

Legal Issues

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Amendments Act of 2008 (ADA) (ADAAA) prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities. According to these laws, no otherwise qualified individual with a disability shall, solely by reason of his/her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity of a public entity.

“Qualified” with respect to postsecondary educational services, means “a person who meets the academic and technical standards requisite to admission or participation in the education program or activity, with or without reasonable modifications to rules, policies or practices; the removal of architectural, communication or transportation barriers; or the provision of auxiliary aids and services.”

“Person with a disability” means “any person who
1) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities,
2) has a record of such an impairment, or
3) is regarded as having such an impairment.”
Disabilities covered by legislation include hearing impairments, learning disabilities, psychiatric disorders, speech impairments, mobility impairments, and visual impairments. Also covered are Impairments that are episodic or in remission that substantially limit a major life activity when active such as epilepsy and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Useful Teaching Techniques

Classroom

- Select course materials early so that students have enough time to translate or find resources in which materials can be translated to audiotape, Braille, and/or large print.
- Make syllabi, short assignment sheets, and reading lists available in electronic format (e.g., CD, electronic mail, WWW).
- Design course web pages to be accessible to students with disabilities.
- Face the class when speaking. Repeat discussion questions.
- Write key phrases and lecture outlines on the blackboard or overhead projector.

Laboratory

- Take a student on a tour of the lab he/she will be working in. Discuss safety concerns.
- Assign group lab projects in which all students contribute according to their abilities.
- Arrange lab equipment so that it is accessible to and usable by everyone.
- Give oral and written lab instructions.

Examination

- Assure that exams test the essential skills or knowledge needed for the course or field of study.
- Some students will require extra time to transcribe or process test questions; follow campus policies regarding extra time on examinations.
- Consider allowing student to turn in exams via electronic mail.

Working Together: Faculty and Students with Disabilities

Office of Disabilities

Paula Huss
Disability Coordinator
218-855-8175
phuss@clcmn.edu



Accommodations and Documentation

Accommodations

The student with a disability is the best source of information regarding necessary accommodations.

In postsecondary settings it is the student's responsibility to request disability related accommodations, but a faculty member can include a statement on the class syllabus inviting students who have disabilities to discuss academic needs. An example of such a statement is "If you wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact Disability Services as soon as possible." The Disability Coordinator then informs instructors of reasonable accommodations needed for students who have provided the appropriate documentation.

Documentation- Student must have..

- A specific diagnosis
- A description of how the diagnosis was reached methods and procedures, test results and evaluation of test results; relevant medical, family, psychosocial and educational history
- A description of the specific changes that have occurred since the original report and recommendations were made that indicate a need to adjust accommodations as originally made
- Licensure & experience of health care professional
- What and how any major life activities are limited by the impairment
- How the disability causes any academic difficulties
- A list of any and all accommodations, which might be needed to facilitate the student's participation in the academic program

Examples of Academic Accommodations

Following are examples of specific disability-related accommodations that students and educators have used successfully.

Hearing

Impairment

- Interpreters, real-time captioning, FM systems
- Note-takers
- Captioned films
- Visual aids
- Written assignments, lab instructions, summaries, notes
- Use of electronic mail for class and private discussions
- Visual warning systems for lab emergencies

Low Vision

- Seating near front of class
- Large print handouts, lab signs, and equipment labels
- TV monitor connected to microscope to enlarge images
- Class assignments made available in electronic format
- Computer equipped to enlarge screen characters and images

Learning

Disability

- Note-takers and/or audio-taped class sessions
- Captioned films
- Extra exam time; alternative testing arrangements
- Visual, aural, and tactile instructional demonstrations
- Computers with voice output, spellchecker, and grammar checker

Examples of Academic Accommodations

Blindness

- Audiotape, Braille or electronic-formatted lecture notes, handouts, and texts
- Verbal descriptions of visual aids
- Raised-line drawings and tactile models of graphic materials
- Braille lab signs and equipment labels, auditory lab warning signals
- Adaptive lab equipment (e.g., talking thermometers and calculators, light probes, and tactile timers)
- Computer with optical character reader, speech output, Braille screen display and printer output

Mobility

Impairment

- Note-takers, lab assistants, group lab assignments
- Classrooms, labs, and field trips in accessible locations
- Adjustable tables; lab equipment located within reach
- Class assignments made available in electronic format
- Computers equipped with special input device (e.g., voice input, alternative keyboard)

Physical and Mental Health

Impairment

- Note-takers
- Flexible attendance requirements
- Extra exam time
- Assignments made available in electronic format
- Use of email to facilitate communication