Student Accessibility

Developed by
The University of Texas at Dallas
Office of Student AccessAbility
Why student accessibility training?

The Americans with Disabilities Act and Sections 504 and 508 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 require federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology accessible to people with disabilities.
The vast majority of students with disabilities resist disclosure due to fear of discrimination. While students have a right not to be indentified with a disability, accommodations are not required unless they do self-identify. Disclosure requires trust, knowledge of benefits, and information on the process for receiving services. The role of the faculty member is crucial in maximizing the satisfaction and success of students with disabilities. Research indicates that students will disclose if:

- There is a positive relationship;
- The context is deemed appropriate;
- They feel personally comfortable; and
- The receiver is viewed as trustworthy.
Module Objectives

After completing this module, you will be able to:

- Define what is the role of the faculty member with a student who has a disability in their course.
- Explain how to refer a student with a disability to the Office of Student AccessAbility.
- Identify correct and incorrect procedures for working with students who have a disability.
The Office of Student AccessAbility

• The University of Texas at Dallas is proud to be an educational institution that welcomes and supports a diverse student body. By removing some of the barriers to education that students with disabilities often experience, UT Dallas hopes to foster a learning environment that encourages as well as challenges all students.

• By law, students with documented disabilities who self-disclose are guaranteed a learning environment that provides reasonable accommodation. This guarantee is provided through Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act 2008.

• The ADAAA reads: "No qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity, or be subjected to discrimination by any such entity."
Examples of Disabilities

The definition covers a range of disabilities and is not limited to:

- Blindness/Low Vision
- Hard of Hearing/Deafness
- Mobility
- Learning
- Psychological
- Chronic health (i.e., Epilepsy, Diabetes, Arthritis, Cancer, Cancer in Remission, Cardiac, HIV/AIDS and Others)
What is my role as a faculty member?

The first personal contact many students have upon entering the University is with a faculty member in class. Thus, the role of the faculty member is crucial in maximizing the success of students with disabilities.

Requests for accommodations are approved by and originate from the Office of Student AccessAbility (OSA). Students must have a Letter of Accommodation that validates their claim and specifies all accommodations. Students without proper authorization should be referred to the OSA. Any questions about the accommodation letter should be addressed to the OSA.
Should my syllabus have a statement for students with disabilities?

UT Dallas strongly encourages the inclusion of a syllabus statement that invites students with disabilities to come forward early in the semester with requests for accommodations and services. Such a statement is one of the most basic ways faculty members can demonstrate that they are making a good faith effort to teach in compliance with the law.

On the next page, there is an example syllabus statement that you can use as it is or tailor it to suit your needs.
Example Syllabus Statement

It is the policy and practice of The University of Texas at Dallas to make reasonable accommodations for students with properly documented disabilities. However, written notification from the Office of Student AccessAbility (OSA) is required. If you are eligible to receive an accommodation and would like to request it for this course, please discuss it with me and allow one week advance notice. Students who have questions about receiving accommodations, or those who have, or think they may have, a disability (mobility, sensory, health, psychological, learning, etc.) are invited to contact the Office of Student AccessAbility for a confidential discussion. OSA is located in the Student Services Building, suite 3.200. They can be reached by phone at (972) 883-2098, or by email at studentaccess@utdallas.edu.
Suggestions: DOs and DON'Ts

**DO**

- Raise appropriate questions.
- Treat students with disabilities with the same courtesies you would afford to other students.
- Please provide the accommodations which have been determined to be appropriate by the Office of Student AccessAbility.
- Respect the privacy of students with disabilities. While the student must disclose disability to a designated official at UT Dallas in order to access accommodations, this does not require disclosure to others. Treat information disclosed to you as confidential.
- Assist students in following the university’s policies, such as referring them to the Office of Student AccessAbility to request appropriate accommodations.
Suggestions: DOs and DON’Ts

DON’T

• Engage in philosophical debates about "fairness" to other, nondisabled students, or whether providing accommodations somehow violates your academic freedom.

• Decide not to provide the academic adjustments which have been approved by the Office of Student AccessAbility designee. You may subject your institution or yourself to liability.

• Leave a student adrift without accommodations. If no volunteers are willing to take notes in class, make sure the student knows who to see to rectify this in another manner.

• Refuse to permit students to tape record lectures as an accommodation.

• Refuse to provide copies of handouts, lecture notes or orally describe information written on the marker board.
Opportunities for More Information

• It is the responsibility of the University to educate faculty about the impact of disabilities on educational pursuits and the laws protecting students with disabilities. In addition to this module, there are a variety of opportunities for more development and information available to the faculty. The OSA and Office of Diversity and Community Engagement offer many programs throughout the year, including workshops, conferences, and student-faculty gatherings.

• In addition, there is an informal but highly useful group of faculty who have disabilities themselves who are willing and eager to speak to colleagues about their experiences. The OSA will provide presentations and workshops with faculty members at their convenience and will tailor such workshops to the specific needs and/or interests of departments or committees.

• I understand I can access the Faculty Guide at any time on the Student AccessAbility website.
For more information

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<th>If you need help</th>
<th>Regulations</th>
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<td>Contact: UT Dallas Office of Student Accessibility • <a href="mailto:studentaccess@utdallas.edu">studentaccess@utdallas.edu</a> • 972-883-2098 • SSB 3.200</td>
<td>• <a href="https://www.ada.gov/index.html">Americans with Disabilities Act</a> • <a href="https://www.rrsf.org/">Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973</a> Sections 504 and 508 • <a href="https://www.utdallas.edu">UTDBP3100 – Policy for Reasonable Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities</a></td>
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