George Mason University Faculty Guide

Disability Services created this guide to include a brief summary of various disabilities and their characteristics, campus resources, frequent academic accommodations, grievance procedures, frequently asked questions, instructional tips for working with various categories of disabilities, testing center policies, resources for supporting individuals with disabilities and rights and responsibilities of students, faculty, staff, and the university.

George Mason University Disability Services
Student Union Building I, Suite 2500
703-993-2474(phone)
Website: ds.gmu.edu
Office Email: ods@gmu.edu

Greetings,

It is our hope that this guide will assist you in understanding the needs of students with disabilities in higher education and providing the necessary accommodations so they can fully participate in the classroom and related activities. Visit our website for additional information (http://ds.gmu.edu) or contact Disability Services via phone (703-993-2474) or email (ods@gmu.edu) with any questions, comments, or concerns.

We encourage you to take time and read through the document in its entirety, and we hope the information below will help with future reference.

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Faculty Guide on Teaching Students with Disabilities

This guide is intended to provide faculty guidance for teaching students with disabilities. It includes strategies related to working with students with varying disabilities including:

- Learning disabilities
- Mobility issues
- Deaf/hard of hearing
- Blind/low vision
- Medically-related disabilities
- Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
- Psychological disabilities
- Temporary disabilities
- Autism Spectrum Disorder

As part of George Mason University's (GMU) continuing commitment to upholding the letter and spirit of the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities, the university established and maintains Disability Services. Under the administration of University Life, the center implements and coordinates reasonable accommodations and disability-related services that afford equal access to university programs and activities. The laws that provide guidance to Disability Services regarding accommodations for students include The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADAA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Fair Housing and Virginia State Laws.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADAA) was established and brought into law in 1990. The law prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in employment, transportation, public accommodation, communications, and governmental activities. The ADA also establishes requirements for telecommunications relay services.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a national law that protects qualified individuals from discrimination based on their disability. The nondiscrimination requirements of the law apply to employers and organizations that receive financial assistance from any Federal department or agency. These organizations and employers include hospitals, nursing homes, mental health centers, institutions of higher education, and human service programs. Section 504 forbids organizations and employers from excluding or denying individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to receive program benefits and services. It defines the rights of individuals with disabilities to participate in, and have access to, program benefits and services.

I. Disability Services Process

Disability Services collaborates with students with impairments or diagnosed disabilities and faculty to provide reasonable accommodations, auxiliary aids, and support services that are individualized and based on student self-disclosure, observation, and third-party documentation. Students are advised to use advocacy skills to request authorized accommodations specific to class needs and personal preference. Disability Services may not be able to meet all personal preference requests but does provide reasonable accommodations/auxiliary aids in order to provide equal opportunity to access the university's programs and services. In order to receive accommodations, students must register with Disability Services and submit documentation of impairment or diagnosis and functional limitations. Disability Services will review the documentation. The following questions need to be addressed to determine eligibility and reasonable accommodations:

> ➢ Does the student meet the criteria of having a disability as defined by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008?
> ➢ What is the current impact of the impairment on the student's ability to participate in the university's educational programs and services (i.e., functional limitations)?
> ➢ What are possible accommodations, modifications, and/or adjustments that might remove the barriers?
> ➢ Without these accommodations, would the individual still have meaningful access to the program, service, or activity?
> ➢ Would these accommodations compromise the essential elements of the curriculum?
> ➢ Would these accommodations require a fundamental alteration in the nature of the program, service, or activity?

The student initially participates in an interactive process with Disability Services staff to design and develop reasonable accommodations. The student is responsible for requesting most accommodations before any academic deadline has been set. Accommodations recommended by healthcare professionals are not automatic. It is the student's responsibility to follow Disability Services' policies and procedures for accessing accommodations as outlined in this section.

After documentation has been reviewed and the intake meeting has been conducted, students will be provided with Faculty Contact Sheets that outline their individualized accommodations. It is the student's responsibility to deliver Faculty Contact Sheets to their instructor(s). Accommodations begin when instructors receive the Faculty Contact Sheet for the current semester. This letter also serves as a catalyst for discussion of how accommodations will be provided.

Some classes require more creative accommodations due to the nature of the course or the complexity of a student's functional limitations. Disability Services can facilitate a dialogue with the student and faculty member to clarify essential elements of the course and to identify creative and reasonable accommodations while considering functional limitations of the student.

II. Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information

Students with disabilities are admitted to GMU under the same requirements and process as other students. It is not mandatory for students with disabilities to disclose their disability during the admissions process nor at any point during their time at GMU. However, in order to qualify for accommodations, it is necessary for a student to self-identify with a disability and submit appropriate documentation to Disability Services. Documentation submitted to Disability Services is considered confidential and will be treated in accordance with federal and state regulations. It is kept separate from the student's general academic file that is housed in Disability Services unless the student chooses to also submit it to another campus department. Disclosure of disability is a voluntary process. Information related to a disability may be disclosed only with the permission of the student or as permitted by federal law. Staff and faculty are advised that disability matters are confidential and should not be shared with others. Attention should be taken to handle academic accommodations in a discreet manner.

III. Rights and Responsibilities

Students with disabilities at GMU have a right to:

- Reasonable and effective accommodations according to a disability based on documentation.
- Equal access to educational and co-curricular programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities available through the university.
- To be treated with respect and dignity and receive equal and fair treatment.
- Confidentiality in all matters of your documentation and educational record.
- Information reasonably available in accessible formats.
- Access to a grievance process either through a formal or informal complaint.

Students with disabilities at GMU have the responsibility to:

- Initiate services with Disability Services.
- Provide appropriate documentation of a disability to Disability Services according to guidelines.
- Request accommodations in a timely manner from Disability Services to ensure that they are in place as soon as possible, while also understanding that accommodations may be requested at any time during tenure at GMU.
- Work in collaboration with Disability Services staff to determine reasonable accommodations.
- Self-advocate and monitor personal progress. Students will alert Disability Services if assistance is needed with accommodation-related issues as soon as possible.
- Request and pick up Faculty Contact Sheets from Disability Services at the beginning of each semester.
- Meet with professor(s), provide Faculty Contact Sheets, and discuss accommodation needs at the beginning of each semester.
- Contact Disability Services by email or phone to request the necessary number of Faculty Contact Sheets. Faculty Contact sheets will be ready for student pick-up 3 business days after submitted request.
- Understand that requests for accommodations are not retroactive. Accommodations begin at the time that I present a Faculty Contact Sheet to my professor(s).
- Will keep my documentation, contact and disclosure information up to date with Disability Services.

- Acknowledge that in order to use DS testing services; I must follow all testing policies and procedures. DS testing center is available only in the event that my professor(s) cannot provide appropriate testing accommodations. http://ods.gmu.edu/services/exams.php
- Agree to abide by the Mason Honor Code. (Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.)
- Acknowledge that Disability Services staff members have provided me with a list of additional academic support resources available to me on campus.
- Agree to notify Disability Services if I need textbooks or other printed material, enlarged or otherwise formatted, at least four weeks prior to the first day of classes of each semester. I agree to provide copies of my syllabi to assist in the delivery of these services.
- Understand that it is solely my responsibility to contact Disability Services if I have any classroom accessibility issues that I cannot solve independently.

Faculty at GMU have the right to:

- Receive notification in writing from Disability Services of a student's need for accommodation. Faculty and staff do not have a right to access confidential disability documentation.
- Decide if an accommodation request meets the academic requirements of the course.
- Contact Disability Services to clarify student requests for accommodation, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids.

Faculty at GMU have the responsibility to:

- To implement these approved accommodations
- Provide information to all students about the accommodation procedure in the course syllabus.
- Refer students who have disclosed having a disability and a need for accommodations to Disability Services.
- Provide accessible technology to his/her course (e.g., captioned video for deaf/hard of hearing students, web accessibility, accessible course materials). Please contact Disability Services or Assistive Technology Initiative for additional resources and assistance.
- Alter the form of a testing procedure to measure proficiency in course knowledge based on the ability of the student, not the disability – there may be an exception when the purpose of the test is to measure a particular skill.
- Provide an opportunity to take a make-up exam on a timely basis for students who miss exams for disability-related reasons. In these instances, Disability Services will work with the faculty when immediate access challenges cause barriers to students with disabilities, while maintaining the confidentiality of information regarding disability issues.

As an institution of higher education, GMU has the right to:

- Identify and establish essential functions, abilities, skills, knowledge, requirements, and standards for courses, programs, services and activities, and to evaluate students on this basis.
- Request and receive, through Disability Services, current documentation that supports requests for accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services.
- Deny a request for accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services if the intake process and continued communication with the student demonstrates that the request is not necessary.
- Select among equally effective accommodations, adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services.
- Refuse an unreasonable accommodation, adjustment, and/or auxiliary aid or service that imposes a fundamental alteration of a program or activity, or places an undue burden on the university.

GMU has the responsibility to:

- Provide information to students with disabilities in accessible formats upon request.
- Ensure that courses, programs, services, and activities, when viewed in their entirety, are available in the most integrated and appropriate settings.
- Evaluate students on their abilities and not their disabilities.
- Provide or arrange for reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services for students with disabilities in courses, programs services, and activities.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication except where sharing information is permitted or required by law or when the student requests that such information be shared.
- Provide students with access to a step-by-step grievance procedure

IV. Accommodating Disabilities:

Accommodations are set into place after completion of the intake process with Disability Services. Accommodations are designed to:

- Meet classroom access needs of registered students with disabilities in a timely manner.
- Provide appropriate accommodations for testing.
- Support accessible course materials for students.

If a faculty member thinks the accommodations approved by Disability Services for the student may interfere with the essential requirements of the course or alter the nature of the course, they should contact Disability Services immediately so that the faculty, student, and DS staff can consult regarding feasible options for modifications to afford equitable access through an interactive process.

Preface

One of the most important shifts in higher education over the last few decades has been the movement away from focusing simply on our *teaching* practices and, instead, emphasizing the degree to which our students are *learning*. Although some might argue that this change can seem like a sort of shell game where we are swapping semantics, the consequences for our classroom practices are actually quite dramatic. By concentrating on student learning, we call attention to the various processes students undergo as they construct their own pathways to knowledge from the tools presented to them by their instructors and the course materials. Instructors are encouraged to have clear and measurable objectives on their syllabi. In order for this kind of learning to occur, however, all students must be afforded equal access to the classroom and to course activities. It is often the case that some students with disabilities will need reasonable accommodations in order to make the goal of a truly accessible class a reality. These students will be working with Disability Services in order to determine appropriate accommodations.

This section of the handbook outlines the most frequent accommodations provided for students with disabilities along with teaching strategies for implementing these accommodations and for enhancing accessibility.

Frequent Accommodations

- Extended time to take in-class quizzes, tests, and exams (1.5x time or 2x).

- Reduced distraction environment for testing.

    o Specific arrangements for testing accommodations are to be made between faculty and the student *for each test or exam*. Disability Services houses a testing center that ensures a reduced distraction environment through cubicles, blank walls, noise-canceling technology, and options available to students (e.g., ear plugs).

    o <u>Teaching Strategy</u>: These accommodations speak directly to the nature of exams and the kinds of student learning you hope to achieve through your exams. Planning for the types of exams you will give, of course, takes place as early as the course design stage. As you sit down to plan your course, consider what you want students to learn before they leave your class. We call this process "backwards design," because you are beginning your plan for the course with the end result—student learning—rather than the more specific details like texts and assignments. Exams play an important part in this process. Once you have determined your learning outcomes and course goals, think about how your exams will fit into this larger context. Then, when it comes time to write your exams, return to these goals and use them to guide the process. The amount of time you will give students to complete the exam becomes an important consideration at this point. Will the amount of time you have allotted allow students to demonstrate their learning? Do the questions need to be revised in order to achieve this goal? Would a take-home, open-book, or Blackboard exam be more effective? Could the exam be reconfigured as an open-ended assignment instead? In short, the timing and format of the exam can be just as important as the content, and focusing on your goals for the exam can help to alleviate any pressure you may feel to constrict (within reason) the time given to students to work on the exam. Ultimately, of course, the specific accommodation for a particular student needs to be implemented, but considering the timeframe and scope of exams can benefit all of the students in your class. For more information about exam design, see http://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/examdesign/

- Altered exam dates – student will take no more than one exam in a 24-hour period.

- Breaks for quizzes, tests, and exams.

    o Provide student with a 5-minute break for every one hour of testing. Specific arrangements for testing accommodations are to be made between faculty and the student *for each test or exam*.

    o <u>Teaching Strategy</u>: Although this accommodation is essential for some students, it is really a beneficial strategy for all students. We know that each student's brain processes material at a different rate, so many (if not all) may appreciate the ability to take a short break. The brief moment of rest may allow for a more successful performance on the exam. If you are worried about cheating or

disrupting other students, allow them to take a break within the classroom (e.g., walk to the window or the back of the room).

- Breaks for quizzes, tests, and exams.

    o Provide student with a 5 minute break for every one hour of testing. Specific arrangements for testing accommodations are to be made between faculty and the student *for each test or exam*.

    o *Teaching Strategy:* Although this accommodation is essential for some students, it is really a beneficial strategy for all students. We know that each student's brain processes material at a different rate, so many (if not all) may appreciate the ability to take a short break. The brief moment of rest may allow for a more successful performance on the exam. If you are worried about cheating or disrupting other students, allow them to take a break only within the strictures of the classroom.

- Altered exam dates. Student will take no more than one exam in a 24 hour period.

- Scantron Scribe**.**

    o The student should be allowed to write on the test paper or have responses transferred to the scantron by a test proctor.

- Use of a computer for writing/typing out responses to essay exams.

    o *Teaching Strategy*: If you have access to computers in your classroom or have the ability to reserve a computer lab (or individual computers), consider designing assignments, exams, and other activities that allow all students to work on the computer. Because many students can type more quickly than they can write by hand, this would allow them to produce more work. Additionally, it is easier to proofread and revise their work when it is created on the computer. Similarly, another option would be to allow students to complete assignments that require a great deal of writing and complex critical thinking skills, such as essay exams, at home where they can compose their responses on the computer. This format may allow all students to better demonstrate their learning. These kinds of assignments also allow you to create more complex questions, because the students have more time to answer them. For larger classes, a carefully designed rubric can help to make the grading of writing easier for you and/or your TAs. See http://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/grading/

- Spelling

    o Allow for as little weight as possible upon this student's spelling when composing written exams. Please allow this student to use a dictionary during the exam. This provision should only be provided if spelling is not one of the fundamental requirements which is being assessed. Specific arrangements for testing accommodations are to be made between faculty and the student *for each test or exam*

- o *Teaching Strategy*: Although we all value precision of thought and of writing in our students' work, composition scholars who study college writers for whom English is a second language talk about the difference between local errors and global errors. Local errors are those, like basic misspellings, that do not impede the reader's understanding of the text. A comma splice would be another good example of a local error. Global errors, on the other hand, often make the meaning of the writing inscrutable. Long runon sentences that are not just grammatically problematic but also affect our understanding of the idea qualify as global errors. By the same token, severe misspellings where you cannot even discern what word the student intended would also be global errors. A grading process whereby local errors have very little (if any) impact on students' grades, while global errors factor into the holistic grading of the writing assignment, may be effective in maximizing the learning of all students.

- Note-taking services

  - o Student will need assistance from the instructor in locating an appropriate in-class note-taker. This should be done discreetly as possible to protect the student's confidentiality. In order to activate this provision, the student will provide the instructor with a note-taker's packet.

- Flexibility with attendance
  - o Flexibility with attendance: Due to the disability, there may be unplanned absences. Consideration in allowing make-up work is appropriate. The student understands that they are responsible for all class work missed. Should a problem arise, please contact Disability Services immediately with any questions or concerns.

    *Please refer to the Fundamental Alternation Analysis Process, provided in the appendix of this guide.

- The student may need to use his/her computer during class to access books and/or take notes.

  - o *Teaching Strategy*: Technology has become an integral part of teaching and learning in the 21st century, both in an out of the classroom. At its most basic, computers and other electronic devices can make note-taking quite a bit easier for students and can allow them to participate more fully in the class. Beyond this use, though, there is a wide range of activities possible that utilize technology in the classroom: everything from showing YouTube clips, to using personal response systems (sometimes called "clickers") to assess student learning on a particular topic, to employing social media as a supplement to class discussions. The possibilities are tremendous, and technology can definitely amplify pedagogy. A *caveat*: technology should only be used in class, of course, if it is contributing to and enhancing the learning for the course. The danger here is that students might begin using technology for purposes unrelated to class. If you wish to implement a policy for the use of electronic devices in class, you can find sample syllabus language here: http://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/designing-your-syllabus/

- Copies of class presentations (ie PowerPoint) when available.

  o A Lecture Notes agreement form is available upon request.

- Screen Reader

  o Any information in handout form, PowerPoint, etc., should be provided to the student in electronic format as early as possible, preferably before class, to be accessed while using a screen reader.

- Audio record lectures

  o The student may utilize their own equipment to audio record lectures. An audio lecture agreement form is available upon request.

- Breaks during class and exam

  o Due to the disability, the student may need to leave class for a short period of time. They will return as soon as possible. Please allow flexibility to make up any work they missed while out of class.

  o _Teaching Strategy_: We certainly want students in class and paying attention, but sometimes, the needs arise. If you are concerned about students not returning to class, consider implementing a participation grade for your course that combines attendance with contributions to discussion or other class activities. This level of accountability can serve to minimize arriving late or leaving early. For more information about participation grades, please see http://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/grading

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- Paper formatted exams

  o The student should be allowed to receive electronic or online tests in a paper format. Specific arrangements for testing accommodations are to be made between faculty and the student _for each test or exam_. A Test Proctoring Center is available when needed.

- Use of a calculator for quantitatively based exams.

  o This accommodation should only be offered if the knowledge being measured does not fundamentally alter the learning outcomes of the exam.

- Classroom Furniture

  o Student may require the use of alternative seating (adaptive table, chair or stool) in classroom.

- Extended time for out of class assignments

  o Prior to the assignment due date the student and faculty member will discuss a reasonable period of time in which to complete assignments. Class assignment extension will be provided only in the case that missing an assignment date will not delay the progress of all other students in the class or serve as a foundation for a next assignment.

- Extended time for out of class assignments

  o Prior to the assignment due date, student will notify faculty that they are in need of an extension and will discuss a reasonable period of time in which to complete assignments.

- Flexibility with arrival and departure to/from class (no more than 15 minutes)

- Flexibility with presentations
  o Student may require an alternate format of publicly presenting.

  o *Teaching Strategy*: We are seeing more and more in the way of creative approaches to student presentations these days. We know, for example, that PowerPoint presentations where students read from slides or lecture-style presentations where students read text without any interaction with the rest of the class are ineffective for the same reason that those methods do not work in other kinds of teaching environments: there is no engagement with the audience and, hence, very little learning takes place (for either the presenter or the audience). On the other hand, presentations that allow students to use other media or other formats—such as mock trials, roundtable discussions, etc.—or to collaborate with their peers are more successful in engendering learning because both the presenters and the audience tend to be more active and engaged.

- Group projects

  o Instructor may need to assist student with forming a group for in and out of class assignments

  o *Teaching Strategy*: Group projects can be tricky, not least because of their social dynamics. Before determining how groups will be formed, though, it is helpful to consider your goals for the assignment. What do you want to achieve by implementing this assignment and how will the use of groups aid in the effectiveness of the project? Once you have answered these questions, then it becomes easier to see what kind of group structure will be most beneficial. In any case, we suggest that you have some hand in deciding how all groups are formed, simply because if students form their own groups, they may align themselves for a variety of reasons (friendship, social status, etc.) that have nothing to do with the learning outcomes for the project. For more information on group assignments, see http://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/collaborativelearning/.

- Scribe

  - Student requires the use of a scribe to complete tests, quizzes, exams and in class assignments.

- CART Services

  - This accommodation is provided to students who require information in a transcribed format by use of Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART). A transcription disclosure agreement form will be signed by the student if they request a copy of the transcript.

- Sign Language Interpreter/Transliterator

  - Students who are Deaf or hard of hearing may require a Sign Language interpreter(s)/transliterator(s) who manually signs what is audible by any speaker and voices what is signed by the student, using English, American Sign Language (ASL) or Signed English.

  - *Teaching Strategy*: When you need to use technical terminology and/or jargon that is specific to your field, or you need to make reference to very complex ideas, consider offering your students illustrative definitions, explanations, and examples in order to further their understanding. This will help all of the students in your class learn more effectively, because they will be able to make deeper connections to the material than if they were only presented with the term or concept. This could even lead to several kinds of group activities where you ask students to discuss your explanations or to come up with their own examples.

- Personal Attendant

  - Student requires the assistance of a personal attendant during class and they will be present in the classroom. The personal attendant will not interfere with the integrity of the learning process

Summary

How, though, do we begin to think about our teaching in terms of accessibility? One way to do so is through the lens of universal design—a principle that originated in the fields of architecture and product design and that has taken hold in higher education over the last few decades. Implementing the tenets of universal design involves constructing courses fully accessible from the outset for students with the "widest possible range of abilities."

The benefit of this approach is that building courses with universal design in mind "instead of providing accommodations alone holds promise for making institutions more inclusive of students who disclose disabilities and request accommodations and those with disabilities who do not disclose, an estimated 60% of the population of students with disabilities."[1] Of course, these benefits would extend to all students, and—thus—a universally-designed course would implicitly take into account every single type of student from the very beginning. In this way, courses that utilize universal design represent the essence of effective higher education, because

they are constructed solely with the students in mind. Despite our best intentions, though, universal design is often an ideal for which we strive rather than one that we completely attain.

No matter how accessible we believe our courses to be, it may not be possible to foresee all of the accommodations that will be necessary for students in a particular class. Questions can then arise as to how best to serve the students who need the accommodations while maintaining a consistent pedagogy.

We have combined important information about accommodations for students with many different kinds of disabilities along with a wide array of teaching strategies that are designed not just to be beneficial for the student in question, but for *all* students in the class. We hope you find this resource to be helpful as you create learning-focused courses that are open and accessible to each and every student who walks through your door.

 ** Please call Disability Services (703.993.2474) with additional questions regarding any accommodations.

V. Testing Process- Test Proctoring through Disability Services
Testing Accommodations

Disability Services is committed to maintain the highest academic integrity standards possible in Disability Services exam environment. In order to meet this goal, DS uses it's testing center which is monitored by a secure closed circuit security system. We offer private and semi-private testing rooms. The testing center and rooms are located in Student Union Building 1 (SUB1) on the 3rd floor. DS requires that all students show ID before taking exams at DS. *Any student observed utilizing any unauthorized resource during an exam will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity and their instructor as a violation of the GMU Honor Code*.

Exam accommodations may include but are not limited to the following:
- Extended time
- Use of a word processor
- CCTV(a magnifying device that projects onto a close circuit screen)
- Reading Software
- Dictation Software
- Large print document
- Scribe
- Reader
- Braille
- Raised table
- Scantron Scribe

Students authorized for exam accommodations have three exam options:

1. Take exams with the class
2. Take exams with accommodations arranged by the instructor.
3. Take exams at Disability Services

Procedure

Students who have accommodations, as a result of their registration with Disability Services, are noted on their Faculty Contact Sheet. The Disability Services Testing Center has access to Faculty Contact sheets and honors the accommodations as noted on each student's individual sheet. Students should request their Faculty Contact Sheets prior to the beginning of each semester. The student should present the Faculty Contact Sheet to their instructors prior to requesting testing accommodations for an upcoming test/quiz. Tests/quizzes are scheduled through completion of a Disability Services Testing Center Test Proctor Form for each individual exam. This form considered a contract between student, instructor and Disability Services. Students are encouraged to turn in their Test Proctoring Forms at the beginning of each semester or prior to the scheduled test/quiz date. It is recommended that test proctoring forms be submitted at least a week prior to the test/quiz date.

Testing Policies & Procedures

1. It is the student's responsibility to meet with each instructor at the beginning of each semester to discuss the disability-related needs in the course – including appropriate testing accommodations, as outlined in the Faculty Contact Sheet. DS does not automatically inform faculty that the student will be in their class.

2. If the instructor prefers to administer the exam and can arrange the proper accommodations, the student makes the arrangements directly with the instructor. DS does not need to be informed about these exam arrangements.

3. If it is decided, after talking with the instructor, that the student should take the exam at DS, a DS Test Form (TF) should be completed by the student and instructor for each specific exam.

4. If the student initiates with the instructor a request to take an exam at a time/day different than the time previously arranged with Disability Services, Disability Services will need confirmation from the professor of the new approved date and time.

5. It is recommended that professors deliver exams to Disability Services 24 hours prior to the testing date, either by email or hand delivery to our office. This should be specified on the Test Proctoring Form. The student is encouraged to remind the professor of the need to deliver the test before the exam date. DS assumes responsibility for security of the exam.

6. During each semester, the Disability Services Testing Center is open for proctoring of test/quizzes on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 9 AM till 4:45pm PM and Tuesday from 9 AM till 8:45PM. The Disability Services Testing Office will remain open for 15min after testing is completed for professors who are picking up tests/quiz completed in Disability Services Testing Center. Availability during finals will be posted in advance on the DS website, http://ds.gmu.edu, emailed to students and on Disability Services' Facebook page.

7. Exams that need to be converted to large print, Braille, or scanned into a computer must be received by DS early enough to ensure adequate time for conversion. Disability Services recommends 2 weeks in advance as enlarging is not typically done in house, but another department (Assistive Technology Initiative) works in partnership with Disability Services to complete these tasks.

8. The student should arrive at DS 10-15 minutes prior to the start of the exam.

9. All students need to show ID when checking in to take an exam with DS.

10. Faculty instructions on the Disability Services Test Proctoring Form will be reviewed with before the exam begins.

11. Students are responsible for their own personal exam materials.

12. Exams will be given at the appointed time and students who are late will forfeit the time they miss and only be offered the scheduled time remaining. Instructors will be notified

of the omission. If a student is more than twenty (20) minutes late, the exam is considered a 'no show' and the instructor will be notified. It will be up to the student to contact the instructor regarding any options for rescheduling.

13. If a student unable to take an exam due to illness or emergency, they are to contact their instructor and DS immediately and are responsible for coordinating the make-up of any missed exam or quiz with your instructor. Disability Services Testing Center is available to proctor these make-ups provided confirmation of the new test/quiz date and time from the professor.

14. If during an exam the student has any question about the test or instructions, the student should inform Disability Services Testing Center staff, who will attempt to contact the instructor by phone or email. The student will speak directly to the professor, or compose the email from dstests@gmu.edu. This email will be monitored by Disability Services Testing Center Staff who will print out the reply and provide it directly to the student. The student is advised to continue with the test and include a written explanation about the problem so it will come to the attention of the instructor. DS will not clarify questions which a student has about the test or any items on the test.

15. A staff member from Disability Services or assigned proctor may come into the testing room at any time to monitor the instructor's guidelines for the exam.

16. Only necessary items mentioned on the Disability Services Test Proctoring Form, a small snack and drink, or items noted in a Faculty Contact Sheet are allowed in the testing room. The items not allowed include (but are not limited to):
    a. Notes and/or books not permitted by professor/instructor
    b. Any communication device including cell phones, notebooks, IPods and other electronic devices.
    c. Storage devices like CD, DVD, USB flash drive, floppy disk
    d. Backpacks and purses.

17. Non-permitted items during the exam, including all communication devices, can be stored with Disability Services Testing Center Staff. However, Disability Services will not be responsible for any damage or loss.

18. Use of the internet/intranet other than mentioned on the Disability Services Test Proctoring Form is strictly prohibited.

19. Any actual or suspected incident/evidence of improper test-taking or dishonesty will be documented by Disability Services staff and may result in termination of the exam. Suspected violations will be seen as an Honor Code violation and reported to the Office of Academic Integrity and to the instructor.

20. Pop Quizzes can be arranged with Disability Services Testing Center on a case by case basis to accommodate the student's academic schedule and course structure.

VI. Specific Disabilities

The overviews are based on characteristics of each disability as is stated in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-5).

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD):

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder is characterized by a persistent pattern of inattention and/hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with function or development on a daily level.

- o Strategies for Preparing for, Teaching and Communicating

    - ➢ Provide a syllabus with clear explanations of course objectives with specific due dates for assignments.
    - ➢ For large projects or long papers, break down the task into smaller parts.
    - ➢ Give verbal reminders in class of upcoming deadlines regarding homework assignments and upcoming exams.
    - ➢ Provide an outline of each lecture at the start of class.
    - ➢ When possible, start each lecture with as summary of material to be covered and conclude each lecture with a summary of major points addressed.
    - ➢ Students with AD/HD may start to "drift" during class. A varied format may help to keep their attention.
    - ➢ Students with AD/HD are encouraged to use the following strategies:
    - ➢ Use of a day planner
    - ➢ Write down all assignments
    - ➢ Take notes in class, rewriting notes after class
    - ➢ Break tasks down into manageable components
    - ➢ Set reasonable goals and use a checklist to keep track of progress
    - ➢ Use of an audio recorder for lectures and studying
    - ➢ Work on projects with someone who has strong organizational skills
    - ➢ Get feedback on social behavior from a trusted friend

Autism Spectrum Disorder

Autism Spectrum Disorder is diagnosed based on the presence of the following criteria: Persistent deficits in social communication & social interaction across multiple contexts; restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities; presence of symptoms since early in the developmental period.

- o Strategies for Preparing for, Teaching and Communicating

    - ➢ Establish trust to decrease conflict
    - ➢ Provide a syllabus with clear explanations of course objectives with specific due dates for assignments.
    - ➢ Be clear about times and reasons for office visits
    - ➢ Be willing to re-explain information as concretely as possible
    - ➢ If the student is disruptive to others, arrange to meet privately; let the student
    - ➢ know what behavior is disrupting others, and help them understand why
    - ➢ Give reasons for your requests to help the student understand your point of view
    - ➢ Avoid arguing if the student gets "stuck" on the topic; instead, stick to your reasoning and let them know that the conversation is done

- ➢ Don't use absolute words such as "always" or "never" unless that is exactly what you mean
- ➢ Supplement oral with written instructions when revising assignments, dates, etc.
- ➢ May need to set limits on participation, i.e. allow student to answer three questions per class period
- ➢ Limit use of metaphors, as they are often misunderstood
- ➢ Discuss any safety concerns, such as evacuation procedures, ahead of time
- ➢ Be aware that students with ASD may be distracted by others making noise, or
- ➢ they may be disruptive to others unintentionally
- ➢ If a student's head is down on the desk, consider the possibility that they may be experiencing sensory overload rather than sleeping
- ➢ Use clear and detailed directives when referring to revisions that need to be made
- ➢ Listing or numbering changes on the paper will provide guidelines for student when working
- ➢ If modeling writing rules, write them on a separate sheet for future reference
- ➢ Keep directions simple and declarative
- ➢ Ask students to repeat directions in their own words to check comprehension
- ➢ Clearly define course requirements, the dates of exams and when assignments are due. Provide advance notice of any changes.
- ➢ Teach to generalize and to consolidate information.
- ➢ Many individuals with ASD are visual learners. Pictures and graphs may be helpful to them.
- ➢ Redirect tangential responses to bring student to the point.
- ➢ Go for gist, meaning, and patterns. Don't get bogged down in details.
- ➢ Use scripts and teach strategies selectively.
- ➢ Make sure all expectations are direct and explicit. Don't require students to "read between the lines" to glean your intentions. Don't expect the student to automatically generalize instructions.
- ➢ Provide direct feedback to the student when you observe areas of academic difficulty.
- ➢ Encourage use of resources designed to help students with study skills,
- ➢ Particularly organizational skills.
- ➢ Avoid idioms, double meaning, and sarcasm, unless you plan to explain your usage
- ➢ If the student has poor handwriting, allow use of a computer if easier for the student.
- ➢ Use the student's preoccupying interest to help focus/motivate the student.
- ➢ Suggest ways to integrate this interest into the course, such as related paper topics
- ➢ Make sure the setting for tests takes into consideration any sensitivity to sound, light, touch, etc.

Blind/Vision Impaired

Strategies for Teaching Students with Visual Impairments

There are two main categories of visual impairments: Low Vision and Blind. Low vision students usually are print users, but may require special equipment and materials. The definition of legal blindness covers a broad spectrum of visual impairments. The extent of visual disability depends upon the physical sensory impairment of the student's eyes, the age of the student at the onset of vision impairment, and the way in which that impairment occurred. Vision also may fluctuate or may be influenced by factors such as inappropriate lighting, light glare, or fatigue. Hence, there is no "typical" vision impaired student. The major challenge facing visually impaired students in the educational environment is the overwhelming mass of visual material to which they are continually exposed in textbooks, class outlines, class schedules, chalkboards writing, etc. In addition, the increase in the use of films, videotapes, computers, laser disks, and television adds to the volume of visual material to which they have only limited access.

- o Strategies for Preparing for, Teaching and Communicating

  - ➢ Speak to the class upon entering and leaving the room or site.
  - ➢ Provide a syllabus with clear explanations of course objectives with specific due dates for assignments.
  - ➢ Call the student by name if you want his/her attention.
  - ➢ Use descriptive words such as straight, forward, left, etc. in relation to the student's body orientation. Be specific in directions and avoid the use of vague terms with unusable information, such as "over there", "here", "this", etc.
  - ➢ Describe, in detail, pertinent visual occurrences of the learning activities.
  - ➢ Describe and tactually familiarize the student to the classroom, laboratory, equipment, supplies, materials, field sites, etc.
  - ➢ Give verbal notice of room changes, special meetings, or assignments.
  - ➢ Offer to read written information for a person with a visual impairment, when appropriate.
  - ➢ Identify yourself by name; don't assume that the student who is visually impaired will recognize you by your voice even though you have met before.
  - ➢ If you are asked to guide a student with a visual impairment, identify yourself, offer your services and, if accepted, offer your arm to the student's hand. Tell them if they have to step up or step down, let them know if the door is to their left or right, and warn them of possible hazards.
  - ➢ Orally, let the student know if you need to move or need to end a conversation.
  - ➢ If a visually impaired student is in class, routinely check the instructional environment to be sure it is adequate and ready for use.
  - ➢ When communicating with a student who has a visional impairment, always identify yourself and others who are present.
  - ➢ Do not pet or touch a guide dog. Guide dogs are working animals. It can be hazardous for the visually impaired person if the dog is distracted.
  - ➢ Be understanding of the slight noise made by a portable brailler.
  - ➢ Also use an auditory or tactile signal where a visual signal is normally used.
  - ➢ It is not necessary to speak loudly to people with visual impairments.
  - ➢ Explain sudden noises
  - ➢ Don't shout. People who are blind or vision impaired are not deaf.

- ➢ When seating a person who is blind or vision impaired guide their hand to the back of the chair and allow them to seat themselves.
- ➢ Show the student where things are placed and let the student pick up and feel objects, where appropriate.
- ➢ Don't move objects without telling the student
- ➢ Don't leave doors ajar. Close or open them fully.
- ➢ Give clear directions, don't talk about "here" and "there"
- ➢ Speak directly to the student not through another person
- ➢ It's OK to use words like "look" and "see"
- ➢ It's OK to refer to object color when talking to the student.
- ➢ Let the student have hands-on experiences whenever possible. Don't force the student to touch new things if they are unsure about them.
- ➢ Ask if the student needs help rather than assuming. The student needs to become independent.
- ➢ Don't leave the student unless they know where they are
- ➢ Don't push or steer the student, let them take your hand or elbow
- ➢ Accept the students Faculty Contact Sheet and ask student if you have questions regarding the accommodations OR contact DS for further assistance.
- ➢ By verbally spelling out a new or technical word, you will be helping the visually impaired student, as well as for other students.
- ➢ Contact ATI in advance if showing any media or video's in the classroom
- ➢ Describe, in detail, all pertinent visual occurrences or chalkboard writing.
- ➢ Modify instructions for auditory/tactile presentation.
- ➢ Allow student to use a tape recorder for recording class presentations.
- ➢ Make all handouts and assignments available in an appropriate form: e.g., regular print, large print, Braille, or cassette, depending on the student's optimal mode of communication.
- ➢ Group work
  - when working in groups, student may need to be monitored by the
  - professor in order to avoid getting off task or taking over group activity
  - avoid having students self-select into groups
  - wherever possible, it may be helpful to offer an alternative approach where the student can select to work on an individual basis
  - if conflict arises, explain to student what effect they had on others, why the conflict arose, and how to behave appropriately in a group setting

Chronic Medical Conditions

Chronic Medical Condition involves a disease or other human health condition that is persistent or long-lasting in nature. The term chronic is usually applied when the course of the disease lasts for more than three months. Chronic Medical Conditions may substantially limit a person's ability to perform major life activities such as seeing, hearing, speaking, walking, breathing, performing manual tasks, learning, caring for oneself, and working. Many medical conditions require chronic care management for effective long-term treatment. Effective chronic disease control requires attention to social, behavioral, environmental and clinical aspects. Below is a list of the more common conditions experienced by the students at GMU.

AIDS	Allergies	Back Conditions	Brain Injuries
Cancer	Cerebral Palsy	Chemical Sensitivity	Chronic Fatigue Syndrome
Chronic Pain	Diabetes	Epilepsy	Gastrointestinal Disorders
Heart Conditions	Lyme Disease	Migraine Headaches	Multiple Sclerosis
Paraplegia/quadriplegia	Respiratory Disorders	Sickle Cell Anemia	Sleep Disorders
Spinal Cord Injury	Stroke		

o Strategies for working with students with Chronic Medical Conditions

There are many kinds of medical conditions, varying significantly in their effects and symptoms. These conditions may not be static therefore as the condition changes, so may the need for special instructional strategies or accommodations. The use of such strategies will depend on how the disability is manifested at that particular time and may change throughout the semester.

Deaf or Hearing Impairment

- o Strategies for working with Deaf or Hearing Impaired

  - ➢ *Have visual materials such as PowerPoint materials and lecture notes available to the students before class.* It is difficult to attend to the interpreter, speaker and visual prompts simultaneously.
  - ➢ *Have captioned videos available.* Videos that are not captioned must be captioned before class. It is not appropriate for the interpreter or transliterators to interpret for the video. Doing so would deprive the student of the ability to attend to both the visual information and the message being conveyed**.** If faculty members wish to show visual media that is not captioned, procedures for requesting accessible media and the online form can be found at http://ati.gmu.edu/media.cfm#CP_JUMP_2078.
  - ➢ Assistive Technology Initiative (ATI) asks for this at least 15 days in advance**.**
  - ➢ Failure to allow for adequate lead time may result in the video not being captioned and opens the university up to complaints regarding accessibility**.** This policy includes YouTube videos and any required media being shown in the classroom or required to be viewed outside of class.
  - ➢ *Treat all students equally.* Please keep in mind that although deaf, hard-of-hearing, and deaf-blind students have special needs they should be treated the same as hearing students.
  - ➢ *Interpreters are not always an accurate reflection of students when voicing for them.* Try to be patient when an interpreter voices for students. D/deaf, hard-of-hearing, and D/deaf-blind students have diverse communications skills. If the professor does not understand the student's question or statement, it is acceptable to ask for it to be repeated.
  - ➢ *Be aware of "process time," which is the time required to process information into another language.* Faculty members are asked to be cognizant that there is a processing time of 5-10 seconds between what is said and the time that an interpreter signs the material to students.
  - ➢ *Slow down.* While slowing down can be tough for faculty members, the rapid pace of instruction is one of the top areas of classroom concern by deaf, hard-of-hearing, and hearing students.
  - ➢ *Allow D/deaf students to have access to the first few rows in class on the first day.*
  - ➢ Deaf, hard-of-hearing, and deaf-blind students frequently need to sit at or near the front of the room in order to have a clear view of the speaker, the interpreter, the captioning, and of any classroom materials.
  - ➢ *Avoid pre-determined groups of deaf/hearing students to work together.* Before establishing groups, ask students privately for their preferences in group assignments.
  - ➢ *When using a laser pointer please allow the pointer to remain on the object.* By allowing the pointer to remain positioned for an extended period of time, deaf and hard-of-hearing students will be able to locate its position, read the content there, and return their attention to the speaker (and an interpreter or reporter if present).
  - ➢ *Avoid using pronouns as referents in the class.* Use of proper names is best. When speakers are more specific it helps all students, hearing or deaf, to understand.

> ➢ Provide a syllabus with clear explanations of course objectives with specific due dates for assignments.

Suggestions for Working with Sign Language Interpreters and/or Cued speech Transliterators

Interpreters are specially trained professionals whose role is to facilitate communication between people who do not share a common language throughout the educational environment, both academic and extracurricular. While the interpreter is not an expert in the faculty member's field, the interpreter is an expert in communication between D/deaf and hearing individuals.

Cued Speech Transliterators resemble the function of a sign language interpreter except that the transliterators use a hand code, or cue, to represent each speech sound.

- o The interpreter will interpret everything that happens in the classroom (both spoken and signed), conveying the content and the spirit of the speaker. Speakers may speak using their normal rate. Speakers should direct all questions and comments to the
- o D/deaf student, not the interpreter.
- o Faculty members may be asked to provide the interpreter with materials relevant to the course, e.g. copies of the syllabus, handouts, an extra copy of the textbook, and lecture notes if possible. A permanent, armless chair will also be needed.
- o Specialized terms, proper names, etc. will need to be provided to the interpreter before the class which will aid the interpreter in conveying the information to the deaf student accurately.
- o Faculty is asked to use visual aids whenever possible. Writing new words, phrases, concepts and ideas on the board is helpful both to the interpreter and the students.
- o Depending on the length and nature of the class, a team of two interpreters may be assigned to a class. The interpreters will alternate, according to time limits they have agreed upon. They will make the change as unobtrusively as possible, and it is not necessary for faculty members to stop the lecture during this change.
- o Interpreters operate under a professional Code of Ethics. All information pertaining to the class will be kept confidential within the educational team working directly with the student. The Code of Ethics requires the interpreter to sign or voice everything seen or heard in the classroom. Speakers who ask the interpreter "not to sign this", place the interpreter in violation of the Code. Likewise, the interpreter will voice for the faculty member and/or class everything the D/deaf student signs with the exception of brief questions specifically to the interpreter for communication clarification.
- o If individuals will read in class, faculty members are asked to please remind them to slow down as reading tends to be done at a much quicker pace than extemporaneous speech. If possible, provide interpreters with a copy of the literature to be read in class.

Learning Disabilities/Cognitive Impairments

Learning Disabilities are difficulties learning and using academic skills, as indicated by the presence of a variety of difficulties regarding reading, math, spelling and/or writing, that have persisted for at least 6 months, despite the provision of interventions that target those difficulties.

Learning disabilities are neurologically-based disorders that affect the manner in which individuals with average or above average intelligence receive, process, retain and/or express information. A learning disability is NOT to be confused with generalized low ability. Learning disabilities are invisible, but may affect a student's performance in reading, writing, spoken language, mathematics, orientation in space and time and/or organization. The areas of difficulty will vary from one student to another.

- o Strategies for Preparing for, Teaching and Communicating

    - o Provide a syllabus with clear explanations of course objectives with specific due dates for assignments.
    - ➢ Advance planning for the reading requirements of a course from semester to semester is especially helpful to students who need recorded audio presentations as an alternative format. Lead-time is essential to provide the alternative medium in a timely fashion.
    - ➢ Create a syllabus with due dates, reading assignments, additional AV or supplemental materials in the library collection, descriptions of projects and papers, grading & attendance policies or rubrics.
    - ➢ Place the syllabus online as well as in print.
    - ➢ Clearly define course requirements such as assignments and their deadlines. Be sure to provide advance notice of any schedule changes.
    - ➢ Sharing lecture notes with a student in advance can be extremely helpful to support his or her visual and auditory preparation for each class.
    - ➢ Encourage students to make appointments during office hours to discuss student's disability, the accommodations required,
    - ➢ Office hours can also be used for individual discussion of assignments and questions about lectures.
    - ➢ When presenting new or technical terms, it can be crucial for students with a learning disability to have them written on the board or supplied in handouts
    - ➢ Guided notes, Power Point presentations, or notes put online at the end of class can improve the performance of all students. If students know the note framework will be available before class, they can download and print it out and use it as an outline.
    - ➢ If the notes are online after the lecture, they can spend their time listening and responding to questions in class, knowing that the notes will be available later
    - ➢ Break information into small steps while instructing on new tasks
    - ➢ Paraphrase key points from the reading and lectures.
    - ➢ Provide examples (and identify things that are not examples).
    - ➢ During a lecture, pause occasionally allowing students to take the time to assimilate the information and catch up with note taking. Pauses can be used to erase a board or change a visual slide.
    - ➢ Use analogies, illustrations, films, overheads, records, tapes.

- For large projects, provide step-by-step directions, bullet those directions, & give advanced notice of due dates (at least 2 weeks).
- Allow time for questions and clarification during or at the end of a lecture.
- Be flexible and willing to experiment. Recognize each learning disabled student's individual learning style and abilities.
- Announce information in both oral and written form whenever possible. This is especially true of changes in assignments or exams
- Talk distinctly and at an appropriate rate.
- Speak at an even speed; emphasizing important points with pauses, gestures, and other body language, helps students follow classroom presentations.
- Try not to lecture while facing the chalkboard.
- When talking, be mindful of the speed and audibility of your lecture.
- Use consistent pauses or voice inflections which can be effective in emphasizing important points. This is important in maintaining attention and encouraging participation.

Psychological Disabilities

Syndrome characterized by clinically significant disturbance in an individual's' cognition, emotion regulation, or behavior that reflects a dysfunction in the psychological, biological, or developmental processes underlying mental functioning. These disabilities are usually associated with significant distress or disability in social, occupation, or other important activities, this does not included culturally approved responses to a common stressor or loss. Socially deviant behavior and conflicts that are primarily between the induvial and society, unless the deviance or conflict results from a dysfunction in the induvial.

There are many kinds of mental/psychiatric disorders, varying significantly in their effects and symptoms. These conditions may not be static therefore as the condition changes, so may the need for special instructional strategies or accommodations.

- Post-traumatic Stress
- Disorder
- Obsessive-Compulsive
- Disorder
- Anxiety Disorder
- Panic Disorders
- Seasonal Affective Disorder
- Depression
- Bipolar Disorder
- Schizophrenia

  o Strategies for working with students with Psychological Disabilities

    - Address a variety of learning styles (e.g. auditory, visual, kinesthetic, experiential, or a combination of styles).
    - Provide a syllabus with clear explanations of course objectives with specific due dates for assignments.
    - Incorporate experiential learning activities.
    - Be prepared to set behavioral expectations for all students in your class.

- ➢ Embrace diversity to include people with psychiatric disabilities
- ➢ Provide an organized, well-written, and complete syllabus that includes required readings, assignments, due dates, and defined expectations.
- ➢ Encourage students to tell you about any accessibility concerns. You can do this both verbally early in the semester and by including an accessibility statement on your syllabus. Indicate that such conversations are confidential and are strictly for the purpose of facilitating any learning needs or accommodations that may be in place.
- ➢ Identify and clearly express the essential course content, and recognize that students can express understanding of essential course content in multiple ways. Diversify assignments or allow for exceptions to enable all students to demonstrate their specific talents (for example, oral presentations, poster presentations, written assignments).
- ➢ Provide the course outline, the list of reading requirements, copies of overhead slides, and all other material in an accessible, digital format to all students whenever possible.
- ➢ Learning disabilities are neurologically-based disorders that affect the manner in which individuals with average or above average intelligence receive, process, retain and/or express information. A learning disability is NOT to be confused with generalized low ability. Learning disabilities are invisible, but may affect a student's performance in reading, writing, spoken language, mathematics, orientation in space and time and/or organization. The areas of difficulty will vary from one student to another. The manifestations resulting from this disability may result in skill deficits in the following areas:
- ➢ Group work
  - when working in groups, student may need to be monitored by the
  - professor in order to avoid getting off task or taking over group activity
  - avoid having students self-select into groups
  - wherever possible, it may be helpful to offer an alternative approach where the student can select to work on an individual basis
  - if conflict arises, explain to student what effect they had on others, why the conflict arose, and how to behave appropriately in a group setting

Temporary Disabilities

Disability Services offers a wide variety of policy directed services to students with temporary documented disabilities. However, services are extended to students with temporary disabilities only for the time that their access to Mason classes, coursework, and programs is significantly limited as a direct result of those disabilities.

The eligibility process is the same as for permanent disability cases

Temporary conditions include but are not limited to:
- Extended Illnesses – i.e. Mono
- Complications due to pregnancies
- Recoveries from surgeries that are extensive
- Short term injuries due to accidents including:
- Broken bones
- Sprains
- Concussive Condition

Grievances Procedure

Disability Services (DS) collaborates with students with documented disabilities to provide reasonable accommodations that are individualized and based upon disability documentation, functional limitations, and a collaborative assessment of needs. Students with disabilities who have met with a DS specialist, and are not satisfied with their approved accommodations are encouraged to appeal the decision made and meet with the Director/Asst. Dean. This meeting is an opportunity for the student to engage in additional conversation, and or to provide supplemental documentation to support their request. Should the appeal not be granted within DS, the next step is for the student to appeal the decision to the ADA Coordinator in the Compliance, Diversity and Ethics (CDE) office. http://integrity.gmu.edu/compliance/AmericansDisabilitiesAct.cfm
Should the appeal not be granted by the ADA Coordinator, the final step is to file a complaint using the CDE Grievance procedure.

CDE has established a process to assist in carrying out its responsibilities in administering and enforcing applicable federal and state laws and university policies related to nondiscrimination and investigating complaints. Consistent with federal and state laws and university policies related to nondiscrimination, CDE investigates complaints of unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including sexual harassment), national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran status, marital status, pregnancy status or genetic information.

Grievance Filing

All complaints must be filed with CDE. Assistance will be provided if needed. Complainants will be asked to complete an intake form describing the alleged discrimination and/or harassment. There are two types of complaints that can be filed:

Informal: Discuss allegations and concerns with respondent (the accused) and attempt to resolve the situation. The respondent is reminded that George Mason University expects all to adhere to our equal opportunity policy. Respondent is put on notice that behavior has been questioned, and informal resolution sought, if possible. If attempts to resolve the situation are not successful, the complainant may pursue a formal complaint. The Office reserves the right to investigate any allegation brought forward if it finds sufficient information to indicate a serious or continuing violation of the equal opportunity policy.

Formal: The Complainant provides a summary of the nature of the allegation in writing and then a full investigation is conducted by the Office complete with written findings and, if a violation is found, corrective actions are taken. For the complete grievance procedure, including time frames and appeal process please view the EO/AA Grievance Procedure Document.

For more information or instructions to fill out EO/AA Grievance Procedure documentation please visit http://integrity.gmu.edu/compliance/grievanceprocedures.cfm

VII. FAQ's

What if I suspect a student has a disability but hasn't provided me with any documentation from Disability Services? Can I ask them if they have a disability?

It is not a good idea to ask directly about a possible disability for a couple of reasons. First, the Americans with Disabilities Act states that a public entity may not make unnecessary inquiries into the existence of a disability. These inquiries usually relate to hiring or pre-admission screening, but when talking with students such inquiries should also be avoided. A direct inquiry such as this could also be considered intrusive or insensitive. You may simply tell the student that you notice she is having academic difficulty and encourage her to consider looking into the academic supports services on campus which includes DS. We ask that you speak to the behavior you are noticing, for example, "I noticed you are struggling with….". In the Appendix section below there is a copy of a flyer listing all the academic support services.

What if a student comes to me at the end of the semester and tells me they have a disability, but has not provided me with documentation from Disability Services?

If a student discloses that he or she has a disability, you may refer and encourage them to go to DS for support. Also, please keep in mind that accommodations are not retroactive. If a student has not supplied you with a faculty contact sheet from DS, you are not required to provide any accommodations or academic adjustments based on a student's disclosed disability. While these decisions are ultimately left to the professor's discretion, we recommend acceptance of this general guideline.

What if I disagree with an accommodation that is provided by Disability Services?

Please call DS for assistance with any questions about a student's accommodations. For further explanation regarding legal obligations of higher education institutions to provide accommodations for students with documented disabilities, please refer to page 1 of this guide which discusses the ADAA and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

When is a student required to submit their accommodation letter to me?

Students can provide you with a faculty contact sheet at any time during the semester. However, please keep in mind that implementation of accommodations begins at that time, and are not retroactive.

What if I have provided the accommodations provided by Disability Services but the student is still struggling in my class?

If you are concerned that a student is not succeeding in your class despite your implementation of accommodations, we encourage you to first talk with the student to discuss these concerns. If you feel a discussion with an DS staff member would be helpful, please contact us and we will assist you. Also, it may be helpful during your conversation with the student to ask if he or she would like to involve a DS staff member in addressing the issue. Ultimately, all students are expected to meet the same academic requirements and should be assigned grades by the same standards, regardless of disability. While we strive to guarantee equal access for students with disabilities, we cannot guarantee success.

A student who is registered with DS is being extremely disruptive in my class, and I'm not sure how to handle the situation. What should I do?

While there may be instances where a student's disruptive behavior is related to their disability, if the behavior is disruptive in a way you're not sure how to handle, you can make a referral to the Office of Student Support and Case Management. Please see their website for further details about their role, policies, and procedures. http://osscm.gmu.edu/

What do I do if I am seriously concerned about a student's well-being? I know he or she has a disability. Who should I contact?

If there is a life threatening emergency, call 911 immediately. If there is an emergent situation and crisis intervention is needed, you can also call Counseling and Psychological Services at 703-993-2380.

Is my intellectual property at risk if I provide a copy of lecture my in any form to the student?

Disability Services is prepared to provide a copy of the Lecture Note agreement to professors and students as requested by professors.

What is the procedure for using the testing center?

Please refer to Section V, page 15-18 of this guide.

What is the role of an interpreter?

For detailed information about the role of interpreters in the classroom, please refer Section VI, Page 24 of this guide.

VIII. Resources & Links

Informational web sites that may be beneficial in working with students with disabilities.

General Information

- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**
  http://www.ada.gov/
  The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), passed July 26, 1990, is a comprehensive federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. This piece of legislation ensures equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in employment, public accommodations, transportation, State and local government services, and telecommunications.
- **Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD)**
  www.ahead.org
  A professional membership organization for individuals involved in the development of policy and in the provision of quality services to meet the needs of persons with disabilities involved in all areas of higher education.
- **Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking and Technology (DO-IT)**
  http://www.washington.edu/doit/
  DO-IT Center promotes the success of individuals with disabilities in postsecondary education and careers, using technology as an empowering tool.
  http://www.washington.edu/doit/Resources/postsec.html
  List of websites to help faculty, administrators, and staff create accessible environments, programs, and resources for students with disabilities and help students with disabilities prepare for and succeed in college
- **HEATH Resource Center**
  http://www.heath.gwu.edu/
  Online clearinghouse on postsecondary education for individuals with disabilities.
- **Office for Civil Rights**
  www.ed.gov/ocr
  Serve student populations facing discrimination and the advocates and institutions promoting systemic solutions to civil rights problems.

Disability Specific

- **Attention Deficit Disorders**
  www.add.org
  www.chadd.org
- **Autism Spectrum Disorder**
  http://www.autism-society.org/
  http://www.autismspeaks.org/
- **Blind and Visual Impairments**
  www.afb.org

- **Deaf/Hard of Hearing**
  http://www.pepnet.org/resources/deaf
- **Learning Disabilities**
  www.ncld.org
- **Mental Health/Psychiatric Disorders**
  http://www.nimh.nih.gov/index.shtml
  http://www.nami.org/template.cfm?section=about_mental_illness

Instructional Strategies

- **Assistive Technology Initiative (ATI)**
  http://ati.gmu.edu/
  The ATI works collaboratively with other units within the Mason community to ensure equivalent access for individuals with disabilities to information technology and communications. This is achieved through the use of adaptive equipment and the provision of technical assistance to all university departments/units. The ATI also provides training and technical support to the university community regarding equivalent access to information technology.
- **CAST Universal Design for Learning**
  www.cast.org
  CAST is a nonprofit research and development organization that works to expand learning opportunities for all individuals, especially those with disabilities, through Universal Design for Learning.
- **The ASD Project**
  http://webdev.usu.edu/drc/facultytraining/introo.htm
  This computer-based course is intended to develop an awareness about accommodating students with disabilities. In your role as faculty, there is a little background information that may be helpful. Studies have shown that students with disabilities can participate in higher education and compete favorably with other students.

IX. Appendix

Process when an accommodation is challenged based on fundamental alteration of an academic program

Mason Process:

Accommodation decision made by Disability Services (DS)

1.   Department/faculty member objects. Must contact DS immediately.

   a. Department/faculty explain reasons.

   b. DS explains accommodation to faculty member. If faculty member still objects to the specific accommodation, DS will offer potential alternatives to faculty member, and to the student, to address the approved accommodations. If the faculty member continues to believe that the approved accommodation interferes with the essential academic or technical requirements of the course, DS will forward to the ADA Coordinator.

   c. ADA Coordinator will oversee fundamental alteration evaluation: (Academic decision, based on the academic program, ADA Coordinator oversight)

      i. Is the academic requirement an essential component of the academic program?

      ii. After determining whether the academic or technical requirement is essential to the academic program, have the ADA Coordinator consider alternatives for essential requirements.

   d. If the requirement and/or the evaluation process are deemed essential, the accommodation is not provided. Determine what alternative assistance is available to the student. (DS and academic program determination)

2.   Appeals. ADA Coordinator and Provost. Both parties may appeal a determination of whether or not an academic requirement is essential and whether or not provision of the specific accommodation would fundamentally alter the academic program. The ADA Coordinator reviews the process followed, ensuring it includes the above steps, and may suggest alternative means to assist the student, if appropriate. The Provost or his designee is the final authority on whether an academic component is essential and whether the proposed accommodation would fundamentally alter the academic program.

[*] The decision must be made by a group of people who are trained, knowledgeable and experienced in the area; the decision makers should consider a series of alternatives as essential requirements; and, the decision should be a careful, thoughtful and rational review of the academic program and its requirements

GMU Academic Support Services

- ## Learning Services
Provides study skills workshops, academic skills program, and academic counseling.
Student Union Building I, Room 3129
http://caps.gmu.edu/learningservices/
703-993-2999

- ## Counseling and Psychological Services(CAPS)
Provides individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs.
Student Union 1, Room 3129
http://caps.gmu.edu/
703-993-2380

- ## Assistive Technology Initiative (ATI)
Provides Assistive Technology assessments, support and training; also provision of accessible text. The referral process is initiated through the Office of Disability Services.
Aquia Building, Room 238
http://ati.gmu.edu
ati@gmu.edu
703-993-4329

- ## The Writing Center
Free writing support and writing workshops
Various locations (see website)
http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/
wcenter@gmu.edu

- ## Math Tutoring Center
Free tutoring for freshman/sophomore math courses (up to MATH 290).
Johnson Center room 344
http://math.gmu.edu/tutorcenter.htm
703-993-1483

- ## Tutor Referral
Recruits and maintains a tutor referral program.
http://caps.gmu.edu/learningservices/tutorreferral.php
703-993-2999

- ## Career Services
Provides assistance in academic/career decision-making and goal setting.
Student Union I, Room 3400
http://careers.gmu.edu/index.cfm
703-993-2370

References

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