



Teaching Students with Medical/Mobility Impairments

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The Ohio State University Partnership Grant
Improving the Quality of Education for Students with Disabilities

Introduction

Mobility impairments are often due to but not limited to a diagnosis of cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, or a spinal cord injury. Students may use crutches, braces, or a wheelchair, and in a few instances, may be accompanied to class by a round-the-clock nurse.

Medical impairments are often invisible and caused by a diagnosis of arthritis, asthma, cancer, diabetes, orthopedic limitations, post-surgery, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, or seizure disorder. The student may have limited energy; difficulty walking, standing, or sitting for a long time; or may have other characteristics, such as an inability to write.

At times, functional abilities may be limited due to episodes of dizziness, disorientation, and difficulty breathing during a recurrence related to the student's diagnosis. For example, with asthma or a seizure disorder, a student may have periods when they function without any accommodations, but at other times, the need for accommodations is necessary when functional abilities become more limited.

Even with the same disability, students with mobility or medical impairments may have a wide variety of characteristics. For example, two students who have both experienced a spinal cord injury are likely to show differing degrees of ability. Each student may require different types of classroom accommodations and one or both may not need any accommodations at all.

Medical/Mobility Impairment

Guidelines

Exam Accommodations: Students who have upper body limitations may be unable to use their hands to take an exam easily or without assistance. A student in this situation will likely need exam accommodations. These accommodations may include extended time, a scribe, or voice recognition software.

Access to Class Notes: Students who are unable to use their hands may need the assistance of a note taker, or they may elect to record lectures.

Tardiness: Some students may need additional time to arrive to class due to mobility, architectural barriers, or the need to use adaptive transportation. The transportation system is influenced by traffic, weather, and scheduling problems. For these reasons, a student may be late getting to class. Please be

patient when this happens.

Seating Arrangements: In a few situations, a student may need to use an alternative chair or desk other than what is provided in a particular classroom. UDS will assist the student in making special seating arrangements and communicate with faculty as needed.

Laboratory Courses: Some students may need assistance for laboratory courses. If a student needs assistance in the lab, it is recommended that the student is paired with another student or a teaching assistant. Or, a student using a wheelchair may need a lower lab table to accommodate the wheelchair. Please consult UDS if you need assistance in making these arrangements.

Missed Exams or Classes: Some students experience recurrence of a chronic condition requiring bed rest and/or hospitalization. They will need extra time to complete course work that is missed and the opportunity to make up tests. Other arrangements may be necessary if a student misses a class excessively due to a disability and is unable to make up the essential requirements of the class. In either situation, it is essential not to penalize students for their disability and at the same time maintain the integrity of the requirements of the class.

Field Trips: When you arrange for field trips or other out of classroom experiences as soon as possible so that all students are able to experience all class teaming opportunities. Consult with UDS about arrangements if you need assistance.

Resources

University of Minnesota Disability Services Website: <http://disserv3.stu.umn.edu/AG-S/3-5.html> The Ohio State

University Partnership Grant Website: <http://www.osu.edu/grants/dpg>

The Ohio State University Office for Disability Services (ODS) Website: <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/> The Ohio State

University Web Accessibility Center Website: <http://www.wac.ohio-state.edu/>

The Ohio State University Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator's Office Website: <http://ada.osu.edu/>

American Psychiatric Association, (2000). The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, 4th edition, Text Revised. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association.

Important Note

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

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