



## Services for Students with Disabilities

117 Louise Pound Hall

### About Us

All students want educational experiences that are inclusive and convey respect. For those students with disabilities, the classroom setting may present certain challenges that need accommodations and consideration. The office of **Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD)** partners with faculty to create accessible educational environments for students with disabilities. "Disability" used in this context is a broad term that includes mental health conditions, ADHD, chronic health issues, learning disabilities and sensory/physical disabilities.

When students enter the University, they are responsible for requesting accommodations. For many, this may be the first time they have had to advocate for themselves. Students will share copies of their accommodation plan with instructors as they initiate the process of arranging their approved services. While there are general guidelines that faculty need to know, each student is an "expert" on his or her own particular needs and can communicate with faculty more specifically about their accommodations.

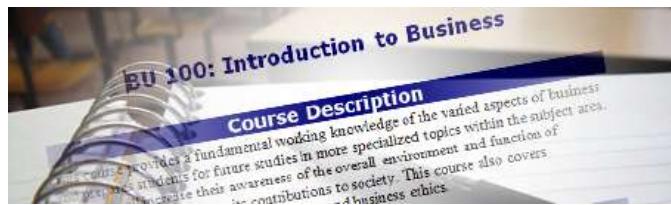
### Supporting All Individuals in Class



Strategies that support diverse student needs in postsecondary classrooms:

- Outline general themes and/or subjects for the day on the board, on canvas, or in print (handouts).
- Use spoken and written directions. Make sure that changes announced in class are also available in print or on Canvas.
- When possible, use graphics to reinforce learning.
- Make frequent eye contact.
- Structure lectures and activities so they are well organized with clear spoken and written instructions.
- Support new material with concrete examples when possible.
- Avoid talking while writing on the board. Resume speaking when you finish writing and can face the class.

### Faculty Syllabus Statement



A statement in your syllabus inviting students with disabilities to meet with you privately is recommended by the University. It's not only an effective way to start a conversation with students, it also helps them feel comfortable approaching you about their needs. The following is a recommended syllabus statement.

*The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options privately. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). If you are eligible for services and register with their office, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so they can be implemented in a timely manner. SSD contact information: 117 Louise Pound Hall.; 402-472-3787*

### Terminology and Stigma

Disability labels can be stigmatizing. They often perpetuate false stereotypes by which students who have disabilities are perceived to be less capable than their peers. In truth, students with learning disabilities are often no less able than other students, they simply receive, process, and/or respond to information differently. In general, it is more appropriate to say, "The student who has a disability" rather than the "disabled student" or the "student with hearing loss" rather than the "hearing impaired student" as it places the importance on the student, rather than the disability.

### Confidentiality and Disclosure



Any information regarding a student's disability is confidential. Information will be shared only when there is a compelling reason. University faculty and staff do not need to access medical documentation; they need to know the accommodations that are necessary to meet the student's disability-related needs.

## **Accommodation Plans and Academic Accommodations**

The SSD office determines appropriate academic accommodations after reviewing medical documentation and assessing the student's functional limitations and specific needs. An accommodation plan is created providing a list of the academic accommodations for which the student is eligible. Students will distribute copies of their plan to their instructors when they meet to discuss accommodations for their classes.

Students registered with SSD have a variety of learning and physical disabilities but must meet the same course requirements as students without disabilities. Reasonable academic adjustments and accommodations allow students with disabilities equal participation in programs and activities available to students without disabilities.

### **Extended Test Time**

Extended time on exams is one of the more common accommodations which allows tests to reflect the student's mastery of the material rather than his/her disability. Faculty determine where the student will be accommodated – in the instructor's department or in the SSD Testing Center.

If requesting this accommodation, the student will make an appointment with you and provide a copy of his/her accommodation plan and an **Instructor Exam Proctor Form** for you to complete when meeting with the student. The student will return the form to the SSD Testing Center.

### **Distraction-reduced Testing Environment**

When in a room filled with people, some students have a difficult time concentrating and consequently have difficulty successfully completing tests. This lack of concentration is beyond the student's control. A student is able to perform more to his/her ability when allowed to take exams in a quiet isolated space. This offers the student a more equitable opportunity to display mastery of the course content.

### **Class notes**

At times some students have difficulty taking notes due to a disability. Such students may request copies of class notes taken by another student in class or the student may request access to PowerPoints Slides or lecture outlines prior to class. When copies of class notes are requested, the instructor will be asked to make a general announcement in class to recruit a notetaker.

The SSD office will send the instructor an announcement to read in class and an information sheet to give to the volunteer notetaker. For confidentiality reasons, the announcement does not identify the student's name. When an instructor's power points are not posted on Canvas prior to the lecture, a student can request Access to PowerPoints Slides and Outlines prior to class. For this accommodation, you will share (email) your PowerPoint slides with this student so they may be reviewed and/or printed prior to class. Students using this accommodation sign an agreement that they will not release share the materials with others.

## **Accessible Media**

Classroom materials need to be accessible to a student with hearing loss at the same time they are accessible to students who can hear. If your course includes the viewing of professionally produced videos, please check to confirm that video materials have English subtitles or captioning. Captioned media will have a "cc" or capital "Q" symbol on the package. If your materials are not captioned, check with the production company to see if a captioned version is available. If your curriculum includes YouTube videos, please review the videos (prior to showing them in class) to ensure that the speech to text captioning is accurate.

If you are informed that you have a student in your class who is deaf or hard of hearing and your materials need captions, UNL Academic video provides YuJa service <https://unl.yuja.com> to University faculty. The primary way to access the service is via Canvas as the service is for academic courses for credit at the University of Nebraska. If you have further questions, you may contact Donald Robertson at [donald.robertson@unl.edu](mailto:donald.robertson@unl.edu) to get started.

### **Flexibility with Attendance**

The nature of some students' disabilities may include symptoms or treatments which can exacerbate unexpectedly, causing the student to miss class occasionally. Flexibility with attendance is intended to create a reasonable modification to classroom attendance policies without penalizing the student. This accommodation does not need to be provided when attendance is considered essential. See [http://www.unl.edu/ssd/PDFs/attendance\\_flexibility.pdf](http://www.unl.edu/ssd/PDFs/attendance_flexibility.pdf) for an in-depth discussion of this accommodation.

### **General Guidelines**

- To receive academic accommodations, a student with a disability must request them through the SSD process.
- Professors are not required to provide academic accommodations until the student has registered with SSD and has discussed them with you.
- Requests for academic accommodations should be made as early in the semester as possible.
- Accommodations are not retroactive.
- Students may become eligible for services throughout the semester due to an emerging or episodic condition.
- Professors have the right to deny academic accommodations that substantially change the curriculum or alter any essential elements or functions of the course.