



Rights and Responsibilities to Assure Educational Access for Students with Disabilities

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Improving the Quality of Education for Students with Disabilities

Introduction

Educational access is the provision of classroom accommodations, auxiliary aids and services to ensure equal educational opportunities for all students regardless of disability. Creating equal educational opportunities is a collaborative effort between the student, the faculty member, and University Disability Services (UDS).

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 protect students with disabilities from discrimination that may occur as a result of misconceptions, attitudinal barriers, and/or failure of the institution to provide appropriate accommodations, auxiliary aids, or services. Examples of accommodations and auxiliary aids include, but are not limited to: qualified interpreters, note takers, extra time for exams, and educational materials in alternate format (i.e. Braille, audiotape, electronic format, enlarged print).

Who Benefits

- Students with disabilities. A disability includes any physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or major life activity.
- All Faculty and Teaching Associates. Instructors are assisted in their responsibility to teach all students in their classes and to provide equal access to education.
- University Disability Services. The office provides a system for service coordination in order to better meet student needs.
- Bloomsburg University. By providing educational access for all students, the university meets its mandated responsibilities and enhances campus diversity.

Principals of ACCESS

A – Accessibility: Faculty members play a major role in making their classrooms accessible to all students.

C – Communication: It is imperative that students with disabilities, faculty members, and UDS communicate on a regular basis.

C – Confidentiality: All instructors and UDS staff must respect a student’s right to confidentiality.

E – Eligibility for Accommodations: UDS is the office designated to determine eligibility for federally mandated academic accommodations and services.

S – Student Responsibility: Students have a responsibility in ensuring they get the necessary services.

S – Support: Both faculty and UDS work together to support students in their legal right to access an education.

Faculty Rights and Responsibilities

Faculty Have the Right to:

Documentation

- Request verification of a student’s eligibility for any requested accommodations. Every semester, registered students will pick up their disclosure form from UDS. Students choosing to use their accommodations in your course will give you a copy of the disclosure form. If you have not received this form, ask the student if they are registered with UDS. If they are, ask the student to provide you a copy of the disclosure form. If they are not, direct them to our office so that we can determine their eligibility for services. UDS is the only office designated to review disability documentation and determine eligibility for appropriate accommodations. Faculty should not view this documentation.

Accommodations

- Expect the student to initiate accommodation requests.
- If the student is taking their tests at UDS, expect UDS to administer exams in a secure and monitored environment.

Faculty Have the Responsibility to:

Accommodations

- Identify and establish essential functions, abilities, skills, and knowledge of their courses and evaluate students on this basis. Students with disabilities should meet the same course expectations as their peers.
- Provide accommodations only to students who are registered with UDS. It is NOT your responsibility to provide accommodations to students who are not registered with UDS.
- Use a syllabus statement and class announcements to invite students to disclose their needs to UDS. The recommended syllabus statement is located on our website under faculty resources.
- Act immediately upon getting a student’s request for accommodations by contacting UDS (if unsure about request), by providing the service or by meeting with students to complete an Exam Request form. The student is responsible for returning the Exam Request form to UDS meeting all deadlines. If you have questions, contact UDS.
- Work to ensure that all audio-visual materials used in class are accessible (e.g., that videos shown are captioned for students with hearing loss and that the equipment used has captioning capabilities, that videos shown will be made with auditory description in some way or that written transcripts will be provided, etc.)
- Consider incorporating principles of Universal Design for Learning in your teaching. A fact

sheet is available on Universal Design from UDS.

Confidentiality

- Treat and protect all disability-related information as confidential medical information. For example, keep printed items, such as Disclosure Forms, Exam Requests, or emails regarding student disability-related information in a protected location.

Communication

- Clearly communicate your exam procedures with the student and approve exam accommodations upon request.
- Work closely with students who present a disclosure form in providing appropriate accommodations.

PLEASE NOTE: Faculty do NOT have the right to ask students if they have a disability. For those students with documented disabilities, faculty do NOT have the right to ask about the nature of the disability. However, if students choose to disclose their disability, this information should be treated confidentially.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Students Have the Right to:

Confidentiality

- Expect all disability-related information to be treated confidentially.

Accommodations

- Receive appropriate accommodations in a timely manner from faculty or UDS. Students should have the opportunity to meet privately with faculty to discuss needed accommodations and any other concerns. Please keep in mind that UDS is the only office designated to review disability documentation and determine eligibility for appropriate accommodations.

Students Have the Responsibility to:

Documentation

- Provide UDS with appropriate documentation of the disability.

Confidentiality

- Go to the instructor's office hours or make an appointment with the instructor to facilitate privacy when requesting accommodations.

Accommodations

- Initiate requests for specific accommodations in a timely manner, preferably before the semester begins or early in the semester.
- Follow procedures with faculty and UDS when arranging for exam accommodations.
- Inform UDS of the materials you need in alternate format as soon as possible.
- Notify faculty/UDS immediately when an accommodation is not being provided completely

or correctly.

- Notify faculty/UDS immediately when a decision has been made to not use an accommodation or the accommodation is no longer needed.
- Provide for their own personal independent living needs or other personal disability-related needs. For example, coordinating services of personal care attendants or acquiring homework assistance are student responsibilities and are not the responsibilities of UDS.

Communication

- Act as your own advocate. Work with UDS professional staff on developing advocacy skills and communicating your specific needs and accommodations to faculty.

UDS Rights and Responsibilities

UDS Rights:

Documentation

- Receive the appropriate documentation from the student prior to the services being initiated.

Accommodations

- Expect students and faculty to work cooperatively with UDS to facilitate academic accommodations.
- Deny unreasonable academic accommodations, adjustments, and/or auxiliary services. Accommodations cannot impose undue hardship to, or fundamentally alter, a program or activity of the college.
- Deny academic accommodations/services if appropriate documentation has not been provided.

UDS Responsibilities:

Documentation

- Collect, evaluate, securely house disability documentation and determine eligibility for services.

Confidentiality

- Treat and protect all disability-related information as confidential medical information.
- Meet with the student privately in an accessible location to discuss disability-related needs.

Accommodations

- Administer exams as directed in a secure and monitored environment.
- Provide appropriate accommodations in collaboration with the instructor and student.
- Provide print materials in accessible format once the faculty member and student identifies them.

Communication

- Communicate procedures clearly to the student and the faculty.

Advocacy

- Assist students with disabilities in understanding their strengths and functional limitations. Provide them with the skills to become self-advocates.

Definitions of Terms

Alternative media – Print material that has been converted to a format that enables a student with a print related disability to read the materials. This includes but is not limited to: taped materials, Braille, electronic text, and enlarged print.

Auxiliary aids – Services, equipment, and procedures that allow students with disabilities access to learning and activities in and out of the classroom. They include but are not limited to: sign language interpreters, real time captioning services, adaptive technology, alternative media, exam accommodations, etc.

Exam accommodations – Legally mandated services that allow students with disabilities to exhibit their knowledge on exams by using auxiliary aids which include but are not limited to: extra time, a reader/scribe, computers, large print, distraction reduced environment, etc.

Universal design – An approach to designing course instruction, materials, and content to benefit people of all learning styles without adaptation or retrofitting. Universal design provides equal access to learning, not simply equal access to information. Universal design allows the student to control the method of accessing information while the teacher monitors the learning process and initiates any beneficial methods.

Important Note

This information is available in alternate format upon request. Please call University Disability Services at 570-389-4491.

This publication is funded by the US Department of Education under project #738322. For additional copies or more information, please contact:

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