronic text or Braille.
- Provide comprehensive syllabi with clearly identified course requirements, accommodation statement and due dates.
- Make syllabi, short assignment sheets, and reading lists available in electronic format (e.g., disk, or e-mail).
- Put course content on-line allowing students to “pick up” material that might have been missed in lecture.
- Face the class when speaking. Repeat discussion questions.
- Write key phrases and lecture outlines on the blackboard or overhead projector.
- Vary instructional methods and provide illustrations, handouts, and auditory and visual aids.
- Use peer mentoring, group discussions, and cooperative learning situations rather than strictly lecture.
- Use guided notes to enable students to listen for essential concepts without copying notes off of overhead.
- Develop study guides.
- Use technology to increase accessibility.
- Clarify any feedback or instructions, ask for questions, and repeat or give additional examples.

Laboratory

- Take the student on a tour of the lab he/she will be working in. Discuss safety concerns.
- Assign group projects in which all students contribute according to their abilities.
- Arrange lab equipment so that it is easily accessible.
- Give oral and written lab instructions.

Examinations and Fieldwork

- Assure that exams test the essential skills or knowledge needed for the course or field of study.
- Give more frequent exams that are shorter in length
- Allow for multiple methods of demonstrating understanding of essential course content
- Some students will require extra time to transcribe or process test questions; follow campus policies regarding extra time on tests.
- Allow students to demonstrate knowledge of the subject through alternate means
- Consider allowing students to turn in exams via e-mail or diskette.
- Ask the student how he/she might be able to do specific aspects of fieldwork. Attempt to include the student in fieldwork opportunities, rather than automatically suggesting non-field work alternatives.
- Include special needs in requests for field trip vehicle reservation.

Accommodation Cover Letter

Accommodation Form

Appendix A

Sample Syllabus Statement

All faculty should include a statement inviting students to discuss their accommodation needs. The essential elements of this statement should include:

- The Office of Disability Resources is available to assist students with disabilities.
- Students should make an appointment with you to discuss their accommodation needs.
- All information will be held in the strictest confidence.

The following is an example:

“The Office of Disability Resources has been designated by the college as the primary office to guide, counsel, and assist students with disabilities. If you receive Resources through the Office of Disability Resources and require accommodations for this class, make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss your approved accommodation needs. Bring your accommodation letter with you to the appointment. I will hold any information you share with me in strictest confidence unless you give me permission to do otherwise.

If you have not made contact with the Office of Disability Resources and have reasonable accommodation needs, (note taking assistance, extended time for tests, etc.), I will be happy to refer you. The office will require appropriate documentation of disability.”

Appendix C

Brief Summaries of Common Disabling Conditions

Every person with a disability is an individual, with their own mixture of strengths and weaknesses. No one student will have all the symptoms of a particular disorder. Students with the same disorder will require different accommodations. With that in mind, you will find below a short description of some of the more common disabilities on college campuses.

Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Attention Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

These developmental disabilities are characterized by inattentiveness, impulsivity, and in the case of hyperactivity disorder, restlessness or excessive activity. To receive such a diagnosis, the student must have displayed several symptoms of inattention or hyperactivity/ impulsivity before age 7 and to a degree that is maladaptive and inconsistent with developmental level. A large percentage of individuals with ADD have learning disabilities and /or other conditions such as anxiety disorders and depression. Most students with the diagnosis are treated medically, though some receive psychotherapy.

Students with ADD or ADHD may have difficulty following lectures due to inconsistent concentration and attention. They may be chronically late to class or excessively absent. During activities that require focused attention, they may appear fidgety or sleepy. They often have difficulty with organization, including organization of their thoughts, and time management. Students with ADD often have difficulty pacing themselves. They may have difficulty focusing on major points while getting too involved in details.

Blind or Visually Impaired

Each student with a visual impairment is different. Most have useable vision and require only slight modifications. Students with low vision may be able to see fairly well in one situation but less well in others. A student is considered if his/her vision is no better than 20/70 with correction in the better eye. If the better eye is no better than 20/200 with correction, that person is legally blind. Having 20/200 vision means that one can see at 20 feet what a person with 20/20 vision can see at 200 feet. A student who is legally blind may still have a great deal of vision. One legally blind student might be able to read standard-size print at a very close range while another might need to have it enlarged or read to them. Another might have no vision and use Braille and a service dog.

Chronic Health Impairments

These impairments may result in limited strength, vitality, and alertness. Some examples of these disorders are cystic fibrosis, diabetes, sickle cell anemia, cancer, hemophilia, AIDS, muscular dystrophy, rheumatoid arthritis, and asthma. At times, these health impairments may require bed rest or hospitalization. The student's physical condition often varies from day to day. Three common characteristics of chronic health impairments are chronic, long-term nature of the disorder, lack of overt signs/ symptoms of impairments, and the need for frequent medical care.

Hearing Impairment or Deafness

Deaf students vary in their communication needs and preferences. Lip reading is only a partial solution since students usually only understand 25% to 45% of what is being said. Other forms of communication include sign language, a combination of sign language, finger spelling and speech, cued speech, or writing.

Many deaf students can and do speak. Some deaf students cannot automatically control the tone and volume of their speech or it may be difficult to understand the enunciation of specific sounds at first. Some students who do not speak choose to do so because they believe their speech will not be understood. Because American Sign Language is the most common form of communication for deaf persons, errors made in written English can result from grammatical differences in the structure of the two languages.

If a deaf student wears a hearing aid, one should not assume that he/ she can understand the spoken word. Furthermore, background noises can interfere with and distort the sound amplification of a student's hearing aid, making speech discrimination difficult. In addition, the student may have difficulty discriminating speech when more than one person is speaking.

Physical Disabilities

Orthopedic or physical disabilities may interfere with motor functioning, communication, academic, or social skills. Examples include disabilities present since birth such as cerebral palsy or spina bifida and those resulting from other causes such as spinal cord injury.

Cerebral palsy is characterized by an inability to fully control motor function. The condition is caused most commonly by damage to the brain during pregnancy, labor, or shortly after birth. Depending on the extent of damage to the central nervous system, one or more of the following may occur: increased or decreased muscle tone, spasms, involuntary movement, disturbance of gait and mobility, abnormal sensation and perception, and impairment of vision, hearing, or speech. It may or may not have an effect on cognitive functioning.

Spinal Cord Injury

Spinal Cord Injury causes paralysis of certain parts of the body, depending on the location of the damage. Paraplegia refers to paralysis from approximately the waist down while quadriplegia refers to paralysis from approximately the shoulders down. In addition to loss of sensation and mobility, spinal cord injuries can result in impairment of the bladder and bowel.

Medical conditions such as arthritis, fibromyalgia, cardiovascular disorders, and muscular dystrophy may also result in mobility and coordination impairments.

Psychiatric/ Psychological Disabilities

Serving students with psychiatric disabilities on campus is relatively new. Their impairments may be hidden and have little or no effect on learning or their emotional disturbances may manifest themselves in negative behavior ranging from indifference to disruptiveness. Such conduct makes it hard to remember that they have as little control over their disabilities as do students with physical disabilities. This does not mean, however, that instructors must allow disruptive behavior in their classrooms.

Probably the most common psychiatric impairment among students is clinical depression. It may be manifested as a pathological sense of helplessness and hopelessness. It may appear as apathy, inattention, impaired concentration, irritability, or as fatigue or other physical symptoms.

Anxiety disorders are also common. Severe anxiety may reduce concentration, distort perception, and interfere with learning. Anxiety may manifest itself as withdrawal, constant talking, complaining, joking, or crying, or extreme fear to the point of panic. Panic attacks may include hyperventilation, tachycardia, nausea, or fainting.

Some students take prescription medications to help control disturbing feelings and behaviors. Sometimes these medications have undesirable side effects such as drowsiness, dry mouth, or disorientation.

Seizure Disorders or Epilepsy

Epilepsy refers to a sudden, brief change in the brain's functioning. Epilepsy involves recurring seizures of various types, ranging from massive convulsions to momentary lapses of attention, marked only by a momentary stare or random movement. Between seizures, most people with epilepsy are normal and healthy. Drug therapy results in partial to full control of seizures in most cases.

Depending on the type of seizure (generalized, when all brain cells are involved, or partial, limited to one part of the brain), the following are characteristics:

- "Blackouts" or periods of confused memory
- Episodes of staring or unexplained periods of unresponsiveness
- Involuntary movement of arms and legs
- "Fainting spells" followed by excessive fatigue
- Odd sounds

Specific Learning Disabilities

This refers to a group of disorders signaled by significant difficulties in listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, and/ or mathematical abilities. This disorder is presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunctions. Learning disabilities include minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, developmental aphasia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia.

Students with learning disabilities have average to superior intellectual ability. University of Mary Washington students with learning disabilities have met the same admission requirements as other UMW students. In a student with learning disabilities, there is a

marked discrepancy between achievement and potential. Specific ability levels differ dramatically within the same individual.

There may be a noticeable difference between oral contributions in class and written work on class essays, tests, or papers. Students often have auditory or visual processing deficits. They typically have trouble taking information in through the senses and interpreting that information in a restricted time frame. For example, a very articulate, knowledgeable student may have difficulty reading and interpreting a set of written instructions. Others may be unable to write effectively. Long and short term auditory and/or visual memory deficits are common.

Because of perceptual deficits, some students with learning disabilities are slow to grasp social cues and respond inappropriately.

Traumatic Brain Injury

Brain injury can result from trauma caused by external events such as automobiles accidents and gunshot wounds or from internal events such as tumors, strokes, or infections of the brain.

Each student with a brain injury is different. Memory deficits are probably the most common result of brain injury. Memory of previously acquired knowledge is usually intact despite difficulty in acquiring new information and storing it for immediate recall. Most injuries result in some degree of impairment in the following areas: memory, cognition, perception, speed of thinking, communication, spatial reasoning, psychosocial behaviors and motor, sensory, and physical abilities. Fatigue and medications may affect attention and concentration. Students often take longer to process information and, therefore, display a slower response time.

Language functions such as writing, reading, speaking, and listening might be impaired. The student may have trouble comprehending written or spoken information under time pressure. Spatial reasoning deficits might result in difficulties with mathematics and reading maps.

Common types of psychological behavioral difficulties include depression, withdrawal, denial, frustration, irritability, lability, impulsiveness, disinhibition, and apathy. Head injuries may impair motor abilities or create seizure activity.

Appendix D

Closed-Captioned Videos and Equipment

What is closed-captioning?

Closed-captioning is television or video in which the audio portion of the programming is displayed as text superimposed over the video. Closed-captioning information is encoded and transmitted within the television signal. The closed-captioning text is not ordinarily visible. In order to view closed-captioning, viewers must use either a set-top decoder or a television receiver with integrated decoder circuitry.

Why is closed-captioning necessary?

Captioned videos give deaf and hard-of-hearing persons (as well as those with auditory processing disabilities) access to auditory presentation of information.

How can I tell if a video is closed-captioned?

Check the video's jacket cover for the "cc" icon.

Do all departments on campus have a TV monitor that is closed-caption-capable?

No. However, there is at least one monitor in every academic building.

How do I know if a TV monitor is caption-capable?

All newer models over 13" diameter (post-1993) are caption-capable. Look on the back of the set to find the manufactured year.

What if I need to use a television without the closed-captioning option?

Both the Office of Disability Resources and the Multimedia Center have MYCAP decoders that can adapt any monitor so that it shows the closed-captions. The Multimedia Center can assist with installing the decoder.

How do I operate the closed-captioned feature?

Use the remote to get to the menu that has this feature and then select "closed-captioning."

How do I know that I need to show closed-captioned videos?

When a student requests this through the Office of Disability Resources, you will receive a letter from the office.

What if I want to show an instructional video that is not available in closed-captioned format?

Contact the Office of Disability Resources (preferably at the beginning of the semester) and notify us of the name of the video with the date and production company. We will attempt to find the video in closed-caption format. If it is not available, we will ask that you send us the video to be transcribed. Please allow at least 2 weeks for a 30-minute video.

Appendix E

Spelling Accommodations

Does this mean the student can turn in work with spelling errors?

It depends...

- For homework assignments and out-of-class projects, the student is responsible for turning in papers free of spelling errors just like any other student.
- For in-class assignment and tests the student should receive spelling accommodations.

Would you explain what you mean by spelling accommodations?

Spelling accommodations might be....

- Permission to use a spell-checking device
- Permission to use a word processor with spell checking
- Permission to have the work proofed
- No penalty for spelling errors
- Permission to use an instructor-approved "word list"

How do I know which method of accommodation to use?

Deciding which accommodation to use is dependent upon the purpose of the test or in-class assignment and the student's ability to use the technology. Sometimes the situation dictates which accommodation is appropriate. For example, it will take longer for the student to use a dictionary and if extended time is not possible, another method of accommodating might be necessary. A discussion between the student and the instructor usually results in finding a workable solution.

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Appendix F

Use of a Class Note Taker

You may accomplish this in any of four different ways:

- Ask for a volunteer in class to provide this service. The student with a disability will provide you with note taker paper in a binder. Your request for a volunteer might be something like this: “I have been asked to announce the need for a volunteer, who takes good notes, to share a copy of his/ her lecture notes with a student with a disability in this class. The volunteer will be provided with a binder and note taker paper. The carbonless paper creates a duplicate copy as you write, so that notes will not need to be photocopied.” In order to limit disclosure of the student’s disability, ask the volunteer to give you the duplicate copies immediately after each class. The student with a disability is responsible for picking them up from you after class.
- Ask for a volunteer (using language similar to the above suggestion) and then have the volunteer pick up the note taker binder from the department secretary. The volunteer can then leave the copies with the secretary after each class.
- Allow the student to give the note taker paper and binder to a friend in the class if he/ she prefers.
- Photocopy the notes of the volunteer and give them to the student with a disability after class.

The student with the disability must take notes as well, unless he/ she is physically unable to do so. In addition, **the student should not receive copies of notes for any classes he/ she did not attend.**

If you are unable to find a volunteer, please contact our office as soon as possible.

Appendix G

Use of a Sign Language Interpreter

Positioning:

- Allow the interpreter to stand or sit in a well-lit area with clear visibility for the student. Never ask the interpreter to stand in front of a window or other light source since this would make him/ her difficult to see.
- When speaking to the student in a one-on-one situation, position the interpreter slightly behind you and slightly to the side so that the student can see both you and the interpreter.
- For large group presentations, such as a class, the interpreter should be positioned near you.
- If the student is speaking before a large group and requires an interpreter for voicing, give the interpreter a microphone and position him/ her facing the student.

General guidelines:

- Speak clearly in a normal volume and at a natural pace. Do not exaggerate lip movements.
- Speak directly to the student who is deaf or hard of hearing. Do not use phrases like “tell her” or “ask him.”
- When the interpreter says “I” or “me” that those are the direct words of the student, not the interpreter.
- Do not speak privately to the working interpreter since everything you say will be interpreted.
- The student will maintain eye contact with the interpreter and not you.
- In situations where interpreting is necessary for two hours or more, two interpreters will be on site, switching duties as the one who is interpreting becomes fatigued.
- Students who are deaf and blind may use a “tactile” interpreter. In this case, the student will touch the interpreter while he/ she is interpreting.

Appendix H

Taping Lectures

Can an instructor forbid a student with a disability to use a tape recorder in class?

No, not if it has been approved as an accommodation for the student's disability in providing meaningful access to the educational experience. Tape recorders are one of the accommodations specifically mentioned in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

According to the regulations:

Students with disabilities who are unable to take or read notes have the right to tape record class lectures only for their personal study.

Lectures taped for personal study may not be shared with other people without the consent of the lecturer.

Tape-recorded lectures may not be used in any way against the faculty member, other lecturers, or students whose classroom comments are taped as part of the class activity.

Information contained in the tape-recorded lecture is protected under federal copyright laws and may not be published or quoted without the express consent of the lecturer and without giving proper identity and credit to the lecturer.

Classes That Involve Self-Disclosure From Students

Occasionally, instructors object to the use of a tape recorder in classes that involve a great deal of self-disclosure from students as part of the class, fearing that the tape recorder will inhibit students from freely sharing. The use of a tape recorder is to replace the student's note taking ability. If these open discussions are not appropriate subject matter for any student to be taking notes, it would not be inappropriate to ask the student with disability to turn off the tape recorder during these periods.

Instructor's Right To Privacy In The Classroom

If an instructor objects to the use of a tape recorder, it is typically because they maintain that their right to privacy of information discussed in the classroom is being violated. The instructor's right to privacy does not override the student's right to accommodation. It is the responsibility of the Office of Disability Resources to see that the instructor's concern for privacy is respected and addressed while still assuring the availability of accommodation for the student. In many instances this has been accomplished through the adoption of a contract between the instructor and student that details the specific limited use of the tapes and makes arrangements for their disposal when the function has been fulfilled.

Sample Tape-Recording Agreement

I understand that, as a student enrolled at the University of Mary Washington who has a disability that affects my ability to take or read notes, I have the right to tape record my class lectures for use in my personal studies only. I realize that lectures taped for this reason may not be shared with other people without the written consent of the lecturer. I also understand that tape recorded lectures may not be used in any way against the faculty member, other lecturer, or students whose classroom comments are taped as part of the class activity.

I am aware that the information contained in the tape recorded lectures is protected under federal copyright laws and may not be published or quoted without the expressed consent of the lecturer and without giving proper identification and credit to the lecturer. I agree to abide by these guidelines with regard to any lectures I tape while enrolled as a student at the institution.

Student Signature

Signature of Lecturer

Signature of Witness

Date

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