



DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS) HANDBOOK

A Guide for Faculty, Staff, and Students

HAGERSTOWN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	3
Contact Information.....	3
Rights and Responsibilities.....	4
Students:	
Process to Obtain Accommodations.....	5
Procedure to Obtain Note Takers.....	5
Procedure to Request Alternative Formatted Textbooks.....	5
Testing Accommodations.....	6
Common Accommodations.....	6
Documentation Guidelines.....	6
Non-Discrimination Policy/Web Accessibility.....	7
DSS Concerns / Grievances.....	8
Service Animal Guidelines.....	9
Personal Attendant Agreement.....	11
Chart: Disability Services in Secondary vs. Post-Secondary Education.....	12
Procedures Regarding Attendance Policies.....	13
Faculty:	
Procedures Regarding Attendance Policies.....	13
Disability Summary Sheets: Characteristics/Instructional Strategies.....	15
Legal Decisions.....	22
Basic Disability Etiquette.....	23
Tips: Working with Deaf Students.....	24
Tips: Working with Interpreters.....	25
Points to Remember for Faculty.....	26
Acknowledgements.....	27

INTRODUCTION

Hagerstown Community College provides reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and its amendments. Unlike secondary education, the College's services are not covered under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Therefore, more responsibility is placed on the student initiative when moving from secondary education to postsecondary education (see Disability Services in Secondary vs. Postsecondary Education handout in Appendix of this document). In this transition, there is a shift from entitlement services to eligibility services. Students are responsible for self-identification and for obtaining requested documentation from an appropriate professional to verify the presence and impact of a disability. Students are also responsible for the cost of this verification. The Disability Support Services (DSS) office coordinates the provision of reasonable accommodations which are determined on an individual basis. These accommodations allow students to be evaluated not on the effects of their disability, but instead on their knowledge and understanding of course material. In no case however, will the College modify essential requirements for any course or degree program for students with disabilities. New students to the DSS office are responsible for identifying him/herself to the DSS office at least two weeks prior to the start of the upcoming semester to allow time for necessary arrangements to be made.

HOW DOES THE ADA AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2008 BROADEN COVERAGE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES?

- Broader definition of “disability” to include impairments that are episodic or in remission and can be considered a disability if they would substantially limit a major life activity during times when it is active.
- Add concentrating and thinking to the list of major life activities.
- Disability determinations must be made without considering mitigating measures, such as medication, hearing aids, etc.
- An impairment does not have to limit or be perceived to limit a major life activity for a person to meet the “regarded as having an impairment” definition.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

The Disability Support Services (DSS) office is located in the Student Center. Please see contact information below:

Luis Flores, DSS Advisor

Phone: 240-500-2291

E-mail: jlflores@hagerstowncc.edu

Kristen Hoffman, DSS Advisor

Phone: 240-500-2712

E-mail: knhoffman@hagerstowncc.edu

The DSS office can assist students in the application, advising, and financial aid process as well as the accommodation process. Please feel free to contact DSS staff with questions pertaining to any of these areas.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

STUDENTS

Have the **RIGHT** to:

- Delivery of reasonable accommodations in a timely manner, upon request.
- Assurance that information regarding their disability will be handled in a confidential manner in accordance with federal and state laws and College policy.
- Receive information in accessible formats as requested.
- Have equal access to programs, courses, services, and activities available at the College.

Have the **RESPONSIBILITY** to:

- Disclose in a timely manner any disability for which they are requesting accommodations, auxiliary aids or services.
- Provide documentation of disability from a qualified professional.
- Follow standard procedures outlined in this handbook to obtain reasonable accommodations.
- Meet HCC standards of enrollment and any technical standards that may exist pertaining to specified program of study.
- Comply with all College regulations and student conduct guidelines.
- Discuss academic accommodations with faculty for each class.

HAGERSTOWN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Has the **RIGHT** to:

- Maintain the College's academic and student conduct standards.
- Require satisfactory documentation of disability from a qualified professional.
- Establish the essential functions, technical standards, and required student outcomes of HCC courses, programs, and activities.
- In conjunction with the Disability Support Services (DSS) office, deny a request for an accommodation that is inappropriate or unreasonable based upon documentation, that poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others, or that requires a fundamental alteration of a program.

Has the **RESPONSIBILITY** to:

- Provide information regarding policies and procedures to students with disabilities.
- Ensure that the resources available at the College are accessible to qualified individuals with disabilities.
- Provide reasonable accommodations in a timely manner to qualified students with documented disabilities who request them in accordance with College policies and procedures.
- Maintain confidentiality of information in accordance with federal and state laws and College policy.

PROCESS OF OBTAINING ACCOMMODATIONS:

1. Complete Intake Request Form

Go to the following link: <https://dss.hagerstowncc.edu> and click on the icon to complete the 'Intake Request Form'. Step one lets the DSS office know that you would like to request accommodations and provides us with some basic, background information.

2. Submit documentation

Part of the accommodations process is the submission of documentation. Documentation comes from a licensed provider and gives the DSS office more information on your disability, as well as your functional needs. You may choose to upload your documentation when completing the Intake Request Form or bring it to you Intake appointment.

3. Complete intake appointment

Once you have completed the Intake Request form and have obtained documentation, you may schedule an intake appointment with the DSS office. To schedule an intake appointment, go to the following link: <https://hagerstown.craniumcafe.com/group/disability-support-services> At this intake appointment, we will talk with you about your strengths and weaknesses as a student, the nature of your disability, possible accommodations, and student responsibilities.

PROCEDURE TO OBTAIN NOTETAKERS:

Students are expected to complete a 'Note Taker Request Form' each semester and list courses in which they want a note taker (provided the student has this listed as an approved accommodation). This form is online at the following link:

<https://www.hagerstowncc.edu/forms/disability-services/note-taker-request-form> Students may email the form to the DSS office at dss@hagerstowncc.edu or they may choose to print the form and drop it off in person to the DSS office.

PROCEDURE TO REQUEST ALTERNATIVE FORMAT FOR TEXTBOOKS:

Students are expected to complete an 'Alternative Format Request Form' each semester in which they would like to receive alternative formatted versions of their textbook (provided the student has this listed as an approved accommodation). This form is online at the following link:

<https://www.hagerstowncc.edu/forms/disability-services/electronic-textbook-request-form>

In order for the DSS office to order alternative formatted books for a student, the student must also have an 'Electronic Textbook Agreement Form' in their file. The 'Electronic Textbook Agreement Form' may be found in the Appendix of this handbook. This agreement form does *not* need to be completed each semester, rather the student completes one agreement form which is kept in their file during their time at the College.

TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS:

Students are expected to request and discuss testing accommodations with their instructor prior to taking an exam. Students with testing accommodations to include a reader, scribe, or separate room also need to contact the Disability Support Services office 3-5 days in advance of each exam so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Students requesting a reader or scribe should complete the 'Exam Reader-Scribe Request Form' which can be accessed at the following link:

<https://www.hagerstowncc.edu/forms/disability-services/exam-reader-scribe-request-form> This form can be submitted electronically or printed out and dropped off to the DSS office. The hard copy version of this form is also in the Appendix of this handbook. Instructors will need to submit the student's exam along with an 'Instructor Form' listed testing accommodations that the student is planning to use on the exam. Students simply requiring additional testing time on an exam will not need to notify the DSS office or Academic Testing Center in advance of the test. However, the instructor will need to complete a separate 'Instructor Form' to accompany the student's test, noting the accommodation of extended testing time.

COMMON ACCOMMODATIONS INCLUDE:

- Extended testing time
- Testing in a quiet, distraction reduced area
- Readers for exams
- Note takers
- Use of a tape recorder
- Use of a calculator
- Scribes for exams
- Interpreters

DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES:

Generally, documentation should be recent and include a formal evaluation, diagnosis of a disability, and provide recommendations concerning academic accommodations

- Documentation should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, examining the impact of the disability on the student and within the specific context of the request for accommodations;
- Determination of a disability should not require the use of any specific language;
- Documentation may be augmented by interview with the student and contact with the evaluator for needed clarification;
- Determination of accommodations is an interactive process and should not be dictated by any one party;
- Documentation of a specific disability does not translate directly into a specific accommodation or set of accommodations
- Disability documentation will be treated in a confidential manner.

If students suspect that they have a disability and do not have appropriate documentation, please see the referral list at the following link: <http://www.hagerstowncc.edu/student-services/disability-services/test-providers> or in Appendix of this handbook.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY:

Hagerstown Community College does not discriminate against any individual for reasons of race, sex, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, sexual orientation, or conditions of disability in the admission and treatment of students, educational programs and activities, scholarship and loan programs, hiring of faculty and staff, or any terms and conditions of employment. The College is committed to affirmative action.

WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY:

Hagerstown Community College is committed to ensuring that its web site (www.hagerstowncc.edu) is accessible to all users. The website has been developed to comply with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (as amended). Section 508 was enacted to eliminate barriers to information technology, to make available new opportunities for people with disabilities, and to encourage the development of new technologies to help achieve these goals. This law requires that all individuals with disabilities have access to information and data comparable to that which is available to individuals without disabilities. If you have questions or feedback about accessibility on the Hagerstown Community College web site, please contact us by emailing webmaster@hagerstowncc.edu

DSS RELATED CONCERNS:

Students with disabilities who have concerns regarding the physical accessibility of the campus should complete the form at the following link:

<https://www.hagerstowncc.edu/forms/disability-support-services/accessibility-request-form>

Students will be contacted to discuss their concerns and come to a resolution. If students are not happy with the resolution, they may choose to follow the grievance procedure below.

Students with disabilities who have concerns regarding the provision of an academic accommodation and have already shared their concerns with their DSS Advisor, should follow the procedure below:

1. Contact Jaime Bachtell, the Director of Student Cohorts, Compliance, and Intervention and make an appointment to discuss the concern. The Director will work with you, your instructor, and/or DSS Advisor to resolve the issue. The Director may be reached at 240-500-2273 or at jlbachtell@hagerstowncc.edu
2. If the student has discussed the accommodation concern with the Director and feels it has not been adequately resolved, the student will need to arrange a meeting with the Dean of Student Affairs. The Dean may be contacted at 240-500-2526. The Dean will meet with the student to discuss the situation and resolve the issue.
3. If not satisfied with the informal resolution, the student may choose to file a General Grievance with the College, which will be initiated through the Human Resources office at the College by completing the following form:
https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?HagerstownCC&layout_id=17

** Student complaints related to academic practices of faculty should be addressed outside of the grievance process above. In these situations, the student will meet first with the instructor to voice a concern and attempt to resolve the issue. If not satisfied, the student will meet with the respective Division Director. If there is continued dissatisfaction, the student will meet with the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Services.

If a student wishes to challenge the final grade assigned by a faculty member, he or she must follow the grade appeal procedure as outlined in the HCC Student Handbook. This guide may be accessed at the following link:

<https://www.hagerstowncc.edu/student-activities/student-handbook>

SERVICE ANIMAL GUIDELINES

Service animals are defined as dogs or miniature horses that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medication, and calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack.

Service animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task a dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.

Under the ADA, service animals must be allowed to accompany people with disabilities in all areas of the facility where the public is normally allowed to go.

Under the ADA, service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices. In this case the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.

When it is not obvious what service an animal provides, only limited inquiries are allowed. Staff may ask two questions: (1) is the dog a service animal required because of a disability, and (2) what work or task has the dog been trained to perform. Staff cannot ask about the person's disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card or training documentation for the dog, or ask that the dog demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.

Allergies and fear of dogs are not valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to people using service animals. In these cases, both the student with the allergy or fear and the student using the service animal should be accommodated by moving the students to different locations within the room or different rooms in the facility.

A person with a disability cannot be asked to remove his service animal from the premises unless: (1) the dog is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it or (2) the dog is not housebroken. When there is legitimate reason to ask that a service animal be removed, staff must offer the person with the disability the opportunity to obtain goods or services without the animal's presence.

Establishments that sell or prepare food must allow service animals in public areas even if state or local health codes prohibit animals on the premises.

People with disabilities who use service animals cannot be isolated from other patrons, treated less favorably than other patrons, or charged fees that are not charged to other patrons without animals.

Staff are not required to provide care or food for a service animal.

In addition to the provisions about service dogs, ADA regulations have a separate provision about miniature horses that have been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. Entities covered by the ADA must permit miniature horses where

reasonable. The following assessment factors will assist in this determination: (1) whether the miniature horse is housebroken; (2) whether the miniature horse is under the owner's control; (3) whether the facility can accommodate the miniature horse's type, size, and weight; and (4) whether the miniature horse's presence will not compromise the legitimate safety requirements necessary for safe operation of the facility.

All students must abide by current city ordinances/laws pertaining to licensing and vaccination requirements for service animals. It is the responsibility of the owner and/or user of the animal to know about these ordinances and/or laws.

For more information, please contact the Disability Support Services office.

PERSONAL ATTENDANT AGREEMENT

Hagerstown Community College (HCC) makes every reasonable effort to accommodate individuals with disabilities as addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act. In keeping with this commitment, personal attendants who accompany individuals with documented disabilities through the DSS office will be allowed entrance into the classroom. However, it is not the responsibility of the College to provide services to meet the personal needs (actions needed regardless of whether the person is a student or not) of the student.

An otherwise qualified student who requires personal attendant services must make arrangements for his/her own personal attendant service. The College does not assume coordination or financial responsibilities for personal attendant services.

The student is expected to:

- Submit appropriate documentation to the DSS office that supports the necessity of having a personal attendant.
- Notify the DSS office of any personnel changes, and have any new attendants sign the Personal Attendant Agreement form.
- Have a back-up plan or alternative plan of action should the regular personal attendant not be available.
- Direct the activities of the personal attendant while at HCC.
- Pay for all personal attendant services.

The personal attendant is expected to:

- Refrain from participating in class discussions.
- Refrain from conversations with the student during class.
- Refrain from discussing any confidential information about the student with faculty, staff, or students.
- Allow the student to take responsibility for his/her own progress in class.
- Follow HCC's Code of Conduct, which can be found in HCC's College Guide: A Handbook Planner for Students.
- Allow the DSS office to coordinate needed classroom accommodations. If the student requests the personal attendant to take notes, the college cannot pay the personal attendant for this service.

If a student or personal attendant fails to abide by the above guidelines, the DSS office may determine that the personal attendant will not be allowed to accompany the student while on campus. Depending on the circumstance, there may also be disciplinary action taken against the student through Judicial Affairs for inappropriate behavior as defined in the Student Code of Conduct.

The student requesting the attendant, the personal attendant, and DSS staff must sign the above agreement to acknowledge that they have read, understand, and agree to comply with the guidelines. See Personal Attendant Agreement form in Appendix of this handbook. This signed agreement is kept in the student's file in the DSS office.

Disability Services in Secondary vs. Postsecondary Education

Student responsibilities dramatically increase as they move from secondary to postsecondary education. More responsibility is placed on student initiative in higher education and there is a shift from *entitlement services* to *eligibility services*.

What is the law?	IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) 504 (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) ADAAA (Americans w/ Disabilities Act Amend. Act 2008)	504 (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) ADAAA (Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008)
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Intent of the law?	IDEA - to provide a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment to identified students with disabilities including special education and related services.	504/ADA/ADAAA - to ensure that no otherwise qualified person with a disability is denied access to, benefits of, or is subject to discrimination solely on the basis of disability.
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Who is covered?	IDEA - All infants, children, and youth requiring special education services until age 21 or graduation from high school.	504/ADA/ADAAA - All qualified persons with disabilities who, with or without accommodations, meet the college's admissions requirements and the specific entry level criteria for the specific program. These persons must also document the existence of a disability as defined by Section 504 and ADA/ADAAA.
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Who is responsible for identifying and documenting need?	School districts are responsible for identifying and evaluating potential students with disabilities. Once a determination is made, the school district plans educational services at no expense to the family.	Students are responsible for self-identification and for obtaining disability documentation from a professional who is qualified to assess their particular disability. Cost of the evaluation must be assumed by the student not the institution.
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Who is responsible for initiating service delivery?	School districts are responsible for identifying students and providing appropriate education.	Students are responsible for notifying the appropriate disability support staff on campus of their disability and need for reasonable accommodations.
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Who is responsible for advocacy?	Special education teachers are the liaison between student, other teachers, and parents.	Student is responsible for self-advocacy.
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Availability of assistance?	Help readily available.	Student must independently seek help using effective communication skills. Services must be requested in advance (students should not wait until the day of the test to request accommodations).
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Labels?	Student is labeled as special education student.	Student is not labeled or served separately from other students.
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Confidentiality issues?	School personnel talk freely with parent(s) about student progress/planning.	Personnel cannot discuss student without student's written permission. Faculty are only notified of required accommodations.
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ATTENDANCE POLICIES AND ACCOMMODATIONS

The Disability Support Services (DSS) office has a limited a role in determining course attendance procedures. Because attendance may be integral to the pedagogic process, these policies are set by faculty at the college, departmental, or individual level. In some cases, attendance is fundamental to course objectives; for example, students may be required to interact with others in the class, to demonstrate the ability to think and argue critically, and to participate in group projects.

Similarly, instructors also determine policies regarding make-up work and missed quizzes and exams. Faculty members are not required to lower or effect substantial modifications to essential requirements/academic standards for accommodation purposes.

Essential Course Requirements: The College will make every effort to reasonably accommodate a student's disability related academic needs. However, neither the College nor an individual faculty member is required to waive an essential or fundamental academic requirement of a course, regardless of the nature of the impact of the student's disability.

The academic department establishes and defines the essential or fundamental academic requirements for its courses and instructors may, of course, establish a reasonable/acceptable number of excused absences in light of these academic requirements. Attendance policies for each course are usually written into the course syllabus.

Instructor considerations: Is attendance an essential requirement for my specific course:

- Is there classroom interaction between the instructor and students and among the students themselves?
- Do student contributions in class constitute a significant part of the learning process?
- Does the fundamental nature of the course rely on student participation as an essential learning method?
- To what degree does a student's failure to attend class constitute a significant loss to the educational experience of other students?
- What does the course description and syllabus indicate regarding participation and attendance?
- By what method is the final grade calculated?

What is expected from students regarding attendance?

Students should listen closely to faculty announcements about attendance and make-up policies and procedures. Also, check your course syllabus for information about these issues. Each party should keep a written copy of what alterations may be decided upon with input from the student and the DSS office.

- Students should make the DSS office aware that they have concerns about the effects of their disability potentially impacting their attendance. A statement will be placed on the student's accommodation form explaining that the student may miss class due to the effects of a disability, please discuss attendance policy with the student. Another statement will also be listed prompting faculty to discuss their make-up work policy with the student.
- Students should pick up their accommodation forms prior to their first class of the semester and present them to their instructors at the first class.

- Students and instructors should discuss attendance policies and make-up work policies as stated on the accommodation form.
- Students should check the course syllabus for information regarding attendance policies/procedures. Students are expected to follow the attendance policy established by the individual course instructor.
- The College recognizes, however, that there may be times when a qualified student with a disability cannot attend class because of disability-related reasons. If a student with a disability believes it may not be possible to abide by the attendance policy because of issues related to the effects of his/her disability, the student should contact the DSS office to discuss their options. If attendance has been determined to be an essential requirement of the course, then it may be in the student's best interest to drop the course and add a different course or consider online alternatives. Decisions about attendance exceptions may be made by the course instructor with input from DSS staff and program manager/department chair, as necessary.

If an exception is made to an attendance policy, it does not mean that unlimited absences will be permitted or that other academic requirements of the course will be part of the exception. Students with disabilities are, as always, required to fulfill all course requirements and will be held to the same evaluation standard as other students in the course. As with all disability accommodations, exceptions to an attendance policy will be determined on an individual basis. The disability documentation must support this type of request. Accommodations are not retroactive.

Disability Summary Sheets

Please keep in mind that all disabilities no two people with the same disability share every characteristic or will respond to every listed instruction strategy. However, the following pages are summary sheets which will provide general information to assist faculty in learning about and teaching students with disabilities.

ATTENTION-DEFICIT/HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER

ADD and ADHD are neurological conditions affecting both learning and behavior. They result from chronic disturbances in the areas of the brain that regulate attention, impulse control, and the executive functions that control cognitive tasks, motor activity, and social interactions. Hyperactivity may or may not be present. Treatable, but not curable, ADD and/or ADHD affects three to six percent of the population.

Common Signs/Characteristics

- Easily distracted
- Poor time management skills
- Difficulty in being prepared for class, keeping appointments, and getting to class on time
- Reading comprehension difficulties
- Difficulty with math problems requiring changes in action, operation, and order
- Inability to listen selectively during lectures, resulting in problems with note taking
- Lack of organization in work, especially written work and essay questions
- Difficulty following directions, listening, and concentrating
- Blurting out answers
- Difficulty making transitions
- Difficulty in producing work at a consistently normal level

Instructional Strategies

- Since these students often also have learning disabilities, effective instructional strategies may include those also used with students with learning disabilities.
- Briefly review the previous lecture
- Use visual aids such as overheads, diagrams, charts, and graphs and a hands-on approach
- Allow the use of tape recorders
- Give assignments in writing as well as orally
- Create study guides
- Face the class when speaking
- Write key terms or an outline on the board
- Emphasize important points, main ideas, and key concepts
- Allow student to sit at the front of class

LEARNING DISABILITIES

A learning disability is a permanent neurological condition that affects the manner in which information is received, organized, remembered, and then retrieved or expressed. Students with learning disabilities possess average to above average intelligence. The disability is characterized by a significant discrepancy between intellectual potential and academic achievement resulting from difficulties with processing information. This disability may affect listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical skills. The effects may change depending upon the learning demands and environments and may manifest in a single academic area or impact performance across a variety of subject areas and disciplines.

Common Signs/Characteristics

- Frequent spelling and grammatical errors
- Problems with organization
- Poor vocabulary and word recall
- Slow reading rate, Poor reading comprehension
- Poor tracking skills while reading (skip words, loose place, miss lines)
- Number reversals
- Confusion of math symbols
- Spatial disorientation
- Difficulty copying math problems
- Inability to effectively pronounce multi-syllabic words
- Difficulty attending to long lectures
- Difficulty taking notes while listening to class lectures
- Difficulty organizing tasks, such as written work
- Difficulty in interpreting social cues

Instructional Strategies

- At the beginning of class, review the previous lecture
- Use visual aids such as overheads, diagrams, charts, and graphs
- Use a hands-on approach to learning
- Allow use of tape recorders
- Explain technical language terminology
- Leave time for questions periodically
- Give assignments in writing as well as orally
- Write key terms or an outline on the board or provide a lecture handout
- Administer frequent quizzes/assignments to provide feedback for students
- Speak distinctly and at a relaxed rate, pausing to allow students time for note-taking

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

Brain injury may occur in many ways. Traumatic brain injury typically results from accidents. However, Brain injury may also be caused by insufficient oxygen, stroke, poisoning, or infection. Traumatic brain injury can cause physical, cognitive, social, and vocational changes that affect an individual for a short time or permanently. Depending on the extent and location of the injury, symptoms caused by a brain injury vary widely. Some common results are seizures, loss of balance or coordination, difficulty with speech, limited concentration, memory loss, and loss of organizational and reasoning skills.

Common Signs/Characteristics (Highly Individual)

- Difficulty organizing thoughts
- Difficulty processing information and retrieval of words
- Memory difficulty
- Poor balance and coordination
- Difficulty in communication processes and speech
- Difficulty making generalizations and integrating skills
- Limited ability in social interactions
- Difficulty in understanding cause-effect relationships and problem solving

Instructional Strategies

- Provide a routine in class
- Give step-by-step instructions for assignments, projects, etc.
- Utilize visual aides during class
- Provide the opportunity for students to learn using a hands-on approach
- Keep in mind that recovery may be inconsistent, a student may take one step forward and two steps back at times
- Present instructions and demonstrations in more than one way
- Provide the syllabus at the start of the semester

DEAFNESS/HARD OF HEARING

Hard of hearing is any type or degree of auditory impairment while deafness is an inability to use hearing as a means of communication. More individuals in the United States are hard of hearing than any other type of physical disability. Hearing loss may be due to multiple factors including an impairment of the auditory nerve or a defect in the auditory system. A person who is born with a hearing loss may have language deficiencies and exhibit poor vocabulary and syntax. Students who are deaf and hard of hearing may use a variety of communication methods, including lip-reading, cued, speech, signed English, and/or American Sign Language (ASL).

Common Signs/Characteristics

- Difficulties with speech, reading, and writing skills due to the close relationship between language development and hearing.
- May be unfamiliar with vocabulary used in class
- Some students use speech only or a combination of sign language, finger-spelling, speech, writing, body language, and facial expression to convey ideas to others.
- Students may be members of a distinct linguistic and cultural group. As a cultural group, they may have their own values, social norms, and traditions.
- Students may be skilled lip-readers but many are not. Only 30% to 40% of spoken English is distinguishable on the mouth and lips under the best conditions.

Instructional Strategies

- Look directly at the student during a conversation, even when an interpreter is present, and speak in natural tones.
- Make sure you have the student's attention before speaking. A light touch on the shoulder, wave, or visual signal may be of assistance.
- Recognize the processing time the interpreter takes to translate a message from its original form into another language.
- The student that is deaf may also need more time to receive information, ask questions, and/or offer comments.
- Establish visual warning system for building emergencies
- Provide unfamiliar vocabulary in written form, on the blackboard, or in a handout.
- Provide handouts in advance so the student can watch the interpreter rather than read or copy new material at the same time.
- Utilize visual aids as much as possible, including captioned versions of videos and films.
- Repeat questions and comments from other students.
- Provide seating that allows the student that is deaf or hard of hearing with an unobstructed view of the speaker's face and mouth, as well as the blackboard, etc.
- While using an interpreter, allow only one person at a time to speak during group discussions.
- Do not turn off all lights when presenting a video in class, as it may be difficult to see the interpreter.

PSYCHOLOGICAL DISABILITIES

Psychological disabilities refer to a wide range of behavioral and/or psychological problems characterized by anxiety, mood swings, depression, and/or a compromised assessment of reality. The majority of psychological disabilities are controlled using a combination of medications and psychotherapy. However, the behavior of students with psychological disabilities may still cycle due to side effects of medication and other personal issues.

Common Signs/Characteristics (This is a broad category and highly individual)

- Limited social functioning
- Difficulty concentrating
- Limited motivation
- Inability to tolerate stress
- Sleep disturbances
- Difficulty attending to lectures
- Incomplete assignments or exams
- Occasional disruptive behavior
- Indifference
- Side effects of medication such as drowsiness, fatigue, memory loss, and decreased response time

Instructional Strategies

- Break up information into smaller steps, especially when involving sequential memory tasks such as math formulas.
- Allow beverages in class due to medications which may cause extreme thirst.
- Provide an understanding and accepting environment in the classroom, keeping in mind that students may not be comfortable disclosing the specifics of their disability.
- If students seem to need counseling for disability-related issues, encourage them to contact the Office for Students with Disabilities.
- Provide some flexibility in the attendance requirements in case of health related absences.
- Allow students to check their perceptions of a situation or information you have presented in class to be sure they are on the right track.

PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

Students may exhibit a variety of physical disabilities including but not limited to spinal cord injury (paraplegia or quadriplegia), spina bifida, amputation, muscular dystrophy, cardiac conditions, cystic fibrosis, paralysis, polio/post polio, and stroke. Physical disabilities may result from congenital conditions, accidents, or progressive neuromuscular diseases.

Common signs/Characteristics (highly individual)

- Lack of coordination
- Inability to walk without crutches, canes, braces, or walkers
- Ability to stand or walk but may use wheelchair to conserve energy or gain speed
- Inability to stand or walk and use wheelchair for total mobility
- Limited lower body use but full use of arms and hands
- Limited use of lower body and limited use of arms and hands
- Impairment of speech or hearing
- Limited head and/or neck movement
- Decreased physical endurance
- Decreased eye-hand coordination

Instructional Strategies

- When talking with a person who uses a wheelchair, try to converse at eye level; sit down if a chair is available.
- Take time to understand the student if he/she has difficulty with communication. Repeat what you understand and let the student know when you do not understand them.
- Ask before giving assistance and wait for a response.
- Let the student set the pace when walking and/or talking.
- Ask the student if he/she will need assistance during an emergency evacuation and assist in making a plan if necessary.
- Plan in advance for field trips to make ensure accessibility.
- Provide an accessible place to meet with the student for office hours, etc.

BLINDNESS/LOW VISION

Visual disabilities vary widely. Students may be totally blind, legally blind, or exhibit low vision. Legal blindness and low vision may be caused by tumors, infections, injuries, retrolental fibroplasia, cataracts, glaucoma, diabetes, vascular impairments, or myopia. Low vision refers to a severe vision loss in distance and near vision.

Common Signs/Characteristics

- Some students may use a guide dog, others may use a white cane, while others may not require any mobility assistance.
- Totally blind students learn via Braille or other non-visual media.
- Legally blind students have less than 20/200 vision in the more functional eye or a very limited field of vision.
- Students with low vision use a combination of vision and other senses to learn, and they may require adaptations in lighting or the print size, and in some cases, Braille.

Instructional Strategies

- Identify yourself at the beginning of a conversation and notify the student when you are exiting the room.
- Verbally reinforce key points made in the conversation to facilitate the communication process, keeping in mind that nonverbal cues depend on good visual acuity.
- Allow the student to determine the most ideal seating location. He/She should be able to see, hear, touch as much of the presented material as possible.
- Assist the student in labeling lab materials using large print and color contrast so that they are easily identifiable.
- Provide verbal description of class activities. For example, when a show of hands is requested, state how many hands were raised.
- Ask if the student will need assistance during an emergency evacuation, and assist in making a plan if necessary.
- When giving directions, be clear. Say “left” or “right”, “step up” or “step down.” Identify obstacles for the student stating “the chair is on your left” or “the stairs start in about 3 steps.”
- Recommend the use of the Kurzweil, and tell students to contact the Office for Students with Disabilities in order to have access to the Kurzweil. The Kurzweil is a software program which reads books and written assignments outloud.

PERTINENT LEGAL DECISIONS

A college or university must provide the accommodation. Students are not required to assume the responsibility for securing a necessary accommodation. The university is required to provide reasonable accommodations for a student's known disability so that the student has an equal opportunity to participate in the courses, activities, or programs. The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) ruled that a university may not charge students for necessary accommodations.

Expense of accommodation is not undue hardship. Providing an auxiliary aid or incurring an expense to ensure access would not constitute undue hardship to the university. In determining what constitutes an undue hardship, the OCR view the entire financial resources of the university rather than any single department or college.

Altered form of exam. The form of an exam must be altered if the testing procedure puts a student with a disability at a disadvantage based on the student's documented disability. There may be an exception when the purpose of the test is to measure a particular skill.

Accommodation must be documented. The university may refuse to grant a student's request for an accommodation that is not specifically recommended in the student's documentation.

Handouts in alternate format. If a student with a visual disability is enrolled in a class, the instructor must provide all handouts in the alternate format requested by the student. In addition, all handouts must be made available to students on the same day they are distributed to students without disabilities.

Classroom must be accessible. A classroom's location must be changes to provide accessibility for a student with a mobility disability. A college or university does not need to make every classroom accessible, but must provide for the participation of students with disabilities when "viewed in its entirety."

Confidentiality of diagnostic information. Faculty/staff do not have the right to access diagnostic information regarding a student's disability. Faculty and staff need only know the accommodations that are necessary to guarantee an equal opportunity for the student.

Personal liability. An individual faculty member who fails to provide an accommodation to a student with a documented disability may be held personally liable.

Personal services and aids. A college or university is not required to provide personal services such as attendant care or personal aids such as wheelchairs or eyeglasses.

Career counseling. Career counselors are prohibited from counseling a student with a disability into more restrictive career paths than are recommended to students without disabilities with similar interests.

BASIC DISABILITY ETIQUETTE

- It is appropriate to shake hands with a person who has a disability even if they have limited use of their hands.
- When talking with a person who has a disability, speak directly to that person rather than to a companion or interpreter.
- Ignore guide dogs or other service animals. Don't pet them, they are working.
- When offering help, wait until the offer is accepted. Make sure to listen or ask for instructions.
- When greeting a person with a vision disability, always identify yourself and anyone else that is with you. Ask, "Shall we shake hands?" Let the person know when you are leaving or exiting the conversation.
- Don't worry about common phrases such as "See ya later," or "Gotta run."
- Treat adults as adults. You may choose to use simple language depending upon the situation. However, do not use childish language.
- Do not patronize people who are in wheelchairs by patting them on the head or shoulder. Do not lean on the wheelchair.
- To get the attention of a person who is deaf, tap the person on the shoulder or wave your hand.
- Do not assume that all people who are deaf can read lips. However, if he/she can read lips, speak slowly and clearly without exaggerating your lip movements.
- Give your undivided attention to someone who has difficulty speaking. Ask short questions which require short answers. Wait for the person to finish their answer and do not cut them off.
- When speaking to someone in a wheelchair, sit down or kneel in place if possible to place yourself at his or her eye level.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions when you are unsure of what to do.

TIPS: Working with Deaf Students

- Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students will usually require seating at the front of the classroom, near to and facing the instructor, to make optimum use of visual cues.
- Please repeat questions from others in the classroom before answering because it is often difficult for the interpreter to hear the questions from the front of the room.
- Expect the same from culturally Deaf Students as you would from Hard-of-Hearing or Hearing students. They all need to be able to handle the same course load.
- Due to slight “lag time” interpreters have when interpreting from English to ASL, give the Deaf Student(s) enough time to respond to questions asked in class, before continuing on your lectures.
- Remember, when working with an interpreter to look and speak directly to the Deaf person. Speak in a normal tone. Do not speak louder or in an exaggerated fashion.
- Emphasize important information such as assignment or schedule changes by writing details on the board.
- Use as many visual aids as much as possible. Write page numbers, assignments, and other important information on the board.
- Speak clearly and naturally. Write and/or spell out difficult or new vocabulary. This is helpful for the student as well as the interpreter.
- Deaf students are just like any other students—they like to be included in class discussions and feel equal to their peers.
- If requested, assist in finding another student in class to take notes; the deaf student may miss parts of the lecture if he/she is trying to watch the interpreter and write notes simultaneously.
- The interpreter is there to interpret/caption EVERYTHING that is said in class. Please do not ask the interpreter to censor any information.
- Do not turn off all lights when presenting a video as it may be difficult to see the interpreter.
- As much as possible please use captioned versions of videos and films. If you are planning to show a video or film that is not captioned, please contact the Disability Support Service office so that we may caption it prior to the day it will be shown in class.
- If a deaf student will need to request an interpreter for an out of class assignment, field trip, meeting with the instructor, tutoring, etc. It is the student’s responsibility to do so.

Tips: Working with Interpreters

- The interpreter's primary responsibility is to facilitate communication. Instructors should refrain from asking the interpreter to function as a teacher's aide, to participate in class activities, or to perform other tasks. Doing so may interfere with the quality of communication provided, compromise the role of the interpreter and prevent full communication access for students who are deaf.
- Familiarity with the subject matter will enhance the quality of the interpreted message. If possible meet with the interpreter before class to share outlines, texts, agenda, technical vocabulary, class syllabus, and any other pertinent information. You may also want to consider allowing interpreters to have access to any course information in Moodle. Interpreters are able to access a Moodle account.
- In class, the interpreter will position themselves in direct line with you, the student, and any visual aids.
- Interpreters process information cognitively before interpreting. The interpreted message therefore, will follow at a pace generally one or two sentences behind the communicator. Speak naturally at a reasonable pace to help facilitate an effective interpretive process.
- Ask students to raise their hand, be recognized, and then ask questions or give comments. This will allow the interpreter to finish interpreting for the current speaker and gives the Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing student equal opportunity to participate in class. Also, encourage the students to wait until the teacher recognizes them before speaking or signing. The interpreter can only convey one message at a time.
- Avoid talking while students are focused on written class work. Deaf students require time to process visual aids and materials before returning their attention to the interpreted message.
- Use "I" and "you" when communicating with deaf students through an interpreter. Look directly at the student with whom you are communicating, not the interpreter. Use of third-party phrases such as, "Ask her" or "Tell him" can compromise the relationship between the instructor and student.
- Please notify the DSS Coordinator if you know in advance that you will not be having class on a particular day. Even if an announcement is made in class, and the interpreter is there is hear the announcement, the DSS Coordinator still must be notified.
- Please notify the DSS Coordinator if the interpreter or the student misses a class, as this also affects payment for interpreting services.

Faculty – Points to Remember

- When in doubt about how to assist, ask the student directly and check the student's accommodation form. If you still have questions call the Disability Support Services (DSS) office at either ext. 273 or ext. 628.
- **Confidentiality of all student information is essential!** At **no time** should the class be informed that a student has a disability, unless the student makes a specific request to do so.
- Do not provide accommodations to students unless the student is registered with the DSS office and presents you with an accommodation form.
- **The Student Code of Conduct regarding disruptive behavior applies to all students.** Clearly state behavioral expectations for all students; discuss them openly in your classroom, on your syllabus, and with individual students as needed. If you require assistance or guidance concerning the behavior of a student with a disability, please contact the DSS office.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

National Clearinghouse on Post-Secondary Education for Individuals with Disabilities, HEATH Resource Center, The George Washington University

Accommodating Students with Disabilities: Faculty/Staff Handbook, Minnesota State University, Mankato

A Faculty/Staff Guide: Optimizing the Learning Environment for Students with Disabilities, Towson University

Access for Students with Disabilities: Policies, Procedures, and Resources. A Desk Reference Guide for Faculty and Staff, North Carolina State University

Employment and Individuals with Disabilities: A Guide for Businesses, Frederick Works Project

The Faculty/Staff Guide: Optimizing the Learning Environment for Students with Disabilities, Montgomery College

Student Guide to Disability Support Services, Montgomery College

Access Utah Network Publication Web Site – A Division of the Labor Commission of Utah