Accommodating Students with Disabilities

“You are the Key to Accessibility” Seminar for Faculty and Staff

Presented by:
Disability Resource Services
165 Murphy Library
Telephone 785-6900
e-mail: ability@uwlax.edu
Web www.uwlax.edu/drs

Developed by Utah State University. Project supported by a grant from U.S. Department of Education Office of Post Secondary Education. P33A990006
## Study of Incoming Freshmen

National Growth in Students with Disabilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage of Freshmen with Disabilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>11.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As reported in the HEATH Resource Center
DRS Services

- Advocating
- Evaluating eligibility
- Coordinating/providing accommodations
- Providing training/support to faculty and students
Laws That Apply to Higher Education

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Equal Access)
- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- Wisconsin University System Policy
SECTION 504

It is a Civil Rights Statute

- It is **not** a promise of:
  - affirmative action
  - program and services design
  - existing rules will be waived

- It does promise:
  - equal access

- It does result in:
  - increasing students with disabilities
  - knowledge they have a right to access
  - insisting on that right
Americans with Disabilities Act (1990)

- Civil rights act for people with disabilities
- Extends Section 504
- Prohibits discrimination in private sector employment
- Ensures access to public accommodations, public services, transportation and telecommunications
- Modifications made to policies, practices and procedures so they aren’t the basis for exclusion.
Four Implications of the Laws

- Those who have otherwise qualified for admission have a right to be here.
- Students, once admitted, have a right to access academic and non-academic programs.
- Qualified students are eligible to receive reasonable accommodations that relate to their disability.
- Students have a right to confidentiality of all disability-related information.
*Never* a factor

- Exceptions must be considered case by case
- Never say “*never!*”
- If someone says, “We never make exceptions” is almost certainly a violation of the ADA.
Confidentiality

- Disability information
  - is a very sensitive issue
  - considered highly confidential
  - on need-to-know basis, necessary only in order to take a specific action.
Steps in the Accommodation Process

1. Getting to the DRS
2. Meeting the eligibility requirements
3. Deciding on specific accommodations
4. Implementing the accommodation plan
5. Revising the accommodation plan
Step 1: Getting to the DRS
How do students find out about DRS?

- May be referred prior to enrollment by parents or a high school counselor

- Accommodation statement on syllabi or other university documents or faculty referral
Any student with a documented disability who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact the instructor and the Disability Resource Services office (165 Murphy Library) at the beginning of the semester.
Why go through the DRS? (Especially if the disability is obvious)

- The university’s designated office responsible for determining and authorizing accommodations
- Protects faculty members and the institution
- Students need appropriate support and rights of confidentiality protected
Step 2: Meeting Eligibility Requirements

- A formal diagnostic assessment
- The basis for determining eligibility
- The responsibility of the DRS (not faculty)
- Kept confidential
- The student is responsible to provide documentation of the diagnosis.
Eligibility Standards

- ADA eligibility criteria
  - can’t screen out persons with disabilities on the basis of that disability

- Technical Standards
  - all nonacademic criteria found to be essential to participate in a program should be in writing
Who is disabled?

- Anyone with a physical or mental impairment that **substantially** limits one or more major activities.
- Anyone with a record of such impairment, regarded as having such or associated with persons with disabilities.
Medical Model

Disability is a deficiency or abnormality.

Disability resides in the individual.

The remedy is cure or normalization of the individual.

The agent of remedy is the professional.

Interactional Model

Disability is a difference. Being disabled, in itself, is neutral.

Disability derives from the interaction between the individual and society.

The remedy is a change in the interaction between the individual and society.

The agent of remedy can be the individual, an advocate, etc.

Carol Gill, Director
Chicago Institute of Disability Research
Substantial Limitations

- Permanent and long term
- Centrally important to daily life
- More than one area

- Severity
- Average person comparison
- Limitation linked to impairment
“Otherwise qualified”

- Someone is considered to be otherwise qualified if, with or without reasonable accommodation, they meet the same academic, professional, technical, or behavioral standards as others do.

- Can be otherwise not qualified when they reach the point of being admitted to a program.
Major Life Activities

- Breathing
- Sleeping
- Seeing
- Hearing
- Working
- Taking care of oneself
- Procreation
- Stooping
- Bending
- Walking
- Learning
Meaningful Access

- Physical Environment
- Program/Policy Environment
- Information Environment
- Attitudinal Environment
Curb-Cuts

- Physical curb-cut
- Electronic curb-cut
- Academic curb-cut
Step 3: Deciding on Specific Accommodations

- The student and the DRS counselor look at limitations.
- The counselor makes specific recommendations. Sometimes faculty may be involved.
Accommodation defined

- Aimed at lessening the impact of a disability
- Focused on mitigating the limitations caused by the disability
- Individualized for each person and each course
The university must provide accommodations

- Reasonable accommodations
- No charge
- Personal liability
- Undue hardship
Reasonable Accommodations

A reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment to a course, program, service, job, facility, or activity that enables a qualified person with a disability to have an equal opportunity.

Institutions are obligated to make reasonable accommodations only to known limitations of an otherwise qualified individual.
Appropriate Academic Accommodations/Modifications

- Course substitutions
- Extensions of time limits for degree completion
- Modifying the manner in which courses are conducted
- Modifications to course examinations
- Adapting classroom and laboratory equipment
Unreasonable Modifications

- Those that would fundamentally alter demonstrable academic or technical standards
- Those that substantially alter the nature of the benefit received from the course, program or service
- Those that present an undue hardship
- Those that pose a risk to self or others
Why should essential course-related information not be waived?

It would

- Compromise the student’s future.
- Compromise the integrity of the curriculum.
- Violate the intent of the law.
Who decides what the essential skills are?

- Counselors at the DRS are experts on disability issues and concerns.
- Faculty members are experts on course content and requirements.
- Faculty members need to identify skills that one must have to function to be competent.
Academic Modification Requires Balance Between Rights of students with disabilities to equal access and College’s right to maintain academic and technical standards integral to its mission.
What to do when a student brings an accommodation form

1. Read the form.
2. How accommodations will work in your class?
3. Implementing the accommodations.
4. If no concerns, sign the form and give to the student to return to DRS.
5. If concerns, contact the DRS counselor.
ACCOMMODATION REQUEST FORM

_____________ (Semester)

THIS FORM CERTIFIES THAT THE FOLLOWING STUDENT HAS PRESENTED THE NECESSARY DOCUMENTATION TO VERIFY THEIR DISABILITY.

STUDENT NAME

DRS ADVISOR

________________________

COURSE

INSTRUCTOR

In order to provide equal access to education, the following accommodations have been determined reasonable by the Disability Resource Services staff.

Testing in a distraction-reduced environment
Extended testing time for exams (time and a half)

These accommodations have been determined based on documentation indicating how the disability affects the student's functioning in an academic environment. The documentation is on file with Disability Resource Services and is confidential.

________________________

STUDENT

DATE

DRS STAFF

DATE

________________________

INSTRUCTOR

DATE

Will you be able to provide the testing in your area? YES NO

This request form is for the current semester only. After all signatures are obtained, verification will be e-mailed to the instructor.
Step 4: Implementing Accommodation Plan

- Student tells you will need some accommodations
- Student should have a DRS Accommodations Form recommending specific accommodations.
- If the student does not have the accommodation form, guide him or her to the DRS office
Once the student provides the Accommodation Form...

- Review DRS recommendations/discuss delivery of accommodations.
- Maintain student confidentiality.
- Complete your portion of the form.
- The student will then bring it back to the DRS office and we will process and verify the accommodation form via e-mail.
What about requests for retroactive accommodations late in the semester?

- A student has the right to request disability-related accommodations at any time.
- Accommodations begin when the student is determined eligible for services.
- Faculty are not required to grant accommodations retroactively.
The accommodation plan is designed to consider . . .

- Implications of the student’s disability.
- How activities required for each course are affected.
- Limitations to acquiring and applying knowledge.
- Related course materials and labs.
- Essential skills of each course.

Levels the playing field
Step 5: Revising the Accommodation Plan

- Discuss your concerns with the DRS staff.
- Ask the DRS for clarification of the Request.
- Meet with the DRS counselor/student.
- Continue to provide the approved accommodations. Do not argue with the student.
- Adapt the plan and make it reasonable and helpful to the student.
What if accommodations become intrusive/unreasonable?

- Most accommodations should not be very time consuming.
- Faculty are not obligated to tutor students.
- Faculty can refer the student for tutoring, counseling, or other relevant programs.
In Summary: What can you do?

- State your course requirements clearly on the syllabus.
- Include a statement about students with disabilities and a reference to DRS on all syllabi.
- Apply performance standards consistently.
- Refer all requests for disability-related accommodations to the DRS.
- Maintain student confidentiality.
- Create an accepting and open environment.
Types of Accommodations

- Note-taking
- Recording lectures
- Alternative media (books, notes, movies, etc.)
- Alternative test taking
- Interpreters
- Guide dogs
Testing Accommodations

- Give students accurate and equitable opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills
- Collaboration with DRS, Student and Instructor
- The most common accommodation
- Should not compromise academic integrity
- Communication is essential

(Show Forms)
Disability Resource Services
Exam Checklist

To be completed by instructor – seal exam in envelope and attach the exam checklist to outside of envelope. Hand deliver to, DRS 165 Murphy.

Student’s Name_____________________________________
Class______________________________________________
Instructor__________________________________________
Date of Exam_____________ Time of Exam______________
Circle items the student may use:
Notes      Open Book      Calculator      Dictionary

Special Instructions: ________________________________

How would you like DRS to return the test? ______________
_________________________________________________

***************************************************

To be completed by Disability Resource Services

Name of Staff Member Returning_______________________

Exam returned to: (please circle)
Instructor            Under Instructor’s Door
Instructor’s Mailbox  Department Secretary

Other______________________________

Date/Time Exam Returned_____________________________
MEMO TO: Instructor

This exam was administered:

STUDENT:_____________________
DATE:_________________________
TIME:_________________________

If this time/date does not meet your approval, please contact the student. The student should schedule the test for the same time as the rest of the class. It is the student’s responsibility to clear any other time with the instructor.
Note-taking

- Note takers are available for students who have a difficult time writing and/or following class lectures
- Who this might help: Students with learning disabilities, ADHD, OCD
- Helpful hints:
  - Give copies of over heads, outlines, and lecture notes or post to D2L
  - Handout materials in advance for preview or formatting
  - Use larger font size and stronger contrast on visuals
***ATTENTION INSTRUCTOR***

RE: CLASSROOM NOTE PROVIDER NEEDED

FROM: June Reinert, Director of Disability Resource Services

MEMO TO: Instructor, COURSE:__________SECTION:__________

Please inform student and the Disability Resource Services office if you have classroom notes available on the Internet, handouts or on reserve at the library.

An accommodation used by some student with disabilities is a note provider during lectures. To comply with Section 504 of the Federal Law, we need to accommodate this student with a note taker. Please announce that a note provider is needed. This is a volunteer position. Please do not reveal who needs the notes but direct potential note provider to sign up at the Disability Resource Services office at 165 Murphy Library. Thank you for your consideration for our students with special needs.
What are Alternative Media Accommodations?

- Alternative media accommodations are accommodations that alters the format of class material such as:
  - Textbooks
  - Articles
  - Handouts
  - Power point slides
  - exams
Alternative media accommodations may require reformatting

- Removing textbook bindings (Mobility)
- Converting the text into digital formats such as:
  - .PDF, .doc, .rtf, .kes, or .brf (Mobility, LD, Vision loss)
- Converting the text into Braille (Blindness)
  - Foreign language, and Math
- Consistent formatting with in documents such as Exams and forms
Alt-media is a shared responsibility

- Textbooks
  - Timely textbook decisions
- Articles
  - Clean copy
  - Post articles as PDF’s
- Handouts
  - Create and save as .doc
  - Work at eliminating Xerox copies
- Power point slides
  - Describe as you are presenting
  - May need to convert them as word documents
- Exams
  - Consistent formatting with in documents such as Exams and forms
By updating and changing it makes these materials accessible through Assistive Technology

- Textbooks
  - Timely textbook decisions
- Articles
  - Clean copy
  - Post articles as PDF’s
- Handouts
  - Create and save as .doc
  - Work at eliminating Xerox copies
- Power point slides
  - Describe as you are presenting
  - May need to convert them as word documents
- Exams
  - Consistent formatting within documents such as Exams and forms
What is Assistive Technology?

- Edyburn, D. L. (2000) stated:

  Assistive technology consists of devices and software that enhance the performance of an individual with a disability by enabling them to complete tasks more effectively, efficiently, and independently than otherwise possible.
References

“Universal design is the process of creating products (devices, environments, systems, and processes)….. which are usable by people with the widest possible range of abilities….. operating within the widest possible range of situations (environments, conditions, and circumstances).”

(Vanderheiden, 1996)
A3 Model

Advocacy Phase | Accommodation Phase | Accessibility Phase
---|---|---

Accessibility

Accommodation

Advocacy

Approaches to meet the needs of people with disabilities

Transition Over Time

©2001 and 2007 Schwanke, Smith, Edyburn
Advocacy in the A3 Model

- This person is waving, yelling, and knocking to draw attention to herself, to let others know that she needs assistance to get into the building.

Knocking of the door in the background
Accommodation in the A3 Model

- We anticipate a need. Here, a person waits by the door to assist people who need help.
Accessibility in the A3 Model

- This automatic doorway opens when rolled or walked upon, making the doorway accessible to everyone.
Expanding Upon the Idea

- The concept of UD in education applies to:
  - Facilities
  - Academic applications
    - Classroom instruction
    - Distance learning courses
    - Laboratory and fieldwork
  - Websites
“It is a dreadful irony that students with disabilities have better access to school buildings than they do to the curricula within them.”

(Dolan & Hall, 2001)
Design for Disability is Better
Design for Everyone
 UD and Learning Styles Theory

All students have *unique learning styles*

- ESL students,
- international students,
- non-traditional students,
- students with older computer technologies,
- students with disabilities,
- students with a learning style that differs from the instructor,
- all students
1. Open Class Climate

Adopt practices that reflect high values with respect to both diversity and inclusiveness.

For example:

Put a statement on your syllabus inviting students to meet with you to discuss disability-related accommodations and other special learning needs.
2. Optimize Physical Access, Usability, and Safety

Assure that activities, materials, and equipment are physically accessible to and usable by all students and that all potential student characteristics are addressed in safety considerations.

For example:

- Develop safety procedures for all students, including those who are blind, deaf, or wheelchair users.
- Label safety equipment simply, in large print, and in a location viewable from a variety of angles.
- Repeat printed directions orally.
3. Diversify Delivery Methods

*Use multiple accessible instructional methods*

For example:
Deliver content in a variety of ways - consider

- lectures,
- collaborative learning options,
- hands-on activities,
- Internet-based communications,
- educational software,
- field work, etc.
4. Use a Variety of Information Resources

Assure that course materials, notes, and other information resources are flexible and accessible to all students.

For example:
Choose printed materials and prepare a syllabus early. This allows students the option of beginning to read materials and work on assignments before the class begins - or -

adequate time to arrange for alternate formats, such as books on tape.
5. Encourage Interaction

Encourage effective interactions between students and between students and the instructor. Assure that communication methods are accessible to all participants.

For example: Assign group work where learners must support each other and where the group process places a high value on different skills and roles.
6. Increase the Frequency and Quality of Feedback

*Provide specific feedback on a regular basis*

For example:

Allow students to turn in parts of large projects for feedback before the final project is due.
7. Diversify Assessment Tools

Regularly assess student progress using multiple, accessible methods and tools and adjust instruction accordingly.

For example:
Assess group/cooperative performance as well as individual achievement.
8. Incorporate Accommodations as Needed

Plan for accommodations for students for whom the instructional design does not meet their needs

For example:

Know how and where to get materials in alternate formats, and arrange for other accommodations for students with disabilities, as requested.
12 Tips for Instructional Accommodation & Accessibility
Top 12 Tips for Universal Design in the Classroom

1. Provide crisp, high contrast printed handouts.
2. Encourage optimum classroom physical environment (lighting, noise, pathways, etc.).
3. Face the class when speaking.
4. Invite students to discuss any access issues with a statement on your syllabus and in the first class.
5. Verbally describe images on all slides and overheads.
6. Use a microphone when speaking.
7. Repeat student questions and comments out loud.
10. Provide text descriptions for all graphical items in instructional materials.
11. Consult the ACCESS-ed Website.
12. Consult your DARC (Department Accessibility Resource Coordinator).
There are staff and faculty in each department and/or unit to advocate for students with disabilities and to share disability information with their colleagues.
Web Site for Tips on Usage of UD in the College Classroom

- http://access-ed.r2d2.uwm.edu/