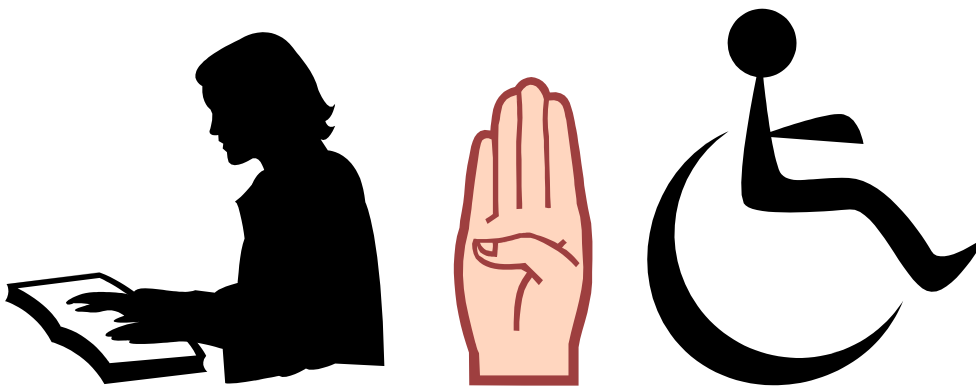


A Resource Manual for Faculty: Services for Students with Disabilities



LSUS

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Introduction

LSUS is committed to making students with disabilities full participants in its programs, services, and activities through its compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended (ADAAA). Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) assists both students with disabilities and the University in accomplishing this goal. The primary objective of services is to ensure accessibility of the University's programs and services so that students with disabilities persist toward their academic goals. SSD provides intake, receives and maintains documentations, assesses needs on campus and makes recommendations regarding accommodations. SSD works as a liaison between students and faculty. SSD informs the administration of policies and issues relevant to students with disabilities. SSD also provides information to faculty and staff so the LSUS community gains a greater understanding of their responsibilities and the needs of students with disabilities.

This manual provides a great deal of beneficial information, and is designed so the reader can quickly access information regarding specific areas of concern or interest. The manual begins with brief discussions of legislation regarding disability which impacts higher education, including The Individuals with Disabilities Act (PL 101-476), Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended (ADAAA). The second section delineates how a disability is defined within the legislation. Following this discussion of legal issues, the manual defines general policy and procedures regarding eligibility for services, need for documentation, and academic accommodation. In the fourth section, general information, characteristics, and academic considerations are presented for various disabling conditions. Frequently Asked Questions and responses are also presented. Finally, interested readers are provided a list of reading materials and directed to available campus, local, and national resources regarding disability issues.

In addition to this manual, the Dean of Students is available to assist instructors in their efforts to accommodate or otherwise meet the needs of students with disabilities.

Legal issues concerning faculty in higher education

With the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended (1990), individuals with disabilities have protected civil rights from early education through obtaining and maintaining employment. It ensures non-discrimination and equal opportunity in employment, education, public accommodation, transportation, state and local government services, and telecommunications. This section will provide a brief introduction to legal guidance and discuss faculty rights and responsibilities in providing access to higher education for students with disabilities.

Public Law 94-142, The Education of all Handicapped Children Act (currently PL 101-476 and named The Individuals with Disabilities Act or IDEA)

While this law does not directly apply to postsecondary education, students eligible for services under IDEA at the elementary and secondary level are increasingly accessing services in higher education. As a result, this legislation shapes the accommodation expectations that students bring to college.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Title V of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is generally considered the first national civil rights legislation for individuals with disabilities. Of direct importance to faculty in postsecondary institutions who are working with students with disabilities is Section 504. Essentially, Section 504 requires nondiscrimination and mandates accessibility to educational programming by all institutions receiving federal funding. It requires that no *otherwise qualified* person with a disability be denied access to, or the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination by any program or activity provided by any institution or entity receiving federal financial assistance. While it does not require that special educational programming be developed for students with disabilities at the postsecondary level, it does require that an institution be prepared to make appropriate academic adjustments and reasonable modifications to policies and practices in order to allow the full participation of students with disabilities in the same programs and activities available to non-disabled students. Accommodations specifically mentioned within the legislation include use of a recording device and access to a notetaker.

Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990

The essential difference between the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is one of coverage. While the Rehabilitation Act covers recipients of federal funds, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) extends protection to individuals with disabilities in private entities, state and local governments (including institutions of higher learning). Title II of ADA addresses higher education, and offers more comprehensive, detailed information on the responsibilities of a university.

Rights & Responsibilities of Students with Disabilities

A student with a disability has the right to an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs offered at LSU Shreveport. To ensure this right, every student with disabilities at LSU Shreveport:

- has a responsibility to identify him or herself as needing accommodation in a timely fashion. When the disability is not obvious, the student must provide documentation. Any information provided is considered an educational record and is subject to the Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA).
- has a responsibility to document how the disability affects a particular delivery system, instructional method, or evaluation criteria when requesting accommodation.

- has the responsibility to actively participate in the search for accommodations and auxiliary aids. This responsibility extends to working with the university to seek financial assistance from government agencies and private sources.
- has the same obligation as any student to meet and maintain the university's fundamental academic and technical standards.
- has the right to be evaluated on his/her ability, not disability. If the disability disproportionately affects the outcome of an evaluation method, the student is entitled to an evaluation by alternate means.
- is entitled to an equal opportunity to learn. If the location, delivery system, or instructional methodology limits access, participation, or ability to benefit, the student has a right to reasonable alterations in those aspects of the course (or program) to accommodate the disability.
- is entitled to an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the academic community at a comparable level as that provided to any student.

Rights & Responsibilities of LSUS

LSU Shreveport recognizes that its basic responsibility is to identify and maintain the academic and technical standards that are fundamental to providing quality academic programs while ensuring the rights of students with disabilities. To meet these obligations, LSU Shreveport:

- has the responsibility to inform its applicants and students about the availability and the range of accommodations.
- has the responsibility to evaluate applicants based solely on their abilities. If an evaluation method or the criteria have a disproportionately adverse effect on an applicant with a disability, LSU Shreveport will seek a reasonable alternative.
- has the responsibility to ensure that all of its programs are accessible.
- has the responsibility to make reasonable adjustments in the delivery, instructional method, and evaluation system for a course when these have a disproportionately adverse impact upon a disability.
- has the responsibility to adjust any requirement/course that has a disproportionately adverse impact on a disability and is not fundamental to the student's academic program.
- and its faculty have the right to identify and establish the abilities, skills, and knowledge that are fundamental to the academic programs/courses and to evaluate each student's performance on this basis. These fundamental programs/course goals are not subject to accommodation.
- has the right to request and review documentation that supports requests for accommodation. Based upon this review, LSU Shreveport has the right to refuse an unsupported request.
- and its faculty have a right to select among equally effective methods of accommodating a student with a disability.
- has the right to refuse an accommodation based on undue hardship.

Definition of a disability

As noted above, legislation provides protection against discrimination and guidelines for accommodation for qualified individuals with disabilities.

A person with a disability is someone with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. A person is considered to be a person with a disability if he/she has the disability, has a record of the disability, or is regarded as having the disability. Inherent in this definition is the concept that an impairment itself is not a disability; it is the interaction of the impact of an impairment and the demands of the environment that create a disability.

- A “physical impairment” means any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological, musculoskeletal, special sense organs, respiratory (including speech organs), cardiovascular, reproductive, digestive, genito-urinary, hemic and lymphatic, skill and endocrine.
- A “mental impairment” means any psychological disorder, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disorders.
- An impairment which “substantially limits” refers to an inability to perform a major life activity, or a significant restriction as to the condition, manner, or duration under which a major life activity can be performed, in comparison to the average person or to most people; the availability of some mitigating factor (such as a hearing aid for a person with hearing loss that brings hearing acuity within normal limits) is not considered when determining if the disability substantially limits the individual. These limitations are determined by considering (a) the nature and severity of the impairment, (b) the duration or expected duration of the impairment, and (c) the permanent or long-term impact resulting from the impairment.
- Major life activities are the most basic activities that the average person can perform with little or no difficulty. These activities include, but are not limited to, walking, seeing, learning, working, performing manual tasks, speaking, and hearing.
- An individual is “regarded as” having a disability if the individual has a record of an impairment or is perceived as having an impairment. This section of the definition is meant to protect individuals from discriminatory treatment based upon assumptions about perceived category membership.

An *otherwise qualified* person with a disability is a person who, with or without reasonable accommodation, meets the academic and technical standards requisite to admission or participation in the educational program or activity.

Accommodating Students in Higher Education

The primary goal of providing services is to ensure access to programs and services. Sometimes this requires adjustments or accommodations to normal classroom procedures or policies. The Dean of Students will assist by gathering relevant information to the existence and limiting

nature of a disabling condition as well as by recommending academic adjustments to ameliorate the negative impact of the disability. Faculty input into these decisions is encouraged, especially in providing information relevant to the nature of the academic tasks and requirements of the course.

General Policy & Eligibility

Disclosure of a disability is always voluntary. However, should the student seek a University-administered accommodation, he or she must self-identify as having a disability and follow these policies and procedures. Students seeking University-administered accommodations based upon disability are advised to submit documentation to the Dean of Students prior to the beginning of the term so that a determination of eligibility can be made and accommodations arranged. The students are further required to notify the Dean of Students prior to the beginning of each new term, so that appropriate accommodations may be continued or new accommodations arranged.

The decision of a student not to self-identify does not constitute a permanent renouncement of the right to University-administered accommodation. However, the student is responsible for his/her performance for as long as he/she self-accommodates. If a student chooses not to self-identify and/or request accommodation, the University does not assume responsibility for any disability-related problems which may arise. Students are not provided retroactive accommodation.

Therefore, any student who self-discloses and/or provides documentation to an instructor should be directed to the Dean of Students. The student will complete an application for services and an intake interview. Sufficient documentation of the disabling condition and related needs will also be requested and reviewed. On occasion, information will also be sought from faculty or academic departments to understand how the limiting function interacts with the specific academic environment. This information will be used to document a student's **functional limitations in the educational setting** and to determine reasonable accommodations. Students who are found to be without substantial limitations in one or more major life activities are referred to other campus and community resources for assistance.

Documentation

Appropriate documentation will not only verify the existence of a disability, but also clarify the substantial limitation of a major life activity and justify requests for accommodation, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids. Sufficient documentation varies according to the specific disabling condition. However, general guidelines include: recency of documentation, appropriate clinical documentation to substantiate the condition, description of the functional limitation in the academic setting, a rationale supporting the need for accommodation, and qualifications of the evaluator. Documentation requirements for specific disabilities are available from the Dean of Students.

Accommodations

Receiving accommodations should **not** be regarded as receiving “special privileges.” Rather, accommodations are designed to minimize the impact of the disability to the greatest extent possible. It is important to remember that the same academic performance is expected from all students, regardless of disability. It is also important to remember that providing an accommodation does not ensure success on the part of the student. Provision of the accommodation is intended to mediate the impact of the disability and ensure access (not success). The ADA and Section 504 did not intend that universities pass students because of a disability.

Decisions regarding appropriate accommodations are based upon the particular facts of each case, including the student interview, documentation, and information regarding the essential requirements of the specific academic courses. It is the responsibility of the Dean of Students to make recommendations regarding accommodations and to be available to answer questions regarding the disability’s impact. The recommended accommodations are written on a letter of verification. It is the responsibility of the student to deliver letters of verification to the appropriate faculty/staff. It is the responsibility of the faculty and student to coordinate the implementation of the accommodation within the classroom or learning environment in a manner that is consistent with the spirit of accessibility, academic standards, and the particular functions of the course.

Accommodations may include physical adaptations and classroom modifications. Physical adaptations include classroom arrangements, preferential seating, and accessible parking. Classroom modifications may occur in one or more of the following areas: environment, presentation, materials, requirements, and testing.

Some common accommodations (and the rationale) in higher education include:

- **Extended testing time:** This accommodation is most frequently provided for students with learning disabilities, but may also be appropriate for attention deficits and physical impairments. Learning disabilities are characterized by below average language processing (slower reading rates and poor comprehension). Allowing additional time allows the student to fully process the questions and formulate answers. Additionally, students with attention deficits may have a hard time focusing on a test. Extra time permits the student to be distracted and then re-focus.

Extended testing time is coordinated between the student and the instructor. The student has the responsibility to contact the instructor prior to the test date to make arrangements. As the student or the instructor may have conflicts on the formal test day, the student and the instructor should be prepared to test on another day and/or time.

- **Alternate testing location:** This accommodation is most frequently provided for a student with an attention deficit as they may be highly distracted by other activities in the classroom (either visual, auditory, or physical). However, students with certain psychological or

psychiatric disorders (i.e., Anxiety Disorders) may also experience distractibility related to the disability. By allowing these students to take a test in a quiet office or separate classroom, he or she can concentrate on the material rather than on the distractions.

Alternate testing locations are coordinated between the student, the instructor, and the department. LSUS does not have a testing center and will not serve as an alternative testing location. The student has the responsibility to contact the instructor prior to the test date to make arrangements.

- **Use of a notetaker:** Access to a peer notetaker is appropriate for students with hearing impairments as well as students with learning/attention deficits and certain physical impairments. A student with a hearing impairment may need to maintain eye contact with the lecturer or interpreter throughout a lecture. Taking notes while maintaining eye contact is not possible. Having access to a peer's notes allows the student to follow the lecture and still study the material later. Additionally, a student with a learning or attention deficit may have a difficult time processing the auditory input of a lecture and at the same time writing cohesive notes. Having access to a peer's notes allows the student to focus on one task at a time.

Under most circumstances, students with disabilities are quite able and in the best position to manage their own note takers. While the instructor can serve as an important liaison and support to both the student and volunteer, it is the student's responsibility to initiate the process, maintain contact with the volunteer, and inform the instructor of any problems. The following procedures in securing a notetaker are recommended as guidelines for faculty.

LSUS utilizes a volunteer notetaker system. This system can be coordinated in several ways. Students who have been granted this accommodation are first encouraged to locate another student within the class who is willing to share his/her notes. It is helpful if the student with a disability looks for a student who demonstrates regular attendance, attention in class, and a genuine interest in his/her education.

When the student with a disability is not familiar with any student or not wanting to reveal his/her disability, the instructor may also be of assistance in locating and/or recommending a good student. In such cases, it is appropriate for the instructor to make an anonymous announcement in class about a notetaker being needed. The student with a disability is also asked to meet with the volunteer to express his/her needs in the classroom and to check over the shared notes with the instructor.

- **Hand scored tests:** A student with a learning disability or visual impairment may have difficulty filling in the appropriate "bubbles" on computer scored tests. Allowing the student to write on the test booklet and have the answers scored by hand (or having the student's answers transferred to a scantron) prevents them from being marked off for errors related to their disability.

- **Alternative to print materials:** A student with visual impairments (or some severe learning disabilities) cannot access typical print materials, such as books, handouts, tests, power point presentations etc. As a result, these students have very restricted access to information. Arranging for the reproduction of these materials to Braille, tape, enlarged format, or electronic format gives them equal access to the information.

The Dean of Students and the student have the responsibility to arrange for the reproduction of class materials into alternative formats. The reproduction of alternate materials is very time consuming. Instructors will be notified of this need as soon as possible and will need to provide materials, preferably in electronic format, (such as handouts, tests, syllabus, etc) for reproduction.

- **Captioning:** Similar to alternatives to print materials, captioning of videos or recorded lectures in the online environment provides access to students with hearing impairments. Any videos, whether required or optional, utilized in the course must be captioned. Captioning is time consuming. Instructors are asked to contact the Director of Online Learning for assistance in captioning course videos.

Course substitution

Students with disabilities requesting a course substitution are informed that these policies are not determined (nor waived) by the Dean of Students. Rather, substituting/waiving a course is an academic decision, which will likely require input from the Dean of Students regarding the impact of the disability. These students are further informed that course substitution/waiver is not an appropriate consideration if the course or content is found to be essential to the area of study and making a substitution would require “substantial change in an essential element of the curriculum.” It is the university’s responsibility to show that a certain class or area is essential to a certain course of study and if there were any changes in the curriculum, it would substantially alter the curriculum. This determination will be made on a case-by-case basis through the following procedures.

Students who have disabilities which may prevent them from completing a required course may petition for a course substitution. The request will be submitted to the Dean of Students who then forwards the request to a committee consisting of the Chair (or representative) from the student’s major, the Chair (or representative) from the discipline in which a substitution is requested, and the Dean of Students. The chair of the committee will rotate among the academic deans and in all cases, the Committee Chair will be a dean unaffected by the request. The committee will consider the student’s written statement and supporting documentation as well as the specific course in question and its relationship to the program of instruction being pursued by the student or its direct relation to licensing requirements. Written recommendations to the student’s dean will be made within two weeks of receipt of a request. Committee decisions regarding substitutions may be appealed to the Provost by either the student or his/her dean.

Attendance

Students at LSUS, with or without disabilities, are expected to give their academic responsibilities first consideration and to attend class regularly and punctually. An absence, avoidable or unavoidable, does not relieve the student from responsibility for course requirements.

Students with disabilities are informed that class attendance policies are not determined (nor waived) by the Dean of Students. Because attendance may be integral to the academic goals of the class, these policies are set by faculty at the college, departmental or individual level. Therefore, attendance requirements may vary according to the department or course. 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, or to participate in group projects. In other instances, faculty may determine that students can master course content despite some or many absences.

Similarly, students with disabilities are made aware that faculty also determine policies regarding make-up work and missed quizzes and exams. Faculty are not required to lower or effect substantial modifications of standards for accommodation purposes. So that arrangements for absences can be made, students are encouraged to contact instructors prior to an absence or to remain in close contact when classes have been missed.

The Dean of Students recommends that students with disabilities know the requirements of a class and fully consider the impact of their disability **prior** to registering. When students may be prevented from attending class on a regular basis based upon disability, “consideration for absences” may be requested as a formal academic accommodation. This consideration is only applicable when class attendance is not an essential element of the course (as determined by the faculty) and when the absence is directly related to the documented disability. This accommodation is not applied retroactively and is not a waiver of attendance requirements. Class attendance is extremely important and while a student may have legitimate absences, there is a point at which there may be too many missed classes to make up the work and other options must be considered. When a disabling condition significantly impacts a student’s attendance and “consideration of absences” is no longer appropriate, the student is advised to contact the course instructor, an academic advisor or the Dean of Students and consider the following options:

- **Dropping from the class** - courses may be dropped in accordance with the dates indicated on the Academic Calendar. During the first 15 days of class of a regular term, no record of the dropped course is maintained. During the next seven weeks, a W (withdrawal) is assigned for courses dropped. During the final five weeks, no withdrawal is permitted except as authorized by the student’s dean.
- **Resignation from the university** - With the approval of a student’s dean, a student may resign (drop from all classes) in accordance with the dates indicated on the Academic Calendar.
- **Incomplete (I) grade** - An “I” is granted for work which is of passing quality but, which because of circumstances beyond the student’s control, is not complete. An instructor may

consider an “I” only with written authorization from the student’s dean. It is the responsibility of the student to initiate the action.

Confidentiality

The Dean of Students treats all disability information with sensitivity and keeps it on separate forms and in separate files from the student’s academic records. However, according to FERPA, these records are considered “educational records” and may be shared on a “need to know” basis regarding the necessity of accommodations, first aid, safety for emergency purposes, and government officials investigating compliance with nondiscrimination laws.

Disability Advisory Committee

The Disability Advisory Committee is made up of faculty with specific areas of expertise (i.e., law, online learning, and disabilities). There are times when other faculty or staff are asked to provide input. The committee meets as needed and advises the Dean of Students in making accommodation decisions. For example, the Disability Advisory Committee’s input may be sought for complex or uncommon accommodation requests. The committee will also assist when a student or faculty questions (appeals) an accommodation decision.

Information on various disabilities

Teaching students with attention, concentration, and memory deficits

General Information

Students with attention, concentration, and/or memory deficits may experience problems in one or more of the following areas: following a lecture, timed reading, spelling, short-term recall, and with associative learning tasks. The student may present as lethargic, “slow,” or as if daydreaming. Commonly associated disabilities include: attention-deficit/hyperactivity, learning disabilities, anxiety disorders, psychological disturbances, seizure disorder, and head trauma.

While each instructor knows the demands of his/her own class, the following questions may be considered so that classroom information is accessible to the student:

- In what way can I help this student to focus on my lecture with a minimum of disruption or embarrassment in the classroom?
- Which mode of communication has provided the most success in the student’s previous courses-reading, writing, speaking, or listening?
- Has the student ever used a recording device to record course content?
- Would the student benefit by using a note taker in class?
- What aids, besides the textbooks, would be helpful to the student?

Suggestions for Communication

- Most people with disabilities do not mind talking frankly about the disability. Understanding and awareness of the facts promotes acceptance and integration.
- When speaking with a student with attention deficits, establish eye contact, use clear, concise language, and ask for clarification of communication.
- If necessary, provide assignments or instructions in both written and oral form.
- Provide frequent feedback to student.

Academic Considerations

- In the classroom, use of proximity control and preferential seating is often beneficial.
- Begin lecture or activity with review of previous class and an outline of current class.
- Vary instructional method.
- Students with attention and memory problems often find a recording device useful to supplement or clarify their class notes. The use of a note taker may also be appropriate.
- Allow for extended time in testing or in short segments; the student may also benefit from an alternate testing location.
- Students with attention difficulties often find that a short break or being able to stand during a lecture assists them in focusing their attention.
- Use visual aids for new or technical vocabulary/concepts.

Teaching students with chronic health problems

General Information

Students may also experience chronic health problems which significantly limit a major life activity. While having a chronic health problem is not necessarily disabling, the impact of the condition, such as hospitalizations, medication effects, etc., may significantly limit the individual within the academic environment. Side effects that may negatively impact on academic performance include: fatigue, memory loss, drowsiness, loss of concentration, euphoria, mental confusion, and excessive absences. Commonly associated disorders include: asthma, lupus, cancer, HIV/AIDS, chronic pain, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, arthritis, seizure disorder, diabetes, and Crohn's disease.

While each instructor knows the demands of his/her own class, the following questions may be considered so that classroom information is accessible to the student:

- Is it possible that the student will have to miss class? If so, what arrangements will need to be made?
- has the student ever utilized time management techniques such as daily, weekly, and/or monthly calendars?
- What specifically are the physical limitations that impact the student's learning?
- Would a note taker be helpful?
- What aids, besides the textbook, are most helpful to the student?
- Has the student ever used a recording device to record course content?

Suggestions for Communication

- Most people with disabilities do not mind talking frankly about the disability. Understanding and awareness of the facts promotes acceptance and integration.

Academic Considerations

- As students with chronic health impairments may have reduced endurance or concentration, they may benefit from the provision of outlines prior to class or a very brief review of previous material before introducing new information.
- Students with health problems often show more absences than other students. Maintain open communication with these students and make allowances for absences (extended time for assignments, not penalizing for assignments turned in late, etc.).
- Because of potential reduction in their stamina, these students may better demonstrate their knowledge of a subject through a series of shortened tests, rather than a few evaluations throughout the semester.
- Appropriate testing alternatives may include a distraction free testing location and/or extended time.

Teaching students with hearing impairments

General Information

Hearing impairments can range from mild hearing loss to total deafness. Hearing impairments may also include difficulties hearing sound frequencies or confusion with certain sounds. From an educational standpoint, hearing impairments have been divided into “deaf” (a hearing loss of 70 db or greater in the better ear) and “hard of hearing” (a hearing loss of 35 to 69 db in the better ear). Depending on the degree of loss, the student may miss fast paced interactions, suffer fatigue while listening, miss 50% or more of class discussion, have problems suppressing background noise, have articulation deficits, limited vocabulary, or learning dysfunction, may have an atonal voice, delayed language and syntax skills (which impacts both reading and writing), and reduced speech intelligibility. Some individuals with hearing impairments use sign language to communicate, but most rely on lip-reading, speech, hearing aides, or any combination to facilitate oral communication. Commonly associated disabilities include: learning disabilities, auditory agnosia, head trauma, deafness, and tinnitus.

While each instructor knows the demands of his/her own class, the following questions may be considered so that classroom information is accessible to the student:

- What is the student’s preferred mode of communication?
- In what ways can I assist the student, an interpreter, or both to prepare ahead of time? (Outline, vocabulary lists of specialized terms, lecture notes, etc.)
- Is my classroom arranged effectively so all class members have eye contact with me and so the interpreter and the student have eye contact?

- Do I situate myself appropriately in the classroom and speak meaningfully to the student? (Lower voice pitch, avoid hand gestures, use facial expressions and body language for emphasis, and no glare producing light sources)
- Do I encourage class members to interact meaningfully with the student?
- How can I clarify key points to the student in class? (Note taker, use of blackboard or overhead projector, use of supplementary materials)
- If I cancel class, how can I notify the student or SSD who must cancel services provided by the interpreter?
- In my online class, what videos or other auditory materials are used and are they captioned?

Suggestions for Communication

- Most people with disabilities do not mind talking frankly about the disability. Understanding and awareness of the facts promotes acceptance and integration.
- Be sure to face the person to whom you are talking, as many hearing impaired and deaf people read lips. Exaggerating lip movements only makes it more difficult to read lips.
- Although people who are hearing impaired or deaf “read lips,” only 40 -50% of speech is readable by watching lips only. Use of body language helps people who are hearing impaired to understand you better.
- Ask the person what is the best way to communicate. Use pen and paper if necessary.
- Be patient and casual. It is OK to ask for repetition or clarification if the person’s speech is difficult to understand. Do not say you understand when you actually do not.
- Some students who are hearing impaired will say they understand what you are saying when they do not. If you think they do not understand, clarify.
- If the student is communicating through the use of a signing interpreter, direct your comments, conversation, and questions to the student rather than the interpreter.
- Speak clearly and distinctly. Slow down the pace of talking. Speak in a normal tone of voice.
- Do not cover your mouth, chew, smoke, or turn away.
- Avoid standing in front of a light source.

Academic Considerations

- Seating a student with hearing impairments close to the speaker increases the chances the student will “hear” part of the lecture, through lip reading or other nonverbal cues.
- A written supplements to oral instructions is often beneficial.
- Reiterate questions from other students in the class, as the hearing impaired student often does not know what has been asked.
- Note takers are often needed as students that are deaf or hard of hearing find it very difficult to attend to an interpreter or lip read a lecture and take notes.
- A hearing aid or personal FM amplification system will be necessary for many hearing impaired students. FM devices are available for loan through SSD. However, they are not a cure.
- Ensure that all auditory materials (videos, lectures, etc.) are captioned.

Teaching students with learning disabilities

General Information

There are many established, and sometimes differing, definitions of learning disabilities and their origins. The Dean of Students has adopted the definition put forth by the National Joint Committee of Learning Disabilities which defines learning disabilities as a general term referring,

“to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical abilities. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual, presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction, and may occur across the life span. Problems in self-regulatory behaviors, social perception, and social interaction may exist with learning disabilities, but do not by themselves constitute a learning disability.”

Students with learning disabilities show myriad integrative processing difficulties, such as spatial orientation, perceptual-motor abilities, memory, motor output, speech/language disorders, and sequencing. Many students with learning disabilities may show soft neurological signs or signs/symptoms of attention deficits, such as inattention, impulsivity, hyperactivity, and emotional lability. Specific academic skills deficits are commonly seen. These disabilities are not visible and may undermine the students social interactions and confidence in academic pursuits. Commonly associated disabilities include: attention deficit disorders, dysgraphia, dyslexia, psychological disorder, agnosia, aphasia, seizure disorders, and head trauma.

While each instructor knows the demands of his/her own class, the following questions may be considered so that classroom information is accessible to the student:

- Does the student find it difficult to write or talk about something that has been recently read or listened to?
- In what ways can testing the student’s knowledge be best accomplished?
- Does the student follow directions better in a quiet area than in a distracting environment?
- Is the student easily frustrated or angered by homework, class projects, or exams?
- Is it difficult for the student to read, write, spell, or use numbers?
- What does the student’s handwriting look like?
- What would be the most appropriate way to do research and write reports? What options are available to assist the student?
- Does the student seem unorganized with daily scheduling and with personal belongings or disoriented by unfamiliar situations or surroundings?

Suggestions for Communication

- Most people with disabilities do not mind talking frankly about the disability. Understanding and awareness of the facts promotes acceptance and integration.

- Recognize that learning disabilities are often an invisible impairment. Provide the opportunity for the student to discuss his/her needs and preferred modes of learning.

Academic Considerations

- Because learning disabilities manifest in so many different ways, specific accommodations are determined on a case by case basis.
- In working with learning disabilities, be flexible, creative, and adaptive with resources.
- Outline class presentations and write new terms and key points on the blackboard.
- Repeat and summarize segments of each presentation and review its entirety.
- Consider giving assignments in both oral and written form to avoid confusion.
- Consider providing in advance, sample study questions for exams that illustrate the test format, as well as the content of the test. Explain what constitutes a good answer and why.
- Encourage students to use campus support services (e.g., study skills training, academic tutorial assistance, peer support groups, etc.).
- **Students with written language difficulties** may benefit from use of a word processor or typewriter for written assignments, extended time, and note taker or recorded lecture.
- **Students with visual processing or reading difficulties** may benefit from recorded class materials, extended time, use of adaptive equipment in library, various presentation of visual material, and alternative testing formats. The student may require books on tape.
- **Visual perceptual difficulties** can be addressed by preferential seating, allowing the student to indicate a test answer on the test or another sheet rather than requiring the student to use a scantron for testing.

Students with mobility impairments or motor control difficulties

General Information

There are varied origins of orthopedic and/or mobility impairments which are manifested in mobility loss ranging from loss of fine motor coordination in one hand to total paralysis from the neck down. Therefore, functional limitations also vary a great deal. Students with mobility impairments may experience difficulties with physical barriers like stairways or distances between campus buildings. Difficulties may also be seen in writing by hand, walking, and/or using standard equipment in the library or laboratory situation. Some of the more common disorders include: cardiovascular disorders, traumatic brain injury, spinal cord injury (quadriplegia, paraplegia), cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, amputation, and arthritis.

While each instructor knows the demands of his/her own class, the following questions may be considered so that classroom information is accessible to the student:

- Does this student need note taking assistance during class? Would a tape recorder be appropriate to use in this class?
- Is it possible for me to reduce the amount of writing in class by using handouts and other supplementary materials?

- Does the student need extended time for a test or assignment because of handwriting difficulties?
- Is it appropriate for this student to be tested orally, by tape, or with the use of a scribe?
- Is the classroom arranged effectively so that the student can access a desk from a wheelchair or situate a wheelchair without blocking emergency exits?
- Are all classroom activities accessible to the student (laboratory activities, slides, etc.)?

Suggestions for Communication

- Most people with disabilities do not mind talking frankly about the disability. Understanding and awareness of the facts promotes acceptance and integration.
- Offer assistance before giving it in order to allow the person the option of accepting.
- Direct questions, concerns, and comments to the person with a disability, rather than communicating through a third party.
- During an extended conversation with a person in a wheelchair, either sit down or try to move to a comfortable eye to eye level.
- Hanging or leaning on a person's wheelchair is comparable to hanging or leaning on the person. Unless you are close friends with the person in the wheelchair, this is not appropriate.

Academic Considerations

- If the classroom is inaccessible, finding an alternative classroom is appropriate.
- Make sure the classroom layout is accessible and free of obstruction for a student using mobility aids (wheelchair, crutches).
- It is common for students with mobility impairments to fatigue easily, take longer to travel between classes and/or have difficulty with reliable transportation, causing them to be tardy more frequently than other students.
- If courses are taught in a laboratory setting, provide an accessible work station.
- In cases of fine motor impairments, students may need adjustments in writing assignments (i.e., access to computer lab or audio taping)
- Many students with fine motor or mobility impairments may need to plan for alternate methods of obtaining class notes.
- Many students with mobility impairments may need testing accommodations, such as extended time, use of adaptive equipment, and/or a scribes.
- Alternative testing formats may be appropriate.

Teaching students with psychological disabilities

General Information

Students with psychological disorders can experience a variety of difficulties including: problems with sustained concentration, inappropriate affect, poor social skills, restless, poor impulse control, and/or excessive anxiety. While these students may function adequately on a day to day basis, the impact on their learning is often seen in short term memory deficits, inconsistent academic performance, and excessive absences due to hospitalizations or medication changes. Commonly associated disorders include: clinical depression or other mood disorders, phobias or other anxiety disorders, attention deficits, compulsivity, and head trauma.

While each instructor knows the demands of his/her own class, the following questions may be considered so that classroom information is accessible to the student:

- Does the student participate in class discussions and articulate well but respond poorly on a written test? In what ways can I make sure that I am testing the knowledge of the student accurately?
- Does the student misinterpret or have difficulty understanding my tone of voice or body language, which may help emphasize key points?
- Does the student appear to be anxious, apathetic, restless, fatigue easily and so on? When does this seem to occur?
- Does the student talk out of turn, speak loudly or rudely, stand too close, or interrupt conversations? When should I overlook this and when is it necessary to deal with it when classroom instruction is disrupted?
- Does the stress of taking a test seem to cause the student difficulty in comprehension?

Suggestions for Communication

- Most people with disabilities do not mind talking frankly about the disability. Understanding and awareness of the facts promotes acceptance and integration.
- When speaking with students with psychological disorders, use an assertive, non-threateningly communication style. You may need to clarify understanding by asking the student to repeat.
- Student with psychological disorders frequently do not recognize their own behaviors. When possible, ignore inappropriate behavior. Reinforce positive behavior with compliments or other appropriate feedback.
- To assist the student in organization and from feeling overwhelmed, maintain focus by dealing with one issue at a time.
- Interpret psychological motivations for behavior cautiously.

Academic Considerations

- Use supplementary text materials and a variety of presentation formats to reinforce or emphasize important points.

- When inappropriate behavior is noticed, signal student in a non-threatening manner or ask for a private conference in order to discuss class behavior.
- Allow the use of a note taker or tape recorder in class.
- As some students show poor concentration, an alternate testing location free of distractions may be appropriate.
- To assist the student in organization and from feeling overwhelmed, allow for frequent deadlines or break tasks into smaller components.
- Consider being available for weekly meetings for feedback on academic performance or encourage student to utilize on campus support services.
- Assist the student in establishing a study schedule.

Teaching students with speech & language difficulties

General Information

Students with speech and language disorders can experience difficulties in one or more areas of functioning, including: pitch, loudness, articulation, syntax, phonology, or fluency. These difficulties may impact a student's ability to participate in class discussions, make an oral presentation, and produce adequate written work. Requirements in computer programming, mathematics, and foreign language may also be affected. Commonly associated disabilities include: developmental language disorder, learning disabilities-language, deafness, aphasia, respiratory disorder, speech impairment, head trauma, and stuttering.

While each instructor knows the demands of his/her own class, the following questions may be considered so that classroom information is accessible to the student:

- In what ways can I objectively evaluate the student's written work?
- Does this student use a voice output computer or other speech generation technology? Is this something that will be integrated into a traditional classroom setting or is it needed only during specific situations?
- What can I do to assist this student using American Sign Language (ASL) to practice standard English in nongraded situations and to interact meaningfully with other class members?
- Do I need to allow alternate formats for oral presentations?

Suggestions for Communication

- Most people with disabilities do not mind talking frankly about the disability. Understanding and awareness of the facts promotes acceptance and integration.
- Be patient and casual. It is OK to ask for repetition or clarification if the person's speech is difficult to understand. Do not say you understand when you actually do not.
- Speak clearly and distinctly. Slow down the pace of talking. Speak in a normal tone of voice.

Academic Considerations

- To ensure understanding, consider individual sessions by appointment during office hours.
- During class, use more writing, less talking. Utilize overheads, chalkboard, and handouts for vocabulary.
- If the student is also severely hard of hearing, a sign language interpreter may be necessary.

Teaching students with visual impairments

General Information

The scope and degree visual impairment in individuals varies a great deal, ranging from difficulties in visual acuity to problems with discrimination or perception. Students with visual impairments may need a service animal, may have poor peripheral vision (tunnel vision), may have night blindness, may have photosensitivity (sensitivity to light), may have amblyopia (double vision), or may show random, jerky, uncoordinated movements of the eye (nystagmus). These impairments may or may not be readily visible to a casual observer. Considering the wide range of impairment, functional limitations also vary a great deal. Difficulties may be seen in the reduction of the sharpness of vision, in separating the background from the foreground, or in accurately following printed information. Commonly associated disabilities include: learning disabilities, head trauma, low vision, and blindness.

While each instructor knows the demands of his/her own class, the following questions may be considered so that classroom information is accessible to the student:

- Do I need to briefly review acceptable behavior toward a service animal to class members?
- Do I identify myself as I meet or greet the student? Is my tone of voice the same?
- What assistance can I provide the student who is taping lecture notes, using a note taker, or using a Braille writer? What works well for the student and what does not?
- Do I verbalize what is written on the blackboard or overhead projector?
- Do I encourage interaction of other class members with the student?
- What testing formats are appropriate for the student?
- Is assistive technology available to the student on campus? What is it and where is it?

Academic Considerations

- Most people with disabilities do not mind talking frankly about the disability. Understanding and awareness of the facts promotes acceptance and integration.
- If the student's vision is better than 20/200, he or she may be able to use large print materials.
- Reserved seating closer to the front of the classroom may help a student with low vision.

- Accommodations for special equipment may be arranged. Adaptive equipment is available through the library (Braille translator, Braille printer, screen reader, enlarger, etc.).
- Testing accommodations may need to be considered and may vary according to the degree of impairment, such as enlarged tests, extended time, a scribe, or oral examination.
- The student may require books on tape.
- The student may benefit from use of a tape recorder during lecture or use of a note taker.

Frequently asked questions

- What do I do if a student reports to me a diagnosis of Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (or some other diagnosis) and asks for a classroom accommodations?

This student should be directed to the Dean of Students. The instructors are not expected to make accommodation decisions and are under no obligation to provide accommodations without recommendations from the Dean of Students. This process protects both the instructor and student rights by establishing and ensuring consistent access to programming.

- What if I do not agree with the recommended accommodations as outlined on the Letter of Verification?

Contact the Dean of Students who will work with the instructor and the student to reach a solution which will allow the student to work within his/her abilities and not compromise the academic standards of the program. Should agreement not be found, an appeal may be submitted to the Disability Advisory Committee. The accommodation in question should be afforded until another solution is agreed upon.

- What do I do if a student requests additional accommodations from me after the term has begun and/or after providing me with a letter of verification?

Call or refer the student to the Dean of Students. All accommodations must relate to functional limitations, which are usually established during the initial intake interview and review of documentation. As with initial requests, an instructor is discouraged from providing accommodations which have not been justified by documentation nor recommended by the Dean of Students. While accommodations are not retroactive, we must be responsive to requests as students make their needs known.

- What is a “reasonable accommodation” and are there limits to what is considered reasonable?

Academic adjustments most relevant to staff and faculty include: the use of auxiliary aids, alternate media, alternate evaluation methods, and modifications to instructional delivery or program requirements. However, an accommodation may be considered unreasonable in several situations:

- a) if an accommodation violates the “essential academic requirements;”
- b) if an accommodation is an individually prescribed aids or equipment for personal use;
- c) if the accommodation would substantially alter the program; or
- d) if the accommodation would pose an undue burden on the institution.

- How are requests for accommodation evaluated?

Requests for accommodation are evaluated by the Dean of Students with input from the student, documentation, and faculty. However, first a student must self-identify. Students may be required to provide appropriate documentation (medical evaluations, psychoeducational evaluations, and so forth) to verify the existence of a disability and to justify their request for accommodation. Accommodations are made on a case-by-case basis; that is to say, a particular disability does not necessarily afford a particular accommodation. The student has the responsibility to assist the University in locating appropriate services. When more than one equally effective method of accommodation exists, the University may choose among them.

- Can I refuse to grant an accommodation recommended by the Dean of Students?

If an instructor/department feels the accommodation compromises the integrity of the course work, the accommodation can be challenged. It is recommended that the instructor/department contact the Dean of Students and discuss his/her concerns. Ideally, an accommodation that addresses the functional limitation and the academic requirements of the course can be negotiated.

- Some accommodations seem so simple, may I provide them without the input of the Dean of Students?

Instructors are discouraged from providing accommodations for the purpose of addressing a student’s disability without recommendations from the Dean of Students. Following established protocol ensures the student receives consistent accommodations and removes the burden of an accommodation decision from the faculty.

- What do I do if I am providing the recommended accommodations, but the student is still not doing well in the course?

Assure yourself that the recommended accommodations are being provided in a consistent and meaningful manner. Academic adjustments are designed to ensure equal access to the University’s programs and services. Because they are not designed to

remediate nor treat a specific condition, they do not ensure academic success. Students with disabilities must be held to the same academic standard as other students.

Campus resources

While serving the entire LSUS community, the following offices routinely provide especially valuable services to students with disabilities.

Academic Support is available through the Student Success Center, located within the Noel Memorial Library. The Success Center provides tutoring, academic coaching, and supplemental instruction.

Career Services is located in the Student Success Center within the Noel Memorial Library. The center assists students and alumni with employment through career exploration, information on possible careers, and strategies for success in the job market. Appointments can be made by calling 797-5062.

Counseling Services is located in the Administration Building, Room 230. Counseling Services assists students with personal development and wellbeing. Appointments can be made by calling 797-5365 (Voice/TDD). Walk-in appointments are also available.

Physical Plant is responsible for maintaining the physical condition and accessibility of the LSUS campus. Any problems with physical accessibility should be addressed to the director of the Physical Plant at 797-5260.

Student Housing offers adapted housing to students with disabilities through the University Court Apartments. Both efficiencies and four-bedroom apartments are available. For more information contact University Court at 797-8588.

University Police is located in the Administration Building, Room 124. With sufficient documentation, students with mobility problems are provided special parking permits.

Recommended reading list

A Guide to Reasonable Accommodations for Students with Disabilities (1992), written by L. Scott Lissner, Coordinator of Services for Individuals with Disabilities, The Learning Center, Longwood College, Farmerville VA 23090-1899.

Accommodations--or Just Good Teaching? Strategies for Teaching College Students with Disabilities (1997), edited by Bonnie M. Hodge & Jennie Preston-Sabin, Praeger Publishers.

Dictionary of College Facilities & Services for People with Disabilities, Fourth Edition (1996), Modoc Press Oryx Press.

Legal Considerations for Serving Students with Learning Disabilities in Institutions of Higher Education, written by Jeanne M. Kincaid, Esq., 101 Varney Road, Center Barnstead, NH 03225.

Promoting Postsecondary Education for Students with Learning Disabilities, written by Loring C. Brinkerhoff, Stan F. Shaw, and Joan M. McGuire, PRO-ED Publishers.

TITLE BY TITLE: The ADA's Impact on Postsecondary Education (1992), written by Jane E. Jarrow, PhD., published by AHEAD.

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Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) (1997). Guidelines for documentation of a learning disability in adolescents and adults.

American Psychiatric Association. (1994). *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders V*. Washington: American Psychiatric Association.

Hammill, D.D., (1990). *On defining learning disabilities: An emerging consensus*. Journal of Learning Disabilities, 23(2) 74-84.

Hodge, B. & Preston-Sabin, J. (1997). *Accommodations-or Just Good Teaching?: Strategies for teaching college students with disabilities*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.

Jarrow, J. (1993) : *Title by Title: The ADA's Impact on Post Secondary Education*. Columbus, OH: AHEAD.

P.L. # 93-112, The Rehabilitation Act of 1973. 29 U.S.C. 791, 1991.

P.L. # 94-142, The Education of All handicapped Children Act of 1975. 20 U.S.C. 1400, 1988.

P.L. #101-336, The Americans with Disabilities Act. 42 U.S.C. 12101, 1991.

P.L. #101-476, The Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1991, 42 U.S.C. 12200, 1991.