Faculty Handbook

Services for Students with Disabilities

(Academic Year 2020-21)

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SSD Faculty Handbook
I. The Purpose of this Handbook

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.

Federal legislation mandates that the University provide reasonable accommodations that afford equal opportunity for all students. Achieving reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities involves shared responsibility between the students, faculty, and staff. This faculty handbook is designed to serve (1) as an introductory overview of disabilities that affect learning in a college or university setting and (2) as a quick reference for the various adjustments that can be made to accommodate students with disabilities.

It is important to note that each student with a disability will have a different level of functioning even within the same disability category. Compensation skills will also vary from one student to another and in the same student across time. Consequently, while the information presented in this handbook can be used as a general guide, specific knowledge of a student’s needs should come to you via a letter prepared by the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office and discussed with you by the student.

II. Critical Ways Faculty Can Support All Students with Disabilities

When students with disabilities are admitted to the University, they have met the same rigorous standards for admission as all other students, i.e., their high school grade point averages and college entrance exams scores are high. Faculty can support the continued success of students with disabilities by implementing certain practices described below, in sections that refer to students with specific disabilities (found later in this handbook) and in the quick reference list of Recommendations for All Courses (located at the end of this handbook).
Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD), is the first place a student should be referred to when a disability has been disclosed to an administrator, instructor, or faculty member. If you are working with a student that you suspect has a learning disability, we recommend you refer them to the SSD director or assistant director so they may be screened to determine whether full assessment is recommended. This needs to be done in a very sensitive manner. For suggestions on how to talk to a student about the possibility of a learning disability, please consult with Sam Goodin, Director of SSD or Barbara Woodhead, Assistant Director of SSD.

Below are some indicators that a learning disability may exist:

- there is a discrepancy between quality of homework and class discussion vs. test scores;
- the student fails to finish exams but performs well on the portion they do finish;
- there are letter or number reversals in their written work;
- content of written work is acceptable however, there are many grammatical and spelling errors;
- student reports that it takes an excessive amount of time to read material;
- student reads questions, but cannot understand what is being asked, but when question is read to them they can easily answer.

Accommodations are determined on an individual basis at the University of Nebraska SSD believes that the student is the most valuable resource for determining what accommodations enable the student to succeed. The process is as follows:

1. The student discloses their disability to UNL staff or faculty and is referred to the SSD office; or the student contacts the SSD office directly.

2. The student submits appropriate documentation of their disability from the appropriate professional (e.g., Clinical Psychologist, Psychiatrist, Audiologist, Ophthalmologist, Physician, or Specialist), and recommendations for accommodation to SSD office.

3. After documentation is approved, the student than meets with the director, assistant director or disability specialist to create an Individual Accommodation Plan (IAP) that is best suited for the student’s needs.

4. Copies of the IAP are sent with the student and his/her faculty/instructors.

5. It is the responsibility of the SSD office to inform the student of their responsibilities and procedure for accessing/requesting services.
6. It is the student’s responsibility for requesting services as needed each semester.

7. It is the joint responsibility of the student, SSD, and faculty/instructors, to arrange for the accommodations that have been approved.

**Syllabus Statement**

It is important that faculty include in each syllabus a statement asking students to inform them of any special needs to ensure that those needs are met in a timely manner. A further recommendation is that the statement be read aloud by the faculty member during the first week of class. This approach demonstrates to students that you are someone who is sensitive to and concerned about meeting the needs of ALL students you teach. Furthermore, it affords students the opportunity to make their accommodation needs known to you early in the semester. The following is an example of a statement that can be included in your syllabus:

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**
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 will be implemented in a timely manner. SSD typically recommends accommodations after verification of a disability has been received. A meeting with one of their Disability Specialists is then assigned, and an Individualized Accommodations Plan (IAP) is created. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such. SSD contact information: 232 Canfield Administration Building; 402-472-3787; https://www.unl.edu/ssd/home; gsimanek3@unl.edu.

This is another example that may be used.

**Disability Statement:**
The University of Nebraska is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Requests for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Office located at 232 Canfield Administration Building. The SSD phone number is 402-472-3787. Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined you will be issued an Individual
Accommodation Plan (IAP). Please present this form to me at the beginning of the term, or at least two weeks prior to the need for the accommodation (test, project, etc.).

Confidentiality

It is essential that disability information be kept confidential. At no time should the class be informed that a student has a disability except at the student’s request. All information that a student gives to the faculty member is to be used specifically for arranging reasonable accommodations for the course of study. We recommend that students bring letters verifying their disabilities to faculty during office hours or by special appointment. At that time, arrangement of accommodations can be discussed in private.

Attendance Flexibility

The nature of some students’ disabilities may include symptoms or treatments, which may 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 for an in-depth discussion of this accommodation)

General Guidelines are provided below:

- 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.

Faculty determine course attendance policies. Because attendance may be integral to the pedagogic process, these policies are set by faculty at the college, departmental, or individual level. 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. Rarely, faculty may decide that students do not need to attend classes at all.

Similarly, faculty also determine policies regarding make-up work and missed quizzes and exams. Faculty are not required to lower or affect substantial modifications of standards for accommodation purposes. The United States Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, which enforces disability law in higher education, uses the following heuristic to determine if class attendance is fundamental to course participation:

- Is there classroom interaction between the instructor and students, and among students?
- Do student contributions constitute a significant component of the learning process?
- Does the fundamental nature of the course rely upon student participation as an essential method for learning?
- To what degree does a student’s failure to attend constitute a significant loss to the educational experience of other students in the class?
- What does the course description and syllabus say?
- What is the method by which the final course grade is calculated?
- What are the classroom practices and policies regarding attendance?

SSD can provide students with accommodation plans, i.e. written verification of their disabilities, based on appropriate medical and/or psychological documentation. This verification can address the legitimacy of absences. The accommodation plans may be distributed by students to faculty in order to initiate discussions of attendance and make-up policies and procedures. Faculty should make their policies clear so that students can make informed choices about which courses to take.

Faculty may choose to announce attendance/makeup policies on the first day of class, and to reinforce this information by including it on the course syllabus. If faculty intend to disallow or restrict absences, they may choose to use wording similar to this: “Your presence is fundamental to meeting the objectives of this course. Consequently, there will be (0, 1, 2…) excused absences, and (0, 1, 2, …) makeup quizzes/exams.”

Source: http://www.etown.edu/offices/disability/Attendance_flexibility.aspx
Textbooks, Course packs, Syllabi, and Videos

Please make your book selections, compiled course packs and syllabi available in a timely manner. Students who are blind or visually impaired or have learning disabilities affecting their reading rates and comprehension require printed materials that is transformed into alternate formats. Conversion of text into a spoken format can be a time consuming process, taking as much as six months to complete. Your syllabus is required to determine the extent to which each text will be used and the order in which reading assignments will be completed.

Some students will rely on having printed material scanned and saved in computer format that can be listened to using voice output software. If you are collating various journal articles and portions of books into course pack please use original copies or copy that is as clean as possible. Creating course packs using second, third and fourth generation copies of material (copies made from copies, etc.) may cause images of text that are fuzzy. Such blurring often makes it impossible for character recognition software to decipher images as readable text. If material included in course packs is not all of top quality, SSD would appreciate being able to briefly borrow your originals for scanning.

If you wish to be supportive, you may ask if the publishers of the books you are considering have created electronic text (e-text) of them. Most states have adopted legislation requiring book publishers automatically create alternative format versions for all books they market. If possible, select a textbook with an accompanying study guide to maximize comprehension for all students.

In addition, using captioned versions of videos is extremely helpful for students who are deaf or hard of hearing and students who have other auditory processing difficulties. Although some videos used in classes are already captioned, others are not. In most cases, you will be contacted by a specialist in the office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) before a semester begins or early in the semester, if there is a deaf or hard of hearing student in one of your classes who needs captioning. However, if you are aware that you will be using videos in a class with an enrolled deaf or hard of hearing student, please contact SSD to discuss how captioning can be created for you. Be aware that to create such captioning, SSD requires a minimum turn-around time of two weeks from the receipt of a video. So your forethought, prompt action, and cooperation are greatly appreciated. Please provide us with a transcript if one is available. Creating captioning from a transcript simplifies the process and may shorten turn-around time. When requesting audio-visual equipment, make sure you request equipment with a captioning decoder.
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 on the disability. Even if a person with disabilities refers to him or herself in particular ways, using phrases like “confined to a wheelchair” reflect poor judgment on the part of the speaker or writer. If you feel awkward in how to refer to a person with disabilities, your best bet may be to ask the person.

Receiving a Request for Accommodations

Procedurally, formal requests for accommodations will come to you in an Individual Accommodation Plan (IAP) authorized by SSD. The accommodations recommended in these forms are not intended to give students with disabilities an unfair advantage, but rather to give them an opportunity to demonstrate mastery of course content. Although a student may request an academic adjustment at any time, the student should request it as early as possible. Some academic adjustments may take more time to provide than others. The student should follow established procedures to ensure that the University has enough time to review the request and provide an appropriate academic adjustment. SSD does not ask that instructors modify essential course requirements for the sake of the student. Any faculty member considering denying an accommodation because it modifies an essential course requirement should consult with SSD or the ADA Coordinator. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the IAP, please contact the authorizing staff person whose name appears on the IAP form.

Special Testing Accommodations

Some accommodations described in IAP’s relate to test taking. Time-and-one-half for testing is the usual accommodation given to students who, for disability related reasons, work slowly and require additional time to complete tests. A few students may also need to take tests in a room with limited distractions or with no other students present. For example, a student may need to read test questions aloud, and this would be disturbing to other test-takers. Still other students may request the use of a laptop computer or adaptive computer technology for taking essay exams.
When special test accommodations are needed, it is in everyone's best interest if the proctor is either one of the teaching assistants for the course, the professor, or another member of the academic department. This practice allows students to address any problems or questions they may have to someone with knowledge of course content and departmental procedures. Reading test questions aloud to the student or writing the student’s dictated answers is usually not recommended; most students prefer using a tape-recorder or other independent means.

SSD Testing Center

The SSD Testing Center serves the College by providing reasonable testing accommodations to students with verified disabilities who are enrolled in UNL courses. By creating an appropriate space for completing exams, the Testing Center aims to make education accessible for students with verified disabilities. SSD Testing Center’s mission is to serve both students and instructors through a well-defined process that ensures confidentiality and test security. For more information contact:

SSD Testing Center
116 Louise Pound Hall
P.O. Box 880335
Lincoln, NE 68588-0335

Phone: (402) 472-3730
Fax: (402) 472-0080
E-mail: ssd-testing@unl.edu
https://www.unl.edu/ssp/home

Making a Referral to Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD)

Faculty members sometimes contact SSD regarding students they feel might need to avail themselves of services offered by our office. Although teachers in high school are active participants in the process of identifying and referring students to special services, there is no comparable requirement in higher education. If you see a student who is struggling and wish to refer that student to SSD or to Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) (402) 472-7450, remember that our students are adults. They may respond best to private conversations in which you use an inquiring and supportive approach and share information about the existence and location of the SSD office. Only the student can decide to disclose his or her disability, or to
pursue information about services available in the SSD office. If a student is requesting accommodations but has not presented you with an IAP form from our office, you may ask the student to contact SSD.

III. Students who are Blind or Visually Impaired

A major challenge facing students who are blind or visually impaired at universities is the overwhelming mass of printed material with which they are confronted – syllabi, course packs, books, time schedules, bibliographies, campus newspapers, posters, tests, etc. The increasing use of films, videotapes, overhead projectors, and closed-circuit television adds to the volume of visual material they must access in an alternative way. Therefore, students with visual impairments must plan their schedules well in advance of each semester to assure that support services are in place when classes begin. Such services may include textbooks converted to an electronic format (e-text), special equipment, or readers.

Reading Methods

By the time students who are blind or visually impaired reach college (unless newly blind), they have probably developed various methods of managing the volume of visual materials. Most students who are blind or visually impaired use a combination of methods including readers, books changed to audiotape or electronic format, Braille books, and taped lectures. If the student uses readers, hiring and scheduling arrangements need to be made. Many students who are blind or visually impaired will register with the office of Service for Students with Disabilities (SSD) and work with the Coordinator of Services for ‘Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired’ (402-471-2891), to make the necessary arrangements. Some students will work independently.

Textbooks and Course packs

So that the student who is blind or visually impaired has time to make the necessary arrangements, please choose books and collate course packs early, and make this information readily available to campus bookstores and copy centers.

Syllabi and Handouts

It is essential to provide syllabi and handouts so that they can be made readable by the time the rest of the class receives them. In many cases, this entails creating and supplying these to the student in advance, either in printed copy, on computer disk, or by email. Before the class
meeting, the student may then use an adapted computer to read or print the material or, if appropriate, arrange for a reader.

Describing Visual Cues in the Classroom

When there is a student who is blind or visually impaired in the classroom, the professor should remember that "this and that" phrases are basically meaningless to the student: for example, "the sum of this plus that equals this" or "the lungs are located here and the diaphragm here." In the first example, the instructor may be writing on the chalkboard and can just as easily say, "The sum of 4 plus 7 equals 11." The student who is blind or visually impaired in this case is getting the same information as the sighted student. In the second example, the instructor can "personalize" the locations of the lungs and diaphragm by asking class members to locate them by touch on their own bodies. Examples of this type will not always be possible. However, if the faculty member is aware not to use strictly visual examples, the student who is blind or visually impaired will benefit.

Class Notes

Many students who are visually impaired record lectures for reviewing later, although, listening to lectures over again takes valuable time. Other students use carbon paper, NCR (no carbon required) paper, or photocopying to obtain copies of another student’s notes. These notes can be converted to large print for reading or tape recorded for them to listen too. If the professor’s notes are appropriate for student use, these can be photocopied as an alternative.

Most students who qualify for an accommodation of “Class Notes” receive notes via a notetaking software – Sonocent. SSD provides Sonocent licenses to students needing access to classroom lectures and discussions. Sonocent uses an app downloaded on a student’s personal device (iPad, cell phone, Android, laptop, etc.) which records the class as a high quality recording. The software allows the student to use the recording as a tool to organize and create meaningful notes. The Sonocent software works effectively with PowerPoints when faculty have them available.

Occasionally students prefer to recruit a notetaker from outside of class. A small number of students use a laptop computer or Braille device to take their own notes during class. Whatever method the student uses for notes, he/she is responsible for the material covered in class.

Taping Lectures

Some faculty members are concerned about having their lectures recorded—whether the student
is blind, visually impaired or sighted. When an instructor is planning to publish his/her lectures, the fear may be that the tapes will somehow interfere with these plans. If this is the case, the faculty member may ask the student to sign an agreement provided by SSD not to release the recording or otherwise hinder the instructor's ability to obtain a copyright.

Testing

A common area in which students who are blind or visually impaired need adaptation is testing. As a rule, it is much better to avoid giving the student "different" tests from the rest of the class because this makes it difficult to compare test results. The fairest option is to administer the same test questions in a non-visual format.

Some instructors prefer to give oral exams to students who are blind or visually impaired, or arrange for a teaching assistant to administer the test orally. Although this approach is certainly within the prerogative of the instructor, it can create an uncomfortable situation for the student when other students are taking written exams. An alternative method is to have the instructor send exams to the test coordinator via e-mail. The test coordinator then prints off the paper exam and the exam can be read to the student although, most individuals with vision issues use a computer program called JAWS. The exam from the instructor is saved to a flash drive and the JAWS program reads to the student and the student types the answers.

Computers with adaptations for visual impairments can also be very useful for test taking, and for writing papers.

Illustrations, Models, and Technology

Students who are blind or visually impaired may use a reading aid called Optelec. Optelec will read a paper exam to the student and Dragon Dictate will record their answers which are passed on to the instructors. Modern technology has made available other aids including talking calculators and speech time compressors. Our office does not have these types of aids but the student may have them available for their own personal and school use.

Art and Other Visual Subject Matter

Substitutions may be found for courses that are "visual" by nature; however, it should not be assumed automatically that a substitution would be necessary. Conversations between the
student who is blind or visually impaired and the professor can lead to new and even exciting instructional techniques that may benefit the entire class.

For example, it is often thought that a student who is blind or visually impaired cannot take a course in art appreciation, and if this class is a requirement for graduation, it should be waived. However, the student who is blind or visually impaired should have the opportunity to become familiar with the world's great art. A classmate or reader who is particularly talented at verbally describing visual images can assist the student who is blind or visually impaired as a visual "interpreter" or "translator." The "Mona Lisa" (or other great work of art) is described, and there are poems written about the "Mona Lisa" that may be used as teaching aids to give more insight and understanding to the work. Miniature models of great works of sculpture can also be available for display and touching in the classroom.

One student was able to learn the proper technique in an archery class when a rope was stretched perpendicular to the target. A "beeper" that was added to the target assisted with positioning. The point is that disabilities (in this case, blindness) do not automatically preclude participation in certain activities or classes. Students, professors, and advisors must be careful not to lower expectations solely on the basis of disability.

Guide Dogs

Some students who are blind or visually impaired use guide dogs. A guide dog will not disturb the class. They are highly trained and disciplined. Most of the time, the dog will lie quietly under or beside the table or desk. The greatest disruption a professor can expect may be an occasional yawn or stretch. It is good to remember that as tempting as it may be to pet or speak to a guide dog, the dog while in harness is responsible for guiding its owner, and should not be distracted from that duty.

Field Trips

If classes involve field trips to out-of-class locations, discuss traveling needs with the student who is blind or visually impaired. In most instances, all that will be required is for a member of the class to act as a sighted guide. In locations where public transportation is adequate, many people who are blind or visually impaired travel quite independently.

Partial Sight and Accommodations

Between 70 and 80 percent of all persons who are legally blind in the United States have some measurable vision. Students who are partially sighted often require many of the same
accommodations as students who are totally blind. This includes readers (e.g., JAWS), where a paper exam is saved on flash drive and the student can use JAWS to listen and type out answers. Students can also use Optelec to listen and write out answers or Dragon to dictate answers. In addition, depending on their level and type of vision, partially sighted students may use large print textbooks, handouts, and tests; magnifying devices; or accessible media. Large print is usually 18 to 22 pt., but varies from student to student. In class, some partially sighted students are able to take notes with a bold felt tip pen or marker. Others use techniques mentioned under "Class Notes" above.

When a Student Doesn't Appear "Blind" or Visually Impaired

The student who is partially sighted is confronted with two basic difficulties that the student who is totally blind is not. First, the students who are partially sighted are sometimes viewed by instructors and classmates as "faking it" because most students who are partially sighted do not use white canes for travel and because most are able to get around much like everyone else. People have difficulty believing that the student needs to use adaptive methods when utilizing printed materials.

One student who is partially sighted commented that having been observed playing Frisbee by one of her instructors, she was sure that the instructor would no longer believe that she was partially sighted. As she explained, she had more peripheral than central vision and was able to see a red Frisbee. If any other color Frisbee was used, she could not see well enough to play. Playing Frisbee and reading text present quite different visual requirements. This is often difficult for the person who is fully sighted to understand.

Large Size Handwriting and Large Print

The second difficulty students who are the partially sighted experience is more subtle. The sighted reader’s psychological response to large handwriting may be that "a child has written this." Unfortunately, this may unconsciously lead to the conclusion that the written communication, e.g. a student’s essay on an exam, is less sophisticated than that of other students. When the student uses large print on their computer, this can still be a problem. It is very important to read for content and try not to be distracted by large size writing. Note: it is often assumed that a student using large print is trying to make an assignment appear longer as in the case of a term paper of a required length. When the number of words instead of pages required is stated, the assignment length is clearer for everyone.
Meeting with the Partially Sighted Student

Potential difficulties are alleviated if the student and professor discuss the student’s needs early in the term. Depending on the level of vision, a partially sighted student may be assisted by such classroom accommodations as sitting in the front of the room and having large print used on the chalkboard and on an overhead projector. The capacity to read printed materials, however, also depends greatly on conditions such as degree of contrast between print and background and the brightness and color of text. Therefore, it is essential for the student and instructor to clarify what methods, techniques, or devices will work to maximum advantage in the setting being used.

Services for Students with Visual impairments

Verification of Disability

As needed, the professor is entitled to confirmation of the student’s disability from a qualified source such as SSD. Once the Director, Assistant Director or Disability Specialist from SSD meets with the student, they will collaborate and create an Individual Accommodation Plan (IAP) for the student, verifying his or her disability and detailing options for accommodations needed in class and/or in testing situations. The student will then share this letter with the professor during office hours and discuss how accommodations will be implemented.

Orientation and Mobility

Students are expected to travel independently as they conduct their day-to-day activities. Students requiring a tactile map of campus can ask SSD to order one from the American Printing House (APH). The ‘Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired’ (NCBVI) can also provide some orientation to campus. Students who are blind or visually impaired can obtain this service by contacting NCBVI at 402-471-2891.

Test Formats and Accommodations

Tests can be administered to students with visual impairments in a number of ways. It may be necessary for the student and instructor to discuss which of several testing methods recommended on an SSD verification form would work best; as needed the SSD office can assist with this process. Tests may be converted to audio format, read aloud, produced in large print (usually using a copier or large print computer screen), or read using JAWS computer software. Students usually record, type, or word process their answers. Tests can be e-mailed to our test coordinator as attachments (no CD’s or flash drives).
**Additional Time**

Faculty members routinely allow extra time for exams. It is up to the student to schedule exams through the instructor if the exam cannot be taken with the rest of the class.

In the event that research papers are to be assigned – someone may have to aid in that literature search, both finding materials and translating them. You may want to extend deadlines for this student. Therefore, it is important to give students plenty of notice in the event of an upcoming research paper.

**Proctoring**

Because students may have questions that would be best answered by someone with knowledge of the subject matter, it is in everyone’s best interest if either one of the teaching assistants for the course or the professor proctors exams taken outside of the classroom. Another member of the academic department is also a good choice. Reading test questions aloud or writing the student’s dictated answers is inadvisable. Some students will use readers and scribes and our department will work with the student if particular provisions do not work for them. Most students prefer using their own recorder, computer, or other independent means. If the student can write out their own answers, the testing center at SSD can print out a test that the instructor had previously e-mailed to our testing coordinator and the student can than listen on Optelec. It needs to be noted that Optelec or current Screen Readers are not able to read tables and graphs, only text.

**Notetaking**

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 PowerPoint 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 on Canvas prior to the lecture, a student can request Access to PowerPoint Slides and Outlines prior to class. For this accommodation, you will share (e-mail) 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. For students who are registered with
SSD and qualify for notetaking assistance, SSD provides photocopying of other student’s notes, NCR (no carbon required) paper for taking notes, or Sonocent software to record lectures. These services are free of charge, as are all services offered by SSD. Some students will elect to use their own personal devices (e.g., laptop computer, recording device, pulse smart pen, etc.).

Taped Textbooks and Other Alternative Formats

Many students who are visually impaired rely on textbooks converted into various other formats, e.g., large print, Braille, and utilizing adaptive software and technology. SSD assists students to locate books that are produced in alternative formats and by reformatting other texts as needed by UNL students.

Large print or Braille formats are virtually essential to make some subjects - such as math, certain sciences, or foreign languages - accessible to students with various visual impairments. It can take as long as six months for textbooks to be converted into these formats. SSD can assist students in making the necessary arrangements.

Readers

Some students with visual impairments may also want to arrange for readers to help with the day-to-day material such as handouts and mail. This reader could be a friend, neighbor, or a volunteer. Postings in dormitories will often yield volunteers willing to read such material.

Reading Rooms

The Adele Hall Learning Commons within Love Library on city campus has quiet study rooms with individual desks that students may use if they need quieter study environments. For additional information: https://libraries.unl.edu/library-services-people-disabilities

The Accommodation Resource Center (ARC) located in Mabel Lee Hall – Room 125 is equipped with hardware and software to support the needs of students with all disabilities.

Accommodation Resource Center (ARC)

https://www.unl.edu/ssd/content/accommodations-resource-center-arc

The Accommodation Resource Center (ARC), located in Mabel Lee Hall - Room 125, provides resources, training, technological assistance and consultation to students with disabilities on the
University of Nebraska campus and all members of the UNL Community. Proof of disability or registration with the SSD office is not required to use the Center or make an appointment.

The Center offers accessibility-related hardware and software as well as a library of physical resources to students, faculty, and staff. Upon request, students may receive evaluations to determine what assistive technology solutions would be most appropriate for their needs, or training in assistive technology use, devices and/or strategies needed. ARC professionals will work with instructors to modify curriculum as necessary to implement an accommodation of a student as well as provide accessibility compliance testing related to in-house development, pre-procurement evaluation, and post-procurement fit concerns.

The ARC also provides direct support for screen magnifications and reader software to the UNL Libraries system and on a ‘needs basis.’ Troubleshooting support and procurement advice is available for specific solutions. Training and advisory support for the production of accessible media and websites may address specific departmental needs.

The Center can support faculty and staff in a variety of ways. One of the most visible ARC services to the campus community is their workplace evaluation program. This program provides practical solutions to accessibility and ergonomic concerns from minor workstation adjustments to full reconfigurations/equipment recommendations. An equipment checkout system enables faculty/staff to find the best-possible solution for their workplace tasks and individual needs.

Contact Jeremy Sydik, Software Development Specialist, at jsydik2@unl.edu or 402-472-5852 for an appointment.

Library Retrieval Service, Accessibility Equipment & Technology

UNL Libraries’ Delivery and Interlibrary Loan service is available free of charge to all students and faculty whose disabilities make it difficult for them to use the library. The retrieval service may be reached by telephoning 402-472-9568, or e-mailing LibrariesAccess@unl.edu. Users with disabilities may also authorize up to four people to check out or pick up library materials for them using their Ncard by completing an authorization form at least 24 hours in advance. A paper version is also available at all ASKus locations.

UNL Libraries also has accessible equipment and technology available to use. For those individuals needing assistance with vision issues, NVDA Screen Readers are equipped on Windows computers as well as on all APPLE computers within the Adele Hall Learning
The University of Nebraska Lincoln provides an on-campus paratransit (PTS) van service to aid students getting from their Residence Halls to their classes or from class to class. This service is only available on campus or between the City/East/Innovation Campus during regular business hours. If you require use of the service, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office (402/472-3787) to register with them, and they will pass along the student’s contact information to UNL PTS Special Events & Transit Office in order to make arrangements in regards to the individuals’ schedule. We recommend that you register with the SSD Office prior to the first day of classes, so that a schedule is established.

Please note: that the Para-Transit Van can only transport one wheelchair at a time, and schedules are accommodated on a first come, first served basis.

Equipment Use by Students

Transportation assistance is often very useful for students with visual impairments. UNL contracts with City of Lincoln StarTran to operate bus routes that connect East, Downtown and Innovation Campuses. The routes run Monday through Friday during the fall and spring semesters and provide timely access throughout the day.

An on-call van transportation service becomes available after the end of the daily bus route schedules beginning at 6 p.m. in perimeter permit areas on weekdays and from 9 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. at designated campus bus stops. Once an individual arrives at a designated StarTran bus stop, call 402-326-8807 and provide current location and destination request. Response time is
about 15 minutes. The van then delivers riders to requested campus bus stop locations. On-call van service is available weekdays during fall and spring semesters.

StarTran also offers two bus routes on Saturdays which provides transportation between East and City campuses between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. These routes do not include Innovation campus. A website has been provided for more information: https://parking.unl.edu/weekday-after-hours-weekend-intercampus-service#weekday-van

StarTran provides a paratransit service called the Handi-Van Program. This is a door-to-door transportation service created to help meet the needs of individuals who have a disability and who, because of that disability, the regular fixed bus routes do not work for them. Pre-registration at the League of Human Dignity is required @ http://lincoln.ne.gov/city/pworks/startran/handi-van/pdf/handi-van-application.pdf, or call and visit the League of Human Dignity at 1701 P Street, Lincoln, NE – 402/441-7871.

### Equipment Use by Students

SSD has small equipment that can be loaned to students on an interim basis, e.g., digital recorders and hearing devices. We also assist students in locating other adapted teaching aids.

### IV. Students with Mobility Impairments

#### Types of Mobility Impairments

Access is one of the major concerns of the student who uses a wheelchair. The student must learn routes to and from classes, and across campus that do not present barriers. A barrier may be a stair, curb, narrow walkway, heavy door, elevator door that has no delay mechanism or one that is too fast, a vehicle blocking a curb cut or ramp, a sign in the middle of what would otherwise be a wide enough walkway, etc. Similar barriers exist for many students with mobility impairments who do not use wheelchairs.

Students use wheelchairs or other mobility aids as a result of a variety of disabilities including spinal cord injury, cerebral palsy, post-polio, multiple sclerosis, severe arthritis, quadriplegia, paraplegia, amputation, muscular dystrophy, and so on. The student with spina bifida may have short stature and may use a wheelchair, braces, or crutches. A number of individuals with conditions such as cerebral palsy walk without assistance but may not be able to negotiate steps or other barriers. Other disabilities that can significantly affect students’ general mobility include cardiac conditions, chronic back pain, active sickle cell anemia, diabetes, and respiratory
disorders such as cystic fibrosis. Classroom modifications will depend on the student’s functional limitations.

Wheelchairs

Wheelchairs come in a variety of styles and sizes, with many types of optional attachments available. Wheelchairs are either manual or powered (electric). Most students who are unable to manually propel the chair themselves for any distance will use an electric-powered wheelchair or scooter.

Classrooms

Auditorium and theater-type classrooms may present difficulties unless there is a large enough flat floor space in the front or rear of the room for a wheelchair to park. There must also be an entrance to and from that level. For students not using wheelchairs, some seats must be easily reached without steps. Classrooms with tables are more accessible to students using wheelchairs than rooms with standard classroom desks. It is preferable if the tables and chairs are movable rather than stationary. Auditorium and theater-type classrooms may present difficulties unless there is a large enough flat floor space in the front or rear of the room for a wheelchair to park.

Variations in Needs

It is difficult to make generalizations about the classroom needs of students who use wheelchairs because some students may be able to stand for short periods of time while others will not be able to stand at all. Some will have full use of their hands and arms, while others will have minimal or no use of them. There are, however, some general considerations that apply to most, if not all, students with mobility impairments.

Academic Considerations

Moving a Class

If a classroom or faculty office is inaccessible, it will be necessary to find an accessible location or alternative class section that is held in an accessible location. To change a room assignment for a class or section, the academic department contacts the room scheduling office for its unit. Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) can also help in this process.

Travel Time
If breaks between classes are short, a student with a mobility impairment may be a few minutes late. Often the student must wait for an elevator, take a circuitous (but accessible) route, wait for assistance in opening doors, and maneuver along crowded paths and corridors. If the student is frequently late, it is, of course, appropriate to discuss the situation with the student and seek solutions. Most students will be aware of time restrictions and will schedule their classes accordingly. However, it is not always possible to leave enough time between classes. For students who require personal attendants, early classes and attendants’ schedules can pose particular difficulties.

Labs

Classes taught in laboratory settings (sciences, language labs, arts, film and video, etc.) usually require some modification of the workstation. Considerations include under counter knee clearance, work and counter top height, horizontal working reach and aisle widths. Working directly with the student may be the best way to provide modifications to the workstation.

Lab Aides

For those students who may not be able to participate in the laboratory class without the assistance of an aide, the student should be allowed to benefit from the actual lab work to the fullest extent. The student can give all instructions to an aide - from what chemical to add, to what type of test tube to use and where to dispose of the used chemicals.

Physical Education

Classes in Kinesiology and recreation can almost always be modified so that the student in a wheelchair can participate. Classmates are usually more than willing to assist if necessary. Some students who use wheelchairs do not get enough physical exercise in daily activity, so it is particularly important that they be encouraged as well as provided the opportunity to participate.

General Considerations

Using a Wheelchair

Students are not "confined" to wheelchairs. They use their wheelchairs to get around much in the same way as others walk, and often transfer to automobiles and furniture. Some people who use wheelchairs can walk with the aid of canes, braces, crutches, or walkers. Note: using a wheelchair some of the time does not mean an individual is faking a disability. For those who
walk with difficulty, a wheelchair is often a means to conserve energy or move about more quickly.

**Offering Help**

Most students with mobility impairments will ask for assistance if they need it. Do not assume automatically that assistance is required. Offer assistance if you wish, but do not insist and do accept a "No, thank you" graciously.

**Relative Height**

When talking with a student who uses a wheelchair or has short stature, try to sit down, kneel, or squat if the conversation continues for more than a few minutes. Then the student does not need to crane their neck to maintain eye contact.

**Personal Space**

A wheelchair is virtually part of a person's body. Do not hang or lean on the chair - this is similar to hanging or leaning on a person. It is fine if you are friends, but inappropriate otherwise.

**Services for Students with Mobility Impairment**

**Verification of Disability**

As needed, the professor is entitled to confirmation of the student’s disability from a qualified source such as SSD. Once the Director, Assistant Director or Disability Specialist from SSD meets with the student, they will collaborate and create an Individual Accommodation Plan (IAP) for the student, verifying his or her disability and detailing options for accommodations needed in class and/or in testing situations. The student will then share this letter with the professor during office hours and discuss how accommodations will be implemented.

**Campus Accessibility Map**

An accessibility map of the University of Nebraska (UN) campus is available in the SSD office. This map shows the locations of ramps, elevators, curb cuts, accessible parking, etc. so that students with mobility impairments may navigate campus more easily. SSD can advocate on a student’s behalf to remove physical barriers in the campus area or to ensure that a class or event is held in an accessible location. [https://parking.unl.edu/parking-maps#pdf-maps](https://parking.unl.edu/parking-maps#pdf-maps)
Testing Accommodations

Additional Time

As needed due to mobility impairments that affect writing speed, faculty members routinely allow extra time for exams. It is up to the student to schedule exams through the instructor if they cannot be taken with the rest of the class.

Alternative Formats

When mobility impairments affect writing, using a word processor or tape recorder may be appropriate. It is the responsibility of the student and the instructor to decide which method to use. The SSD office can assist with this process, as needed.

Proctoring

When needed, it is in everyone’s best interest if the proctor for testing is either one of the teaching assistants for the course or the professor, in the event of any problems or questions. Another member of the academic department is also a good choice. Reading test questions aloud and writing the student’s dictated answers are not usually recommended; using a digital recorder or other independent means is preferred by most students.

NoteTaking

Whatever method the student uses for notes, he/she is responsible for the material covered in class. For students in need of notetakers due to a disability, we often recommend that the instructor make an announcement to the class asking for volunteers, usually without mentioning the name of the student. A blank sheet of paper may than be passed around the room so that students who are interested in volunteering may write down their names, telephone numbers, and/or email addresses. It is the responsibility of the student requesting notes to contact those on the list and finalize notetaking arrangements. You will be contacted if this type of announcement is needed. In that case, you may also consider allowing the student to use your notes (depending upon their pedagogical utility and your own preference).

For students who are registered with SSD and qualify for notetaking assistance, SSD provides photocopying of other student’s notes, NCR (no carbon required) paper for taking notes, or Sonocent software to record lectures. These services are free of charge, as are all services offered by SSD. Some students will elect to use their own personal devices (e.g., laptop computer, digital recorder, pulse smart pen, etc.).
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Mobile chairs, adjustable height tables, and whiteboards are available throughout the library, in the Adele Hall Learning Commons, the second floor of Love South, and throughout the libraries.

For additional information: https://libraries.unl.edu/library-services-people-disabilities

Accommodation Resource Center (ARC)

https://www.unl.edu/ssl/content/accommodations-resource-center-arc

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Faculty and Staff (ARC)
The Accommodation Resource Center can support faculty and staff in a variety of ways. One of the most visible ARC services to the campus community is their workplace evaluation program. This program provides practical solutions to accessibility and ergonomic concerns from minor workstation adjustments to full reconfigurations/equipment recommendations. An equipment checkout system enables faculty/staff to find the best-possible solution for their workplace tasks and individual needs.

Contact Jeremy Sydik, Software Development Specialist, at jsydik2@unl.edu or 402-472-5852 for an appointment.

Transportation

The University of Nebraska Lincoln provides an on-campus paratransit (PTS) van service to aid students getting from their Residence Halls to their classes or from class to class. This service is only available on campus or between the City/East/Innovation Campus during regular business hours. If you require use of the service, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office (402/472-3787) to register with them, and they will pass along the student’s contact information to UNL PTS Special Events & Transit Office in order to make arrangements in regards to the individuals’ schedule. We recommend that you register with the SSD Office prior to the first day of classes, so that a schedule is established.

Please note: that the Para-Transit Van can only transport one wheelchair at a time, and schedules are accommodated on a first come, first served basis.

The University is contracted with Star Tran which has four bus routes that connect the UNL campuses throughout the day during the week. A bus rider/user guide is available (https://parking.unl.edu/bus-riders-user-guide#contact-information), as well as bus routes. An on-call van service (402) 326-8807 that connects UNL campuses is available at no-cost to students during the weekdays from 9p – 11:30 pm. Saturday bus services from 7:00a – 6:00 pm are available for intercampus trips. Go to https://parking.unl.edu/weekday-after-hours-weekend-intercampus-service for more information.

University of Nebraska Paratransit Service

Handi-Van is a door-to-door transportation service to assist individuals with disabilities whom are unable to ride the regular city bus routes. You need to preregister @ http://lincoln.ne.gov/city/pworks/startran/handi-van/pdf/handi-van-application.pdf, or call and visit the League of Human Dignity at 1701 P Street, Lincoln, NE – 402/441-7871.
Parking

Each year, the campus parking map produced by Parking & Transit Services indicates where accessible parking spaces are located on campus: https://parking.unl.edu/parking-maps.

To park in any UNL parking lots and structures you need to have a valid UNL issued parking permit 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Individuals with physical disabilities may purchase a permit valid for use in an area reserved for the exclusive use of individuals with disabilities by presenting UNL Parking & Transit Services a current state-issued handicapped permit authorization. Handicapped permits can only be purchased in the Parking & Transit Services office. Supporting documents (e.g., copy of the handicap placard receipt), may be uploaded online. If you have questions about the handicapped paid permit or accessible parking on campus for faculty and staff, contact:

Parking and Transit Services
625 Stadium Drive, Suite A
Lincoln, NE 68588-0161
(402) 472-1800
Website: https://parking.unl.edu/special-permits#accessible-permit

Individuals with temporary disabilities who do not already have a state of Nebraska permit will need to get a handicapped parking application from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) either from the DMV office or online. You will then need to complete and sign the form, ask your health-care provider to fill out and sign the portion that certifies disability, than submit the application by mail or in person to the DMV. The appropriate form may be downloaded from the Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicle’s Web page found at:


For more information, contact the Nebraska DMV office at:

Nebraska State Office Building
301 Centennial Mall South
P.O. Box 94789
Lincoln, NE 68509-4726
website: https://dmv.nebraska.gov/help/search

V. Students with Learning Disabilities
An individual who has difficulty processing written or spoken information such that it interferes with his or her ability to read, write, spell, listen, talk, or do math may be diagnosed with a specific learning disability. Like all students, each student with a learning disability has a distinct combination of abilities and deficiencies and therefore a unique profile. Some areas of functioning will be in an average or above average (even gifted) range, while deficiencies will vary from minimal to severe. It is important to note that students with specific learning disabilities will display some, but not all, of the characteristics of that disability. In addition, the student’s ability to compensate for information processing difficulties will vary across time and with differing levels of stress.

**Characteristics of Common Learning Disabilities**

**Reading**

For college students with dyslexia or other print related learning disabilities, reading is not automatic and fluid particularly when under time pressures. Difficulties are liable to be linked to slow reading rates and misreading what is written due to transposing of letters and skipping words altogether. Because of slow reading rates, it may take students with reading-related disabilities longer than their colleagues to read books and articles, to locate a word in a dictionary, to find a passage that is part of a play and other writing, or to find their place in a scientific or mathematical table. With certain subject areas, these students may have more problems comprehending what is written in their texts, on the blackboard, in a test, or even in their own notes. Retaining the information that is read is therefore more difficult. A student with reading-related learning disabilities may be especially concerned when he or she has large volumes of printed material to read or is under pressure to complete an examination.

Some students with reading disabilities may find improvement in both reading speed and comprehension if their texts are changed into an alternative format, such as books on electronic text. This reformatting can allow students who qualify for the service to take information in through two channels or senses (visual reading and auditory processing). A student with reading disabilities may wish to contact a specialist at Service for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to determine whether or not they qualify for and could benefit from this service.

**Writing**

Some college students with learning disabilities have problems communicating effectively through writing. Whether these difficulties are related to dyslexia or to the physical act of printing or writing (dysgraphia), the outcome is likely to manifest itself in written work that
appears careless. Although it is appropriate not to lower academic standards, it can be helpful to understand that students with documented written language disabilities usually put equal or greater effort into their writing than do students who do not have disabilities. It may also help to know the types of errors you may encounter as you work with students who have written language disabilities. Sentences are sometimes incomplete with essential words and phrases missing. The organization of the paper can be choppy, jumping from one idea to the next and back again.

Vocabulary used may be less sophisticated than expected for college level work. The student may have difficulty monitoring his or her writing for errors in spelling, grammar, word order and word endings, subject-verb agreement, punctuation, and paragraph formation. Handwriting can be poorly formed or illegible with letters and words being unevenly spaced on the page. Students with writing disabilities sometimes use a mixture of printed and cursive writing and upper and lower case letters in the same document.

Some of the difficulties students with written language disabilities have may be mitigated by the use of a computer or word processor with spell check, grammar check, and cut and paste capabilities for in class essays and essay exams. A student with written language disabilities may also benefit from working with a tutor at the University of Nebraska Writing Center with locations located across both UNL East & Main Campuses (https://www.unl.edu/writing/hours-locations).

Mathematics

To be successful in understanding math concepts and in knowing when and how to apply them, the student must have strong language, memory, sequencing, and problem-solving skills. As the student approaches more complicated and abstract college level work, he or she also needs to be able to visualize the positioning of objects that are described and the spatial relationships between them, even when conceptual objects must be turned or moved. Students who have disabilities in math reasoning and calculation (dyscalculia) may make errors that seem to be "dumb mistakes," e.g., reversing numbers, miscopying and/or misaligning columns of figures, and making errors when changing operational signs and performing other conversions. Some students with learning disabilities in mathematics have difficulty remembering and working through the sequence of steps required to solve a problem (so that steps may be repeated, performed out of order, or forgotten altogether). These students may also have problems figuring out calculations mentally, estimating what answers would be, and/or organizing a problem, especially when it is a word-problem or when the student must first remember and perform calculations to obtain missing data.
A student’s confidence in his or her ability to be successful at mathematics adds another dimension to learning disabilities. Because mathematics is a cumulative subject with new concepts building on previously acquired information, some students who have memory difficulties or who never completely mastered specific math concepts may experience frustration and mounting anxieties. Teaching math also requires that a great deal of information be presented in a short period of time. Students with learning disabilities in mathematics may feel overwhelmed by the pace at which math is taught or feel they understand what is being taught, only to realize they cannot generalize math concepts to homework assignments or test questions. Thus, math anxieties may cause a student to freeze during testing.

Students with math disabilities and anxieties usually benefit from regular and frequent work with a tutor and clarification from the instructor, as needed. In addition, recommendation may be made by SSD that the student be allowed to use extended time, a quiet room, and scrap paper for quizzes and tests.

**Foreign Language**

Students who have disabilities that relate to distinguishing, processing, remembering, and expressing sounds and words may find learning a foreign language problematic. To successfully master a second language a student must be able to: hear and cognitively differentiate between the sound structures of words, comprehend and remember the meanings of words and differing meanings when words are combined, understand rules related to sentence structure and grammar, retrieve information easily, and mentally manipulate it to successfully communicate verbally or in writing.

Students who have disabilities that affect learning a foreign language may benefit when instruction is multi-sensory, when students are given sufficient oral practice, and when pressures of timed responses (oral and written) are removed. Some students you work with may experience extreme and persistent difficulties/failures in learning a foreign language, despite the student’s conscientious effort. In such cases, you may refer the student to the SSD Office to discuss the possibility of petitioning to receive a foreign language substitution. Should the petitioning process be pursued, the student may ask his or her foreign language faculty to write a letter describing the specific difficulties experienced while trying to learn a foreign language. A foreign language substitution accommodation replaces a required foreign language course with an alternative course.

**Oral Language**
Some students are eloquent writers yet have extreme difficulty in formulating an immediate verbal response to a question. They may appear socially inept as they are unable to gather and express their ideas amidst the fast pace of active dialogue. During oral presentations, their thoughts may come out jumbled and chaotic and they may use many filler words, e.g., uh, er, um, as they struggle to express themselves. Reading aloud in class and taking oral quizzes and tests can be stressful and embarrassing. If oral expression is not a fundamental requirement of the course being taught, you may allow a student to complete an oral assignment using a different format. Some students with disabilities related to oral expression may benefit from video-taping their presentation for viewing or delivering their presentation to the instructor privately.

Students who have a disability related to taking in oral information may have difficulty listening and taking notes at the same time. The problem may relate to difficulties in differentiating relevant from irrelevant details so that the student frantically tries to write down everything being said. Similarly, students with dysgraphia, who extend more than the normal focus and energy in actually writing words they are hearing, may fall behind in taking notes and miss examples and nuances of a lecture that aid other students in understanding and memory. Allowing students with disabilities to tape lectures often alleviates this problem. Many of the adaptive techniques that assist students who are deaf will also help these students - note takers, films, role-playing, captioned videotapes, and other visual materials. Students with oral receptive language disabilities will also benefit if instructions and assignments are given both orally and in written form.

**Sequential Memory**

Other students you may work with will have learning disabilities that affect sequential memory tasks such as spelling, mathematics, and following step-by-step instructions. Students with this area of disability benefit by learning how to break down tasks into smaller parts and by gaining clarity on how the authors of their texts and their instructors organize material for learning. Giving more opportunities for evaluation and relatively frequent quizzes, tests, and writing assignments can help all students learn how to successfully organize their study, how much memorization of detail is needed, and how to transfer their learning from facts to application. Tutoring may be required in subject areas that are more problematic for a student. In general, the student with learning disabilities and all students benefit when a multi-modal approach to teaching and learning is used (seeing, hearing, saying and doing).

**Organization and Attention**

SSD Faculty Handbook
Success in college requires a reasonably sophisticated development of skills related to organization, focus, attention, and study. Students who have a disability due to Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), and certain learning disabilities may seem vulnerable or lacking in these skill areas. For instance, you may see from a student’s participation in class discussions that he or she has completed the necessary reading and has a good grasp of course material. Yet the same student may misplace papers to be turned in or postpone starting projects so that the final product is rushed and less thorough than you would expect. The delayed start of papers and projects may relate to poor estimation of how long it will take to complete the task. A student may appear to have reasonable organization and study skills but have difficulty understanding how much detail to focus on during lectures or while reading, writing, and preparing for tests. Some students also have problems screening out sights and sounds in the classroom to maintain focus on class lecture. These difficulties can increase during longer lecture classes and peak stress times, such as during midterms and finals. It is important to note that for these problem areas to be termed as disabling they must meet criteria that go beyond mere developmental immaturity.

Students who have learning disabilities that affect organization and attention often have difficulty completing open-ended, unstructured, and last minute assignments. Therefore, they, like all students, can benefit from receiving a detailed syllabus that clearly states reading to be completed for each class period and gives due dates and clear descriptions for course papers and projects. Providing students with an outline of material to be covered for each class also helps them learn how to organize their listening, note taking, and studying. Some instructors make such outlines available at the beginning of each class, printed in a course pack, or available for downloading from the web so that students may spend more class time and attention understanding concepts and noting examples to aid memory.

**Individual Differences**

Keep in mind that no two students with learning disabilities are alike. Learning strategies and accommodations that work for one student may not work for another. Likewise, what works in one subject area or class format may not work in another. In general, students with learning disabilities will learn much better when more channels are used in the teaching/learning process - oral, visual, tactile, and kinesthetic. (See the "Recommendations" section.)

**Conferences with Students**

It is important to meet individually with each student who has learning disabilities once they identify themselves. Encourage students to do so at the beginning of the term (See #1 in the
"Recommendations" section and "Verification of Disability" in the Services section that follows.) If you are working with a student who seems to be struggling in your class but has not indicated that he or she has a learning disability, you may wish to refer the student to SSD.

**Services for Students with Learning Disabilities**

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**Verification of Disability**

As needed, the professor is entitled to confirmation of the student’s disability from a qualified source such as SSD. Once the Director, Assistant Director or Disability Specialist from SSD meets with the student, they will collaborate together and create an Individual Accommodation Plan (IAP) for the student, verifying his or her disability and detailing options for accommodations needed in class and/or in testing situations. The student will then share their IAP with the professor during office hours and discuss how accommodations will be implemented.

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**Testing Accommodations**

Faculty members routinely allow extra time for exams, often in a quiet room with no other distractions, to provide students with learning disabilities an adequate opportunity to show what they have learned. At times, alternative test formats are required, e.g. Tests may be converted to audio format, read aloud, produced in large print (usually using a copier or large print computer screen), or read using JAWS computer software. Students usually record, type, or word process their answers. It is the responsibility of the student and the instructor to discuss the recommendations made in the student’s verification letter and to decide how they will be implemented. As needed the SSD office can help with this process. The student should schedule exams through the instructor if they cannot be taken with the rest of the class.

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**Proctoring**

In the event the student has questions about an exam, it is in everyone’s best interest if the proctor for testing is either one of the teaching assistants for the course, the professor, or another member of the academic department. Reading test questions aloud or writing the student’s dictated answers is not usually recommended; using a digital recorder or other independent means is preferred by most students.

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**Notetaking**

Whatever notetaking method the student uses, he/she is responsible for the material covered in
class. Many students with learning disabilities record lectures for reviewing later; this can be time consuming. A number of students prefer to recruit a note taker from class, which can sometimes be difficult. Once recruited, the classmate uses carbon paper, NCR (no carbon required) paper, or photocopying to obtain copies of their notes for the student with a learning disability.

Upon request, it is essential to help the student find a notetaker and/or allow the student to use your notes (depending upon their pedagogical utility). With the student’s permission, it is often helpful for the instructor to make an announcement to the class asking for volunteers, usually without mentioning the name of the student. 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 (e-mail) 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 share the materials with others.

SSD provides free photocopying of class notes, NCR paper, or assistive notetaking technology (if they are available for that course).

**Accommodation Resource Center (ARC)**

[https://www.unl.edu/ssp/content/accommodations-resource-center-arc](https://www.unl.edu/ssp/content/accommodations-resource-center-arc)

The Accommodation Resource Center (ARC), located in Mabel Lee Hall - Room 125, provides resources, training, technological assistance and consultation to students with disabilities on the University of Nebraska campus and all members of the UNL Community. Proof of disability or registration with the SSD office is not required to use the Center or make an appointment.

The Center offers accessibility-related hardware and software as well as a library of physical resources to students, faculty, and staff. Upon request, students may receive evaluations to determine what assistive technology solutions would be most appropriate for their needs, or training in assistive technology use, devices and/or strategies needed. ARC professionals will work with instructors to modify curriculum as necessary to implement an accommodation of a student.

The ARC also provides direct support for screen magnifications and reader software to the UNL Libraries system and on a ‘needs basis.’ Troubleshooting support and procurement advice is
available for specific solutions. Training and advisory support for the production of accessible media and websites may address specific departmental needs.

The Center can support faculty and staff in a variety of ways. One of the most visible ARC services to the campus community is their workplace evaluation program. This program provides practical solutions to accessibility and ergonomic concerns from minor workstation adjustments to full reconfigurations/equipment recommendations. An equipment checkout system enables faculty/staff to find the best-possible solution for their workplace tasks and individual needs.

Contact Jeremy Sydik, Software Development Specialist, at jsydik2@unl.edu or 402-472-5852 for an appointment.

Textbooks in Alternative Formats

Some students who have reading based learning disabilities rely on textbooks converted to E-text. As needed, SSD assists University of Nebraska students in locating books that have been produced in these alternative formats and by reformatting other texts, such as course packs and class notes.

Tutors

SSD can help students with learning disabilities assess their self-management, time-management, and learning strategy needs and can work with these students to find more effective methods. The office does not, however, provide content tutoring support for courses taught at the University. Students are encouraged to ask their instructor and academic department about tutoring recommendations.

Psycho-Educational Assessments

The SSD office or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) are able to give students contact information regarding access to local professionals who diagnose learning disabilities. SSD determines students’ eligibility for this service. You are welcome to refer to us undiagnosed students exhibiting some of the signs listed above.

Guidance and Counseling

Students with learning disabilities may have some particular guidance or counseling needs to assist in their academic, social, or personal development. SSD often encourages first-year
students to stay in contact with a staff member at least once a week as a means of resolving any problems and improving academic performance.

VI. Students with Speech Impairments

You may work with some students who appear shy and withdrawn when you call on them in class or attempt to engage them in conversation outside of the classroom. They may use single words or short phrases when communicating verbally or delay in responding, as they seem to struggle in finding the correct words. Some students have difficulty coming to the point or staying on the topic in their oral communication, even though they appear to understand the information being discussed or communicate effectively in writing.

These observable traits may be signs that the student has a speech impairment that he or she was born with or that has resulted from illness or injury. The condition may also be part of another disability. In any case, the college student with speech impairment may be reluctant to talk with you about such difficulties because he or she feels frustrated expressing thoughts orally. Unless it has been recently acquired, the student will probably have received some speech therapy.

Types of Speech Conditions

Speech impairments include: problems with the way words are pronounced (omitting, distorting or substituting sounds in the words spoken); voice quality (volume, pitch, tonal quality, or chronic hoarseness); rate of speech (long pauses while searching for the right word, stuttering, speaking too quickly or too slowly, or stopping and starting of speech with the use of filler words like um, er, uh); and esophageal speech resulting from a laryngectomy. Occasionally distorted movements and facial expressions may accompany these conditions.

Self-Consciousness

Many students with speech impairments will be hesitant about participating in activities that require speaking. Even if the student has adjusted well to their speech impairment, new situations may aggravate old anxieties. Therefore, if making oral reports, reading aloud in class, or responding to tests orally is a part of, but not an essential component of your course, you may wish to discuss alternatives with the student. Please keep in mind that speaking in front of a group can be an agonizing experience for any student with or without speech impairment.

Interacting with the Student

It is important to encourage the student with a speech impairment to express him or herself and
to allow time for the student to organize thoughts and formulate responses before speaking. Make a point of concentrating on the content of what the student says rather than on the format, and keep in mind that regardless of the type of communication the student is always an equal intellectual participant in the class. It is also beneficial to resist the temptation to complete words and phrases for the speech-impaired student. By patiently accepting and responding to all attempts at communication, the professor can set a mood that aids a student’s effective self-expression in class and encourages appropriate reactions from other students.

Speaking Aids

Persons, who cannot speak and who are otherwise physically disabled so that they cannot sign, write, or type, may use a variety of communication aids. Some individuals may use sophisticated electronic "speaking" machines, activated by punching a keyboard with a head pointer or mouth wand (both assistive devices that allow individuals to perform tasks that would ordinarily be performed by hand or finger movement). Others may rely on a spelling board that consists of a layout of the alphabet and a few common words and phrases ("yes" or "no") to which a speech impaired person points and an assistant may speak out loud. Individuals with speech impairments may use devices that provide a "ticker tape" printout or display the message on a calculator-like screen across which the characters move. With less portable devices, the message may be displayed on a TV screen. Most frequently, these students need respect, patience, quiet encouragement, and an opportunity to develop self-confidence in an unfamiliar group.

Accommodations May Include

Oral presentations may be a concern for students with speech impairments and their instructors. It is recommended that instructors openly discuss these concerns with the student and come up with adjustments to oral assignments, if needed. Listed below are several possibilities for alterations.

- Modifications of oral assignments by allowing one-to-one presentations (between you and the student) or the use of a computer with a voice synthesizer.
- Allowing substitutions for oral class reports, where the oral report is not fundamental to the class.

VII. Students with Mental Health Conditions

Some mental health conditions, such as bipolar disorder, may interfere with the performance of major life activities, such as learning, thinking, communicating, and sleeping. The type,
intensity, and duration of symptoms vary from person to person and in each individual across time. They come and go and do not always follow a regular pattern, making it difficult to predict when symptoms and functioning will worsen. Although symptoms of psychological conditions can often be controlled effectively through medication and therapy, some people continue to experience periodic episodes that require further treatment. Accordingly, some people with mental health conditions will need no extra support, others may need only occasional assistance, and still others may require thorough and ongoing support to maintain their productivity.

**Signs of Mental Health Conditions**

Mental Health Conditions are generally not apparent. Therefore, faculty and staff are unlikely to know if a student has a mental health condition unless he or she chooses to discuss it. Disclosure is a personal decision on the part of the student that involves many factors including trust, perceived open-mindedness and support of the faculty, security that knowledge of the mental health condition will be kept confidential, and general comfort.

In addition, many individuals first develop symptoms of mental illness between the ages of 15 and 25. College students who fall into this category, may be unsure of what is happening to them, not fully recognize the impact that symptoms are having on their academic or social performance, and/or be unaware of effective treatments and supportive services that are available to them.

**Academic Considerations**

It is impossible to generalize about the characteristics of all students with psychological disabilities. When asked about how their psychological symptoms affect functioning in school, some students cite difficulty in maintaining concentration. Students who take medications to control their symptoms may experience side effects such as: excessive thirst, drowsiness, nervousness, difficulty focusing on multiple tasks at the same time (especially amid noise and distractions), blurred vision, or hand tremors.

Of course, the strengths and weaknesses of each student must be assessed individually, regardless of the presence of a disability. The student’s ability to perform well in class will depend not merely on the presence or absence of psychological symptoms but on his or her past experiences, knowledge of the mental health condition, and skills for effective coping.

**Services for Students with Mental Health Conditions**

Because symptoms of mental health conditions vary broadly, as does the level of impairment
experienced by each person at any one time, it is impossible to list accommodations that work for all students with psychological disabilities. If a student has contacted the office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD), provided us with documentation that clarifies that he or she has a mental health condition that qualifies as a disability, and requests intervention on his or her behalf, recommendations for accommodations will be written in a student’s verification letter created by SSD. The student is then responsible for delivering a copy of this letter to each instructor from whom he or she is requesting accommodations. If a student is struggling but has not provided you with a verification letter, you may choose to discuss your concerns with him or her in privacy and, if needed, to make a referral to the SSD office.

Like all students, those with mental health conditions may benefit from well-organized teaching and classroom management practices. Best practices include:

- Approach each student with an open mind about his/her strengths and abilities.
- Clearly delineate expectations for performance.
- Deliver feedback on performance, both positive and corrective, in a timely and constructive fashion.
- Make yourself available to consult with students during regular office hours and through contact by telephone and email.
- Demonstrate flexibility and fairness in administering policies and assignments.

Some students with mental health conditions may need to take more frequent breaks, have food and drink with them in class (due to side effects of medications they are taking), and/or use testing accommodations, such as extended time and a distraction-free environment for testing.

**Popular Misconceptions about People with Mental Health Conditions**

**Myth #1: Mental Health Conditions Are Uncommon**

Recent estimates by the federal government indicate that 3.3 million American adults (approximately 2 percent) have a serious mental health condition. The National Institute of Mental Health estimates that one out of every five people in the U.S. will experience a mental health condition in his or her lifetime, and that one in four of us knows someone personally who has a mental health condition. In all likelihood, one or more of the college students and faculty/staff you work with will experience a mental health condition.
Myth #2: Mental Health Condition is Something People Choose to Have

It is important to know that mental illness is not caused or necessarily prolonged by any moral weakness. Additionally, it is not something that an individual can merely "snap out of" by choice.

Myth #3: People with Mental Health Conditions Are Likely to be Violent and/or Disruptive

This myth is reinforced by the way people with mental health conditions are portrayed in the movies, television, and news media, as frequently and randomly violent. Data from scholarly research does not support this sensationalized picture of people with psychological disabilities. Research further indicates that students with mental health conditions are no more disruptive than other students.

Should a student’s behavior seem threatening or be disruptive to class, it is important to remember that, like all University of Nebraska students, they are required to meet the University’s code of conduct. Therefore, it is appropriate to follow policy recommendations on handling these situations.

Myth #4: Recovery from Mental Health Conditions is Not Possible

For many decades, a mental health condition was thought to be permanent and untreatable. As a result, people with mental health conditions were hospitalized to separate them from the rest of society. With the discovery of various medications to alleviate symptoms of mental illness, there has been a gradual evolution toward providing treatment and rehabilitation services in the community. Long-term studies have revealed that people with mental health conditions show genuine improvement over time and are able to lead stable, productive lives. Recovery rates are sited as ranging from 25% to 90%.

Myth #5: People with Mental Health Conditions Cannot Tolerate Stress

This myth oversimplifies the complex human response to stress. People with various medical conditions may find their symptoms exacerbated by high levels of stress. Furthermore, people vary substantially in what they view as stressful. Some people find unstructured schedules highly stressful, while others struggle with too much regimentation. Some people need solitude to focus and be productive, while others thrive on high levels of social contact and public visibility.
Therefore, whether or not a mental health condition is present, success in dealing with stress seems to depend most on how well an individual’s needs and daily life circumstances match.

VIII. Other Disabilities

A number of students registered at the University of Nebraska have disabilities that do not specifically fall into the major categories previously discussed. The degree to which these disabilities affect students academically varies widely. At times, it is the medication which is required to control symptoms that impairs a student’s academic performance, rather than the condition itself. Common side effects of medications include fatigue, memory loss, shortened attention span, loss of concentration, and drowsiness. The degree of impairment may also vary from time to time because of the nature of the disability or the medication that is taken. Some conditions are stable while others may be progressive.

Epilepsy

Most people who have epilepsy are now able to participate in activities such as sports and lead active, normal lives. Students who have epilepsy generally manage seizure activity through adequate rest, proper diet, and regular medication, and have few problems in the classroom.

The following is a short list of do's and don'ts included here so that the instructor will be prepared in the unlikely event that a seizure occurs during class.

1. Remain calm. Please keep in mind that other students will tend to mirror the emotional reaction of the instructor. Note: the seizure is painless.
2. Do not try to restrain the person. There is nothing you can do to stop the seizure once it has begun. It must run its course.
3. Clear the area around the individual so that he/she does not injure him/herself on hard or sharp objects. Try not to interfere with movements in any way.
4. Don’t force anything between the person’s teeth. If the person’s mouth is already opened, you might place a soft object like a handkerchief between the side teeth.
5. It isn’t generally necessary to call a doctor unless the attack is followed almost immediately by another major seizure or the seizure lasts more than ten minutes.
6. When the seizure is over, let the person rest if he/she needs to.
7. Turn the incident into a learning experience for the class. You might clarify that the seizure is not contagious and explain these steps.

Multiple Sclerosis
Multiple sclerosis (MS) is the number one cause of chronic disability among young adults. It may affect the student in a multitude of ways. Because MS most often occurs between the ages of 20 and 40, the college student with MS is apt to be currently adjusting to having a disability. Depending upon the degree to which the MS has progressed, the student’s mobility, speech, vision, and emotional state may be affected.

One of the most difficult aspects of MS is that the symptoms have a tendency to come and go but they continue to progress. "In between" periods may last for a few days to months in the early stages. When affected the student may appear as if intoxicated—slurred speech, staggering when walking, and unfocused eyes. Understanding the fluctuations that may occur in the student's behavior makes it easier to understand variations in classroom performance.

The physical adaptations required by the student with MS, if any, will vary from student to student, depending on functional limitation. The most common adaptations required have been discussed in previous sections.

**Fluctuating Symptoms**

Other conditions that may result in marked fluctuations of behavior and performance include muscular dystrophy, certain types of kidney problems that may necessitate dialysis, AIDS/HIV, cystic fibrosis, diabetes, and lupus.

**Pain**

Chronic pain may result in limitations in a student’s ability to sit for long periods of time in the classroom. In addition, there may be some loss of strength or difficulties standing, walking, climbing, kneeling, stooping, and carrying even mildly heavy objects. The onset of pain may increase with cold weather or sudden changes in temperature.

Students with chronic pain may need to stand or change positions intermittently during class. Therefore, they may ask to be seated within a part of the room where these movements will not be disruptive to the rest of the class or to the instructor. Severe pain may cause an increased number of absences for the student. He or she is still required to complete course assignments.

**Respiratory Disorders**

Some respiratory disorders can result in significant limitations to activities such as walking and
climbing. Persons with these disorders often show a limited tolerance to temperature changes or extremes in temperature, wet or humid conditions, fumes, dust, and smoke.

Medications

Some of the conditions described in this section require medication for control of symptoms. If an instructor has questions about the potential effect of any medications on the student’s academic performance, the student can probably provide this information. However, for confidentiality reasons, students always have the choice about what to disclose and not disclose.

Permission to Leave Class

Some disabilities result in the need to consume large amounts of fluids, to urinate more frequently than other students, to move about more than is possible in the classroom to relieve pain, or to take medication or give self-injections during a class period. As a result, the student may need to leave the classroom more frequently than other students.

Considerations for Hidden Disabilities

Many disabilities are obvious and the question then is one of degree of accommodation and assistance required. However, there are cases in which a faculty member would have no immediate way of knowing that a student has a disability. For example, a student with diabetes, bipolar disorder, or another chronic condition may deal with their disability every day but have no clear symptoms during the class period. Learning disabilities are another common example of non-visible conditions that may become clearer as the course proceeds. The frequency of various non-obvious disabilities is one reason an announcement is highly recommended at the beginning of each course (see Recommendations section).

Individuals do have the right to keep their disability confidential. For example, a student who is epileptic and on medication may not expect or need any adaptation and might not mention his/her condition to the professor. During a remission period, a student with multiple sclerosis may not feel the need to mention the condition. These judgments are up to each student depending on their current situation. Sometimes, however, the student’s condition will worsen during the term and they will feel the need to inform you at that time. Faculty members are also welcome to ask a specialist in the Service for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office for information about how a type of disability may affect a student’s academic needs or performance.
IX. Recommendations for All Courses

1. Please include this statement in your syllabus and read the statement in class as you discuss the syllabus. This approach indicates the willingness of the faculty member to provide assistance and preserves students’ privacy.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at your earliest time. Some aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way the course is taught, may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to help us determine appropriate academic accommodations. SSD (402-472-3787; https://www.unl.edu/ssd/home) typically recommends accommodations through an Individual Accommodation Plan (IAP). Any information you provide is private and confidential and is treated as such.

2. Confidentiality of all disability information is essential. At no time, should a class be informed, that a student has a disability, except at the student’s express request. All disability information, which the student gives to the faculty member, is to be used specifically for arranging reasonable accommodations for the course of study.

3. A detailed course syllabus, which can be made available before registration, is useful to many students with disabilities.

4. Clearly spell out expectations at the beginning of the course (e.g., grading, material to be covered, assignment due dates).

5. Scanning books can take up to three weeks to complete. So announce reading assignments well in advance for students who are using E-text or other alternative formats.

6. All students, including students with disabilities, will benefit if you start each lecture with an outline of material to be covered during that class period. Briefly summarizing key points at the conclusion of class aids students in clarifying their notes and delineating supporting information from the main ideas you wish them to remember.
7. Present new or technical vocabulary on the blackboard, an overhead, or in a handout. Providing examples may also convey greater meaning.

8. Give assignments both orally and in written form to avoid confusion.

9. Allow students to tape lectures for reviewing later.

10. Provide adequate opportunities for questions and answers, including review sessions.

11. For exams, supply students with study questions that demonstrate the format as well as the content of the test. Explain what constitutes a good answer and why.

12. Allow students with disabilities who require alternate testing formats to demonstrate mastery of course material by using methods appropriate to the student and the subject matter. For example, extended time limits for testing, taped exams, individually proctored exams in a separate room.

13. When a test is not designed to measure a student’s mastery of basic arithmetic or spelling, allow the use of simple calculators, scratch paper, and spellers’ dictionaries during exams.

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