



UT Dallas Faculty Guide

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Faculty Guide

The goal of the Office of Disability Services is to provide students with disabilities educational opportunities equal to those of their non-disabled peers. We welcome input from faculty and staff on campus as to how we can better serve both students and faculty/staff members in achieving this goal.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please call us. Disability Services is located in room 1.610 in the Student Union. Office hours are Monday through Thursday, 8:30 AM to 6:30 PM and Friday, 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM.

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Richardson, Texas 75083-0688
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1.) THE LAW AND ACADEMIC STANDARDS

What does the law require of postsecondary institutions?

Essentially, the law requires that colleges and universities make those reasonable adjustments necessary to eliminate discrimination based on disability. For example, it may be necessary to remove classroom prohibitions against tape recorders or animals (in the case of service animals) for students who are blind. Occasionally, an assignment requirement may be substituted (e.g., a research paper versus a presentation for a student who is deaf). Classes enrolling students with mobility impairments may need to be rescheduled

in accessible facilities. The college or university may need to provide special services such as registration, note taking, or mobility assistance.

Note that the emphasis in each of the adjustments is on the “may.” The key is accommodating the disability, not altering course content. The “may” means that, with the exception of removing architectural barriers, no set formulas exist for making adjustments that will be helpful in every case. Thus, the adaptation will be specific to the individual. The instructor who has a paraplegic student in class may not have to adapt his or her teaching at all. However, in order to supply test-taking assistance to a student who is quadriplegic, the instructor may need to allow the student to take tests in the Disability Services office. In every case, the intent is to accommodate the disability without altering academic standards or course content.

The law requires that an instructor adapt the course presentation to meet the unique needs of the student’s disabling condition. However, adaptations of course procedures are not solely the instructors’ responsibility. The student bears responsibility to make his or her abilities and limitations known and to meet instructor expectations concerning attendance, class participation, performance, and work standards. Disability Services is available to assist both students and faculty in this planning process.

Obviously, specific adaptations will vary according to the student and the disability experienced. It is important to meet with a student with disabilities early in the semester to discuss course procedures and the specific adaptations that will be required. Topics that generally need to be addressed with any student with disabilities include test-taking procedures, reproduction of written materials and visual aids and lecture procedures.

As faculty and students with disabilities work together, it may be useful to remember the following:

1. Adapting classroom activities is a responsibility shared by the instructor and the student. A problem-solving approach is most useful here.
2. Modifications are always applied to course procedures and processes, not to course content.
3. In most cases, the student with disabilities is the best resource for the kinds of adjustments required. The instructor should not hesitate to ask any question that relates to adaptations necessary to facilitate the course work.

Am I being asked to compromise academic standards or give the student with a disability an advantage?

Definitely not. The accommodation should have the purpose of providing an equal opportunity to the student, in effect starting the student on equal footing with others. To compromise standards or requirements would not assist the student to acquire a competitive degree. The student with a disability should fulfill all the essential course-related requirements; however, altering the format, substituting an equivalent requirement, or changing the method of meeting requirements may provide the student a more equitable chance at success.

By making certain accommodations to students with disabilities, am I not discriminating against the other student who would probably prefer such things as extended time for tests, etc.?

It may appear that preferential treatment is being given to students with disabilities; however, the objective of the legal requirement is to help the student compensate for a life function that is not the same as that of other students in the class. Through the accommodation, we attempt to provide the student with the same opportunity that other class members have without special measures. The law allows, and in fact requires, that special needs be met.

2.) NOTIFICATION OF FACULTY

How will I know if there are students with disabilities needing accommodation in my class?

It is the student's responsibility to notify his or her professors. Disability Services provides students with letters to present to faculty members verifying that the student has a disability and needs accommodations. Request that individuals requiring special accommodation contact you after class or during office hours. Print this information in your syllabus. In this way, you give students permission to approach you with their needs.

Faculty members always have the right to know that a student has a documented disability that entitles him or her to accommodations before providing them. It is the student's responsibility to notify his or her professors and present them with the appropriate documentation from Disability Services. Our office will provide the student with a letter stating their association with the Disability Services Office and any accommodations to which the student is entitled.

Some students do not wish to register with the Office of Disability Services and they cannot be required to do so. Students registered with Disability Services may choose not to reveal detailed information about their disabilities to persons outside of the Disability Services Office. To ensure the student's confidentiality, Disability Services does not disclose any information about a student's disability without the student's permission.

Disability Services recognizes that certain accommodations, such as sign language interpreters, require the presence of a third party in the classroom. In such cases, we will notify faculty in advance, whenever possible, that the interpreter or other assistant will be present. Again, this notification is given only with the knowledge and consent of the disabled student.

How do I know that the accommodation the student has requested is appropriate and legitimate?

If the student presents to you a STUDENT REQUEST FOR COURSE ACCOMMODATIONS form, prepared by Disability Services, you can be assured the student has provided the University with proof of a disability under the legal definition of the word. The accommodations requested on the form will be only those that have legitimacy in relation to the student's disability.

The accommodations outlined on this form are determined by the Disability Services Coordinator based on the student's specific disability, documentation prepared by a professional(s) in the appropriate field qualified to diagnose the disability, and previous educational history. These accommodations have been deemed reasonable and necessary in order to promote equal access to the University for students with disabilities.

Accommodations and the Faculty Members Responsibility

In order to make courses and programs fully accessible and to preserve academic integrity at the University, it is vital that faculty members be involved in accommodating students in their courses. Because the faculty member determines the course content, activities, and academic standards for his or her course, he or she is the most qualified and appropriate person make needed accommodations. In this way, a student's chances of success are maximized without compromising academic integrity.

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3.) CONFIDENTIALITY

Information that a student does or does not have a disability for which special accommodation must be made is not a part of public information and must be treated as confidential. Every

effort must be made to preserve the privacy of the student who needs special accommodation.

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4.) EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Consult the student involved for information on emergency medical procedures if a high likelihood exists that a medical emergency may occur in class. The student will be the best guide for what to do. In any medical emergency, remain calm. If you need medical assistance, send a student to the nearest telephone and contact the University Police for help (dial 2322 or 911).

In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation, the safe exit of every individual from the building will naturally be a priority for all University personnel. Students in wheelchairs and others with mobility impairments should move toward the nearest marked exit. As a first choice, the wheelchair occupant or other person with a disability may attempt to use the elevator, although in a fire, elevators will be inoperable. In some circumstances, the person with a disability may request evacuation assistance from others. If this is the case, ask the individual for instructions on lifting or moving (Must the individual be moved in the wheelchair or with other support? If so, where can the chair be safely grasped for lifting, i. e. handlebars, wheel rims, etc.?). If a power wheelchair must be moved downstairs, remove batteries before attempting to transport it. Make sure the footrests and armrests are locked. If a seatbelt is available, secure the person in the chair. A relay team arrangement may be needed. If it is not possible to carry the individual downstairs, the wheelchair occupant or other person with a disability should stay in the Safe Refuge Area until emergency rescue personnel arrive.

Safe Refuge Areas

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that the University provide areas of safe refuge for persons with disabilities in case

of emergencies. Primarily these areas will serve as a safe place to wait for evacuation assistance if there is a fire and elevators are inaccessible. Signs have been posted at various stairwells indicating that they have been designated as Safe Refuge Areas. Emergency telephones with direct access to the UTD Police have been installed in the stairwell landings. When the police receive a call for these telephones, they automatically know the caller's location and can dispatch assistance.

The locations of the Safe Refuge Areas were determined by various fire and safety regulations. The locations are as follows:

Multipurpose Building: MP2.4S1

McDermott Library: MC1.6S3, MC1.6S4, MC1.3S5, MC1.3S2, MC3.4S4, MC3.2S2, MC4.4S4, MC4.3S3

Jonsson Academic Center: JOA3.1S1, JOB1.2S4, JOB4.9S3, JOB5.4S4, JOB5.2S3

Green Hall: GR3.8S3, GR3.1S1, GR4.8S3

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5.) ELIGIBILITY FOR SERVICES

Any student with a physical, psychiatric, or learning disability that affects his or her academic performance is eligible for services. Current documentation of the disability from a qualified professional is required. It is the student's responsibility to provide adequate documentation of his or her disability and any limitations resulting from it. The Office of Disability Services reviews the documentation and makes recommendations for accommodations based upon the identified disability and resulting impairments.

Students with disabilities cannot be required to register with Disability Services. If students choose to withhold information about their disabilities and thereby forfeit any accommodations

that may have been available, they have that right. Students are encouraged to disclose their disabilities, however, and avail themselves of services to enhance their academic success.

Accommodations cannot be made retroactively. For example, a student with a learning disability may choose not to disclose the disability and take his or her exams without extended time. If the exam grades are then poor, however, the student cannot expect any type of remediation. Future exams may be taken with extended time, but past grades still stand.

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6.) STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE CLASSROOM

Testing Accommodations

Taking a test under standard conditions requires certain skills and abilities that are not a part of what is being measured by the test instrument. For example, written answers to essay questions on a history exam would require the student to perform manual writing. The test is designed to measure the student's knowledge of history, not his or her ability to write manually. Therefore, an oral test or a scribe to record the student's answers would more accurately reflect the student's abilities. For some students with disabilities, the format of the test itself or the physical location in which the test is to be administered will constitute a discriminatory barrier to performance. The suggestions below include guidelines for adapting examinations as well as other accommodations for students in a classroom setting. A discussion of changes appropriate for many students (adaptations in the test environment, extra time, proctors, etc.) is also included.

Classroom Environment

The teaching environment directly affects the capability of a student with a disability to participate and keep up with course work. Most necessary modifications are simple techniques that can foster full participation not only by students with disabilities, but by other students as well.

In general, it is the responsibility of the student with a disability to make the instructor aware of any special needs. This can be facilitated if instructors offer an invitation to students to meet with them within the first few days of the semester to discuss special needs. Questions regarding recommended modifications and University resources should be directed to Disability Services.

Communication Skills

Looking directly at students with disabilities while speaking to them facilitates communication. If there is an interpreter, parent, or attendant, direct the conversation to the student with a disability, not the third party. If it is difficult to understand the student with a disability due to speech impairment, ask for clarification.

Don't hesitate to use language in a natural context when talking to a person with disabilities. For example, "Nice to see you" is appropriate in conversation with a student who is blind. Because many students with disabilities are quite independent, verbally offer assistance instead of presuming it is desired. Give the person an opportunity to accept or decline.

General Course Adaptations

Advance planning is the key to working with students with disabilities. Additional time may be required for tests, papers, or projects. Therefore, professors and students should plan accordingly.

For some students with disabilities, writing may be difficult or impossible. These students find it helpful to tape lectures and class discussions. If an instructor intends to publish lectures,

the student may be asked to sign a statement that tapes will not be released.

Many students with disabilities need note-taking assistance. The best note-takers to provide assistance are students in the class, so you may want to ask for volunteers. Disability Services provides carbonless paper for note-takers who volunteer to assist.

Some students with disabilities need to ask their classmates for special assistance with note taking, wheel-chair assistance, etc. It is helpful if the instructor can assist in soliciting volunteer help.

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7.) STUDENTS WITH MOBILITY IMPAIRMENTS

Mobility impairment broadly describes any disability that limits functional movement of any limb or fine motor ability. The student may use a wheelchair, cane, crutches, or simply walk at a slower pace. In addition, some students with mobility impairments have limited use of arms and hands, and may use adaptive equipment. The student's condition may involve limitations in performing certain acts such as entering and moving about the classroom, sitting for long time periods, manipulating test materials (i.e., scratch paper, pencils, calculators, etc.), and manual writing.

Accessibility Aids

1. Maneuvering in a classroom may be difficult for a student with a mobility impairment. It is important to keep aisles and doorways free of obstacles.
2. Because of the distances between some buildings on campus, a student with mobility impairments may have to take alternate travel routes from class to class, and may occasionally be late to class.

3. Special equipment in laboratory classes may necessitate modification of the facility in order to make it accessible to a student with a mobility impairment. Sinks, tables, storage, and aisle width may pose particular problems and should be adjusted as much as possible. Disability Services works with the Facilities Management to arrange for necessary modifications.

Course Adaptations

1. Students who have difficulty writing may need to take extra time for examinations. They may also need to make alternative arrangements in which they can respond orally, type, or tape test answers.

2. If a class includes field trips or fieldwork, try to choose accessible sites or consider how some sites could be made accessible. The student with a disability is the best resource for this type of information.

3. A student who uses a wheelchair may feel awkward or uncomfortable speaking with a person who is standing for a lengthy conversation. Therefore, when a conversation takes more than a few minutes, try to sit down when conversing with a person who is using a wheelchair.

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8.) STUDENTS WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENTS

Students with hearing impairments vary greatly in the degree and type of hearing loss they experience. Each person with a hearing loss will respond differently to amplification, and it is important to note that hearing aids do not completely correct a hearing loss as glasses can correct vision.

A person who is hard of hearing has a partial hearing loss and may be able to communicate adequately in a one-to-one situation in quiet surroundings. However, in a typical classroom environment with moderate background noise, students with

hearing impairments may still experience significant communication difficulty.

Students who are deaf have a more significant hearing loss. They must rely on visual mode of communication though they may be able to hear some sounds with hearing aids.

A person with a hearing impairment may communicate orally (by speech reading and speaking) or by using sign language, or a combination of both.

Interpreter Services

1. An interpreter may be necessary for the student to have access to communication in the educational environment. Interpreters are provided, upon request from the student, for classes and academic-related activities outside of class.
2. Interpreters have no knowledge of the student's classroom performance or the etiology of their deafness.

Interpreters in the Classroom

1. Speak directly to the student who is hearing-impaired. Do not tell the interpreter to "tell him..."
2. Look at the student with a hearing impairment, not the interpreter. The interpreter will sign what you are saying and voice what the student with a hearing impairment says.
3. The interpreter is not permitted to voice personal opinions about the conversation.
4. Speak at a normal rate. The interpreter will ask the speaker to repeat or slow down if the rate of delivery is too fast.
5. Allow the interpreter to sit or stand near you. At the beginning of the semester the student, interpreter and instructor together should work out the best place for the interpreter to work. The closer the interpreter is to the speaker, the easier it

is for the student to see the interpreter, instructor, and any visual aids.

6. Permit only one person to speak at a time. It is difficult for an interpreter to follow several people speaking at once.

7. Remember that the interpreter is a few words behind the speaker. Allow the interpreter time to finish so that the student with a hearing impairment can ask questions or join the discussion.

8. Provide good lighting. If you plan to darken the room to show visual aids, be sure the student with a hearing impairment can see the interpreter.

9. Make sure the student with a hearing impairment doesn't miss vital information. Allow extra time when referring to written material, since the student with a hearing impairment must look at the material and then return their attention to the interpreter to keep up with the discussion.

10. Provide the interpreter with extra copies of materials being discussed in class. This helps the interpreter to follow the discussion and to assist the deaf person in following along.

11. Interpreters are paid professionals. Skilled interpreters are in great demand and their fees reflect this. This makes it important to inform students who use this service of any class cancellations or changes as early as possible so they can make arrangements with their interpreters.

12. If the interpreter does not show up, it is the student's responsibility to notify Disability Services. Although interpreters are expected to be prompt and reliable, they are human and emergencies sometimes happen. In this event, the student the instructor can decide what to do (tape the lecture to be interpreted later, allow the student to leave, stay, etc.)

13. Contact the Disability Services Coordinator with any concerns or questions. Initially, an interpreter's presence may be distracting to the instructor and other students. However,

the initial curiosity will subside and it should be a comfortable situation for all concerned.

Delivering Your Lecture

Regardless of the student's mode of communication, whether it is through speech reading or sign language, the following practices will help both the instructor and the student:

1. Speak naturally in a normal tone and volume. Shouting or exaggerating lip movements will not help a student with a hearing loss.
2. Allow students with hearing impairments to sit at the front of the class.
3. Standing with a light source behind you or covering your mouth when speaking makes it almost impossible for a student with a hearing impairment to read lips.
4. Refrain from speaking while writing on a blackboard or while turned away from the student, keep lips and face from visual obstructions.
5. Permit the student to obtain notes from a classmate or note-taker as it is difficult to take notes while speech reading or watching an interpreter. The use of visual aids such as chalkboards, overhead projectors, films, diagrams, and charts greatly assists students with hearing impairments. Try to incorporate this into lectures whenever possible.
6. In a group discussion, have students speak one at a time. Point to the speaker and/or have speakers raise their hands so the student with a hearing impairment can follow the discussion. It may be necessary to repeat questions or comments so the student with a hearing impairment can keep up with the discussion.
7. Many students who have hearing impairments can benefit from special equipment to reduce background noise and enhance the instructor's voice. This equipment may include a

small microphone that the instructor wears and a receiver unit that the student wears. For group discussion, the microphone may be passed around or a conference microphone may be placed near the center of the group.

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9.) STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

Students with visual impairments may include students who are totally blind or students with low vision. The student with low vision has some vision, can usually read materials in large print, and may use a cane for mobility. A student who is totally blind has no functional vision, and may rely upon mobility devices such as a cane or service animal. Both groups of students may use paid or volunteer readers, and/or assistive devices such as a tape recorder, typewriter, Braille print, or talking books.

Course Adaptations

1. Arrange for a special edition of exams, i.e. on tape, individually read, or larger print.
2. Student may use electronic optical aids, such as a CCTV, which enlarge the print.
3. Student may record information by typing or taping.
4. Student may dictate exam answers to a proctor who marks the answer sheet or writes the essay.
5. Where spelling and punctuation are related to course objectives, student and instructor may determine a way for grammar to be evaluated within the parameters of the adaptation.

Mobility Aids

1. To assist the student with visual impairments in maneuvering, leave the classroom door all the way open or all

the way closed. Otherwise, the door may present an unexpected obstacle.

2. When a class is relocated, ask someone to wait at the door of the original classroom to guide the student to the new location.

3. Students who are blind may need a little extra time to get oriented; allow them time to orient themselves before offering assistance.

4. Animal guides are specially trained to be extremely attentive to their owners. Petting, feeding or talking to these dogs only distracts them from their duty.

Speaking Styles

1. Always identify yourself to someone with a visual disability; let them know when you are leaving their presence.

2. Avoid expressions like "this," "that," "here," and "there" which mean nothing to the student with a visual impairment. Instead, provide a concrete description of the material being discussed.

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10.) STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

A learning disability is a documented perceptual impairment that affects the ability to process information in people of average to above average intelligence. Different individuals may have difficulties in one or more areas of receiving or sending information. These may include spelling, reading, handwriting, short-term memory, attending, organizing, following directions, spatial relations, math, or even translating aural cues.

A student who has learning disabilities may have normal or high intelligence but does not achieve at the expected level in academic, social, or daily living skill. These gaps in

performance are assumed to arise from neurological origins and are not the result of mental retardation, physical handicaps, emotional disturbance, or educational deprivation. Persons with learning disabilities often acquire and express information in ways that differ from the norm.

Testing Accommodations

1. Allow extended time for exams to compensate for slower visual or verbal processing.
2. Arrange for alternate methods of recording answers such as taping, typing, or dictating answers to a proctor who marks the answer sheet or writes the essay.
3. Arrange for a special edition of the exam, i.e. on tape, individually read, in essay form as opposed to short-answer or in short-answer form as opposed to essay.
4. Where spelling and punctuation are related to course objectives, student and instructor may determine a way for grammar to be evaluated within the parameters of the adaptation.
5. Allow the student to use a dictionary.
6. Allow the use of a word processor with spell-check/grammar-check capability, etc.
7. Permit the test to be given individually in a quiet room without distractions.

Course Adaptations

1. Try to provide a list of new vocabulary at the beginning of each class. When possible, provide copies of lecture notes to assist the student in following the lecture.
2. The use of visual aids such as chalkboards, overhead projectors, films, diagrams, and charts greatly assists these

students. When showing a film, it is helpful to provide a written transcript, if available.

Materials Adaptations

Students with learning disabilities may require the use of taped textbooks, readers, tape recorders, or typewriters, or taped textbooks. Therefore, as far in advance of the first class as possible, supply students with information concerning course materials so they can make necessary arrangements.

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11.) STUDENTS WITH SPEECH IMPAIRMENTS

A speech impairment may cause a student to be unable to speak, to mispronounce certain words, to speak slowly or in a manner hard to understand. Such an impairment rarely restricts a student in a written examination; however, depending upon the extent of the impairment, it may have a great influence on oral recitation types of examinations.

Course Adaptations

1. Written examinations might be substituted for oral recitation exams.
2. A student may write his/her response for an oral presentation and have that presentation read by an assistant.
3. Student may use an auxiliary aid such as a word board or interpreter for classroom participation.

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12.) Psychiatric Disabilities

Psychiatric disability may cause the student problems in coping with stress, waiting patiently, controlling anxiety, or maintaining concentration. Most people have some stress or test anxieties. For students with psychiatric

disabilities; however, stress is so severe that it prevents normal functioning.

Course Adaptations

1. Administer regular exams individually within the regular time limit.
2. Determine an alternative task or assignment to be completed so long as requirements and objectives are suitably met.
3. Refer student to Learning Resources (883-6706) for assistance with study skills or test taking strategies.
4. Allow extended time for exams to compensate for impaired concentration or the effects of medications.

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13.) STUDENTS WITH HIDDEN DISABILITIES

Among the vast range of disabling conditions which are not usually visible or readily detectable to the casual onlooker are seizure disorders and other problems related to brain injury or neurological dysfunction; cardiovascular diseases; musculo-skeletal problems (from arthritis to back injury); respiratory disease or dysfunction (such as asthma and chemical or environmental allergies); and systemic diseases or dysfunctions (such as lupus, diabetes, cancer, etc). Some students with hidden disabilities must cope daily with constant severe pain, a high level of fatigue, or medications that may affect classroom performance. Because needs will differ widely, adaptations should be made in close consultation with the student and Disability Services.

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