



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**TENNESSEE**  
KNOXVILLE

STUDENT DISABILITY SERVICES

# INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION GUIDE

This was created to provide a reference to assist faculty and instructors when working with students with disabilities.

## CONTACT INFORMATION:

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DIVISION OF STUDENT LIFE

## MISSION

The mission of Student Disability Services (SDS) is to partner with the campus community in creating equitable access for eligible students while promoting disability-inclusive diversity.

### **SDS accomplishes this mission by coordinating accommodations for students with disabilities such as:**

- Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Blind/Low Vision
- Chronic Health Disabilities
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- Learning Disabilities
- Mobility Disabilities
- Psychological/Emotional Health Disabilities
- Acquired/Traumatic Brain Injuries
- Temporary Injuries and Illnesses

## OVERVIEW

Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities.

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

“Qualified,” with respect to postsecondary education, means “a person who meets the academic and technical standards requisite to admission or participation in the education program or activity.”

Accommodations are determined on an individual basis, based on each student’s unique needs in relation to their disability.



The Student Disability Services Testing Center has adopted the standards of, and is certified by, the National Collegiate Testing Association.

# Examples of Possible Academic Accommodations

\*As adapted from DO-IT, University of Washington

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<b>Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder</b>	Alternative test location, note taker, extended test time, recording of lectures and discussions, appropriate seating in class, printed materials in alternative format, laptop for note taking, smart pen
<b>Autism Spectrum Disorder</b>	Alternative test location, appropriate seating in class, permission to leave classroom when disability-related needs arise, alternate assignments for group work and/or class presentations, laptop for note taking, marking answers on exam in lieu of Scantron
<b>Blind/Low Vision</b>	Appropriate seating in class, note taking, permission to record lectures and discussions, printed materials in alternate format, accessible media such as transcribed audio, electronic copy of exam for use with reading software
<b>Chronic Health Disabilities</b>	Note taking, extended test time, recording of lectures and discussions, alternative test location, permission to take breaks, food/drinks allowed, flexible attendance requirements
<b>Deaf/Hard of Hearing</b>	Sign Language interpreting and/or captioning services, assistive listening device, note taking, accessible media such as captioned videos, permission to leave classroom when disability-related needs arise
<b>Learning Disabilities</b>	Note taking, recording of lectures and discussions, extended test time, laptop for note taking, speech-to-text software, reading software, use of nonscientific calculator, smart pen, printed materials in alternate format
<b>Mobility Disabilities</b>	Note taking, permission to record lectures and discussions, extended test time, alternative test location, permission to leave classroom when disability-related needs arise, speech-to-text software, accessible classroom locations and furniture, laptop for note taking, food/drinks allowed
<b>Psychological/ Emotional Health Disabilities</b>	Flexible attendance requirements, alternative test location, note taking, recording of lectures and discussions, permission to take breaks as disability-related needs arise
<b>Acquired/Traumatic Brain Injuries</b>	Note taking, recording of lectures and discussions, extended test time, permission to leave classroom when disability-related needs arise, use of formula sheet when memorization of formulas is not required

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# Teaching Techniques

These techniques benefit all students, especially students with disabilities:



## CLASSROOM

- Select course materials early so that students and SDS have enough time to convert to accessible formats (e.g., audio, large print) as needed.
- Make course materials (e.g., syllabus, handouts, assignment sheets) available in electronic format.
- Write lecture outlines on the board or incorporate into a PowerPoint presentation.
- Write key phrases, technical vocabulary, formulas, etc., on the board or provide as a handout.
- Do not speak when you have your back turned to the class.
- Repeat or rephrase questions or comments from the class before responding.



## EXAMINATIONS

- Ensure exams test the essential skills or knowledge needed for the course.
- Provide accommodated testing, as appropriate. Some students may require extended time or assistance on exams. Contact SDS regarding options for accommodated testing.
- Consider alternative assessment methods (e.g., portfolio, multimedia presentation).



## LABS

- Provide a lab orientation, take a tour of the lab, and discuss safety concerns.
- Provide oral and written lab instructions.
- Arrange lab equipment so that it is easily accessible.
- Assign group lab projects in which all students contribute according to their abilities.
- Provide adaptive lab equipment.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## 1. What are a student's responsibilities when working with Student Disability Services (SDS)?

- a. Self-identify as a student with a disability.
- b. Present appropriate documentation of disability and request accommodations.
- c. Send accommodation letters to their instructor(s) and set up a time to discuss their specific situation with each instructor.
- d. Follow SDS's procedures for accessing and utilizing accommodations.

## 2. What are my responsibilities as an instructor when working with a student with a disability?

- a. Inform all students of procedures for accessing accommodations at the beginning of each semester, preferably through a statement in the syllabus.
- b. Provide and arrange for accommodations addressed in the accommodation letter in a timely manner.
- c. Maintain the same academic and behavior standards for all students.
  - i. Accommodations allow the student equal access to the educational opportunities in your course. If you are concerned that these accommodations might fundamentally alter the requirements of your course in some way, please contact our office as soon as possible. It is important to Student Disability Services that the academic integrity of your class is maintained while ensuring equal access to the student.
  - ii. Students are encouraged to speak with faculty about their accommodations. Upon their request, please meet with students to ensure there is a clear, mutual understanding of requested accommodations.
- d. In compliance with FERPA guidelines, please keep all disability-related information confidential.

## 3. I want to include a statement in my syllabus to ensure students with disabilities are aware of their rights regarding accommodations. What might be an example of such a statement?

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact Student Disability Services in Dunford Hall, at 865-974-6087, or by VP at, 865-622-6566, to coordinate reasonable academic accommodations.

## 4. A student has approached me and is concerned that a particular student in class is receiving special treatment. What should I do?

Explain to the student that:

- a. All students are held to the same standards of academic performance.
- b. The issue cannot be discussed further because you must respect the confidentiality of all students.

## 5. What are my responsibilities when a student has a note taker accommodation listed in their faculty accommodation letter?

Please note that you do not need to assist SDS with recruiting a note taker solely based on this being an accommodation listed on the Faculty Accommodation Letter. Students may choose not to use the accommodation even though it has been approved for them.

If a student wishes to use the note-taker accommodation in your course, they will submit a request to SDS. If needed, SDS will then email you to request that you make an announcement in class, via email, and/or on Canvas that we are hiring a note taker for the course. You may ask any prospective note takers to contact SDS directly.

## 6. What should I do if a student who has accommodations is not attending class regularly?

Generally, it is recommended that faculty hold all students to the same standard with respect to class attendance. Please contact SDS if you have questions or concerns about how to appropriately assist a student who has an accommodation indicating that they may need to be unexpectedly absent due to disability.

### **7. What are my responsibilities when a student has testing accommodations listed in their Faculty Accommodation Letter?**

Please note that you do not need to initiate test accommodations solely based on them being listed on the Faculty Accommodation Letter. Students may choose not to utilize the accommodations even though they are approved for them. If students choose to use their testing accommodations, they may make arrangements with you or schedule their exams with the Testing Center via the student portal on the SDS website at least seven days in advance. An earlier scheduling deadline will apply for final exams, and the date will be communicated each semester. Once a student schedules to take an exam in SDS, you will receive a notification to review the information and approve the exam. Instructions for providing the exam to SDS are also included.

### **8. What are my responsibilities when a student has an accommodation for printed materials in alternate format?**

In an effort to make your courses accessible to individuals with disabilities, please ask publishers whether course materials are available in an accessible format when considering textbook adoption. Students who qualify for printed materials in alternative format must submit their request to SDS as early as possible and allow at least four weeks for books to arrive. Additionally, students must provide SDS with a copy of their receipt confirming the purchase of their books. SDS is also available to assist faculty with the conversion of printed materials in alternative format (e.g., handouts, PowerPoint) with advance notice.

### **9. What are my responsibilities when a student has an accommodation for accessible media?**

Faculty are encouraged to make every effort to select media that are accessible to individuals with disabilities (e.g., captioned videos, audio with transcript, video descriptions, etc.). If you need to use media that are not accessible, please contact SDS as soon as possible. Please also note that captioning software is available in the Studio at Hodges Library for faculty who would like to caption their own materials.

### **10. I have a student who is registered with SDS and not doing well in my class. What should I do?**

For guidance on assisting struggling students, please visit the Teaching Guide published annually by the Teaching and Learning Center and the Office of the Provost. Please also feel free to contact SDS. We are happy to engage students in conversation about how to best utilize their accommodations, as well as to connect them to other campus resources.

### **11. What happens when I refer a student to SDS for potential learning or attention difficulties?**

Upon referral, SDS meets with the student to discuss their needs and to provide information about other campus resources.

### **12. I am concerned about a student's behavior. I am aware that the student has a disability because they presented me an accommodation letter at the beginning of the semester. How do I handle their disruptive behavior?**

Standards of conduct for students are outlined in *Hilltopics*, the student handbook, published annually by the Office of the Dean of Students. All students should be held to the same standards of conduct. In any case of obstruction or disruption of teaching, you have the right to ask the disruptive student(s) to leave the classroom. In case of an emergency, you may call 865-974-3114 to contact security. Please report such instances to the dean of students at 865-974-3179. If a student's behavior represents an immediate threat, call 911. If the threat is not immediate, but you are concerned the student may harm self or others, please call 865-974-HELP (4357).