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Faculty and Staff Guide to Reasonable Accommodations for Teaching Students with Disabilities

Mission Statement
Saint Leo University is a Catholic, liberal arts-based college serving people of all faiths. Rooted in the 1,500-year-old Benedictine tradition, the University seeks balanced growth in mind, body and spirit for all members of its community. On its home campus and many extension centers, Saint Leo University offers a practical, effective model for life and leadership in a challenging world; a model based on a steadfast moral consciousness that recognizes the dignity, value and gifts of all people.

To accomplish its mission, the University community creates a student-centered environment in which the love of learning is of prime importance. Members of the community are expected to examine and express their own values, listen respectfully to and respond to the opinions of others, serve the community in which they live, welcome others into their lives and care for all of God’s creations.

Ethical Standards
Faculty and staff are committed to upholding the highest ethical standards reflective of Saint Leo University’s values on behalf of all students. Confidentiality, respect, and a spirit of belonging foster academic and personal growth.

Faculty and staff shall:

Ensure that confidentiality is maintained with respect to communications and records (integrity)

Value the worth and dignity of every person (respect)

Not intentionally expose a student to embarrassment, deny a student’s legal rights, harass a student, or discriminate against a student on the basis of race, sex, religion or disability (respect)

Maintain honesty and consistency in all dealings (integrity)

Assist the student to achieve their potential (personal development)

Utilize resources of the University to meet the needs of the students and the University mission (responsible stewardship)

Foster a spirit of belonging, unity and interdependence based on mutual trust and respect (community)

Foster an awareness and responsiveness of the University community to the needs of the students with disabilities (community)
Continually further the knowledge of the needs of students with disabilities (excellence)

Be aware of and follow all the policies of the university (excellence)

Introduction

Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADA-AA) require that Saint Leo University make reasonable modifications to policies and practices and provide services to otherwise qualified students with disabilities.

In an effort to promote awareness and understanding, this document has been compiled and revised in 2000, 2007 and 2010 for use by the faculty and staff. In addition to this, there are other resources available such as the Policy and Procedure Manuals. A hard copy can be obtained from the Office of Disability Services or online at: www.saintleo.edu. From the main website, click on Campus Life, Learning Resource Center and then Disability Services.
The Accommodations Process

Identification & Accommodations Process

Student Desires Accommodation under ADA

Student self identifies and requests accommodations.

Student provides documentation to the ODS or campus contact.

Note: Campus contact forwards documentation to the Office of Disability Services.

If the disability is verified, the student receives a signed letter from the Office of Disability Services, specifying accommodations.

Student reads and signs the Rights & Responsibilities form.

Letter of Accommodation is sent to faculty/campus contact.

Student discusses letter with faculty.

Note: Student must request his/her letter each term for which he/she is enrolled.

Student does NOT provide documentation to the ODS.

If the disability is NOT verified, the student is NOT eligible to receive accommodations.
Effective Classroom Accommodations

**Faculty Responsibility**: Faculty members are usually the first to know that a student with a disability is in class. Students with disabilities are not required to register with the Office of Disability Services unless they request specific classroom accommodations as a result of their disability. At that point they are required to register with the Office of Disability Services.

It is when a student requests that a faculty member make accommodations to match the student’s disability, that the faculty member should refer the student to the Office of Disability Services. Once referred, the process of determining whether the student meets state and federal guidelines for a specific disability can begin. That determination is made only by the Office of Disability Services, which is the only agency at Saint Leo University designated to keep records of a student’s disability. Once documentation is provided, the student is officially registered with the Office of Disability Services as having a disability and letters of accommodation can then be distributed to faculty. The letter of accommodation is the letter of record verifying that the student is registered as a student with a disability.

Upon receipt of the letter, each faculty member is responsible for reviewing the information in the letter. At any point that faculty members have questions or concerns about the information contained in the letter, they should immediately contact the Assistant Director of Disability Services. All questions are to be directed to the Assistant Director of Disability Services and not the student. Until the Assistant Director is contacted, it can only be assumed that there are no questions with any particular student’s accommodations package.

Reasonable accommodation in the classroom is an individual civil right guaranteed by federal legislation (ADA-AA and Section 504). Once the accommodations are identified, the accommodations must be provided. The only option is how the accommodation will be provided. Most classroom accommodations are easy to arrange and will not take much time to administer. If, however, assistance is needed, faculty members should contact the Assistant Director of Disability Services. The Assistant Director will make the accommodation process simple and effective for both the student and the faculty. The issue of fairness and classroom accommodation is raised often. Classroom accommodations provide an opportunity for students with disabilities to compete on equal terms with other students in class. Individual accommodations are a civil right guaranteed under federal law. The accommodations prescribed through the Office of Disability Services are not frivolous or arbitrary. They are individually designed for each student based on appropriate documentation on file in the Office of Disability Services. Although accommodations may appear similar for many students, they are based on individualized need and disability documentation.

Accommodations necessary for ensuring complete access to and full participation in the educational process do not require the instructor to adjust evaluations of academic performance. Rather, the accommodations make it possible for a student with a disability to
truly learn the material presented and for an instructor to fairly evaluate the student’s understanding of the material. Examples are as follows:

- Priority seating in the classroom
- Change of classroom
- Faculty member standing facing the class when speaking
- Assistance in identifying a note taker
- Tape recording of lectures
- Use of scribes
- Use of sign language interpreters
- Exam delays
- Providing copies of overhead demonstrations and lecture notes
- Reduced course load
- Captioning or transcription work
- Enlarged print on exam questions or class materials
- Readers
- Use of computers in taking tests
- Alternative test formats
- Alternative access to material covered in a field trip
- Advanced copy of syllabus, textbook & course materials
- Extra time on tests, exams and quizzes
- Flexible attendance policies
- Tape-recording exam questions
- Tape-recording exam answers

**Faculty Rights**

Faculty members have the right to:

- Maintain academic standards for courses
- Determine course content and how it will be taught
- Confirm a student’s request for accommodations and ask for clarification about a specific accommodation with the Office of Disability Services
- Deny a request for accommodation if the student has not been approved for such accommodation
- Award grades appropriate to the level of the student’s demonstrated mastery of the material
- Fail a student who does not perform to passing standards

Faculty members do not have the right to:

- Refuse to provide an approved accommodation for a documented disability
- Challenge the legitimacy of a student’s disability
- Review a student’s documentation, including diagnostic data
**Failure to Accommodate:** The accommodations outlined by the Office of Disability Services are not optional and must be provided under two federal pieces of legislation (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504; and the ADA-AA). When questions arise about a specific accommodation, please contact the Assistant Director of Disability Service. Remember, we are always available for discussion or assistance with implementation of the accommodation once the faculty member receives the letter.

**Student Responsibility:** Students with disabilities are responsible for ensuring that Saint Leo University is aware of their disabilities that require accommodations in the educational process. Students with disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services, as it is the only designated campus agency responsible for classroom accommodations. To receive accommodations, students with disabilities first must register with the Office of Disability Services in the Student Activities Building, second floor, Learning Resource Center.

After providing appropriate documentation of a disability that requires accommodation and consulting with the Assistant Director of Disability Services, the student is registered with the Office of Disability Services. Once registered, students should contact the ODS at the beginning of each term to request a copy of their letter be sent to faculty. Students are responsible for requesting accommodations in a timely manner so that instructors may plan for those accommodations. It will be necessary for the student and faculty member to work out the implementation of the accommodations.

Students with disabilities must maintain the same responsibility for their education as students who are non-disabled. This includes achieving the same academic standards, attending class, maintaining appropriate behavior, and providing timely notification of individual needs. Students who want to request classroom accommodations should register with the Office of Disability Services and:

- Request a letter of accommodation each semester/term
- Arrange for the implementation of the accommodation
- Report to the Assistant Director of Disability Services any problems with the provision of accommodations by instructors.
Overview – General Classroom Access

Specific suggestions for teaching students with disabilities are offered in the sections devoted to each disability. Here are some general considerations to keep in mind.

**Faculty-Student Responsibilities:** Students with disabilities bear the primary responsibility of notifying Saint Leo University of their disabilities. If a student needs an approved accommodation, faculty members are responsible for making those accommodations.

**Faculty-Student Relationships:** Dialogue between the student and instructor is essential early in the term, and follow-up meetings are recommended. Faculty should not feel apprehensive about discussing a student’s needs as they relate to the course. There is no reason to avoid using terms that refer to the disability, such as “blind,” “see,” or “walk.” However, care should be taken to avoid generalizing a particular limitation to other aspects of a student’s functioning. Often, for example, people in wheelchairs are spoken to loudly, as if they were deaf. The student probably will have had some experience with the kind of initial uneasiness instructors may bring to the relationship. The student’s own suggestions, based on experience with the disability and with school work, are invaluable in accommodating disabilities in college.

**Attendance and Promptness:** Flexible attendance policies may be appropriate accommodations for some students. Students using wheelchairs or other assisting devices may encounter obstacles or barriers in getting to class on time. Others may have periodic or irregular difficulties, either from the disability or from medication. Flexibility in applying attendance and promptness rules to such students is helpful, and will be requested in the accommodation letter.

**Classroom Adjustments – Universal Design:** Universal Design (UD) is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. The intent of UD is to simplify life for everyone by making products, communications, and the built environment more usable by as many people as possible at little or no extra cost. UD benefits people of all ages and abilities. A wide range of students with disabilities may be assisted in the classroom by the following: making book lists and syllabi available prior to the beginning of the term, making appropriate seating arrangements, provide printed or web-based materials that cover material given orally, use captioned videotapes, use accessible WebPages, speaking only when directly facing the class, providing PowerPoint lecture notes, and writing key lecture points and assignments on the chalkboard or an overhead projector. Remember that beards and mustaches that cover the mouth often interfere with a student’s ability to speech read.
**Power Point, Notes on Web:** Instructors may see an accommodation listed on the accommodation letter for students to have access to classroom materials. The accommodation will appear on the accommodation memo as:

X_ Instructor’s Notes/Power Points

Students with this accommodation generally have a processing disorder that interferes with their ability to take notes in class. The access to materials is intended to supplement their class notes and to serve as a guide as the student listens to lectures. Classroom materials include overhead projections, transparencies, and PowerPoint presentations. Classroom materials do not include the instructor’s personal notes used in lecture. Access to these materials should be made before the class meets. The student must contact you during office hours to determine the most efficient way for the student to receive this information (i.e., making copies of overheads, emailing PowerPoint presentations). Many instructors are posting PowerPoint presentations on their class websites. This offers easy access to classroom materials for students with disabilities and can enhance the learning experience for all students.

**Alternatives to Taking Notes:** Students who cannot take notes or who have difficulty taking notes adequately may use any combination of classroom accommodations, such as tape-recorders, note-takers, copies of lecture notes and/or overheads, and copies of classmates’ notes. Students must ask permission of the instructor to tape-record a class. If taping a class is the only reasonable accommodation, the instructor must give permission for the student to tape the class. Students and instructors should discuss how to exchange class materials, ideally prior to class.

**Testing and Evaluation:** Depending on the disability, the student may require oral administration of examinations, use of readers and/or scribes, extensions of time for the duration of exams, modification of test formats or, in some cases, make-up or take-home exams. This may entail recognizing when a student has missed material (particularly in the case of those students with hearing and/or vision impairments) because the material was not interpreted literally or visual aids were not effectively described. If a student has missed or misunderstood the material because of these problems, test answers will demonstrate the incomplete knowledge. Instructors should apply the same standards to students with disabilities as they apply to other students in evaluating their work and assigning grades.

**Functional Problems:** In addition to the adjustments discussed in detail for each category of disability, some understanding is required in working with more subtle and sometimes unexpected manifestations of a disability. Chronic weakness and fatigue characterize some disabilities and medical conditions. Drowsiness, fatigue, or impairments of memory or speech may result from prescribed medications. Such difficulties and interferences with the student’s ability to perform should be distinguished from the apathetic behavior it may resemble.

**Program Accessibility:** All events that are part of structured class activities are to be planned in accessible places. Workshops, labs, off-campus events, meetings, trips, conferences and any other program, service or activity must be open and accessible to all students. If necessary, move the program to an area that is accessible. When planning
events, on and off campus, please make sure that all individuals have access. If your office is not accessible, it is expected that you will make alternate arrangements to meet with students.

**Syllabus Information:** One of the most crucial parts of any class is the syllabus. It is in the syllabus that instructor expectations are made known to each student. Students, who are blind, visually impaired, or learning disabled, may not be able to access the syllabus in the traditional format. A good way to avoid a possible problem is to include a statement on all future syllabi that notifies each student that the syllabus is available in alternate format upon request. You should also make this statement in class as part of your syllabus review. In most cases you will only need to enlarge the syllabus or change the font size when printing. If the larger font size is used, ask the student if a font size of 14 or 18 would be appropriate. If changing the font size is not possible, then enlarge each page on a copy machine, by changing paper from 8.5 x 11 to 11 x 17 and enlarging 144 percent. If a student requests a Braille copy of the syllabus, contact the Office of Disability Services for assistance.

The Assistant Director of Disability Services is always trying to reach out to students with disabilities and inform them of the services available. You can help in that mission by adding the following sentence to each syllabus produced for your class. You should also read this statement aloud as part of your syllabus review. **Students with disabilities, who may need accommodation, should contact Amanda Becker in the Office of Disability Services at (352) 588-8464, or email adaoffice@saintleo.edu.** The Office of Disability Services is located in the Learning Resource Center (second floor of the Student Activities Building) in Room 207.
Dispelling Myths

The similarities of students with disabilities to students without disabilities are greater than their differences. The first step in teaching students with disabilities is easy: treat them as you would all students. After all, they come to college for the same reasons others come and they bring with them the same range of backgrounds, intelligence, and scholastic skills. These truths are easier stated than acted upon. The best of intentions may be derailed by attitudes that dramatically distort our interaction with people who have disabilities.

Attitudes that distort our relationships with people who have disabilities may occur without malice, and are often the result of fears, guilt or inexperience with individuals who have disabilities. Distorting attitudes can be devastating to a person with disabilities. Unfounded or inappropriate attitudes reduce or bias our expectations of individual performance.

Defining a person by the disability, not by the person’s humanness, leads us to isolate and segregate people with disabilities. It also hurts their pride and damages their confidence. Unfounded or inappropriate attitudes can be more disabling than any diagnosed disability.

Stereotyping prevails on campus, as it does in the larger society. In college, though, it not only perpetuates the prejudicial treatment encountered by people with disabilities elsewhere, but it also may undermine scholastic performance or access to educational opportunities. Stereotyping also reinforces barriers that students with disabilities are trying to overcome at critical junctures in their lives.

Revising our perceptions and attitudes is the first step in accommodating students with disabilities. It is vital to remember that similarities among all students are much more significant than their differences: they are all, first and foremost, students.
Preferred Language

People term “handicapped” has fallen into disuse and should be avoided. The terms “able-bodied,” with disabilities prefer that people focus on their individuality, not their disability. The “physically challenged,” and “differently abled” also are discouraged. The following are some recommendations:

Never use the article THE with an adjective to describe people with disabilities.

The preferred usage, “people with disabilities,” stresses the essential humanity of individuals and avoids objectification.

Not the deaf
Use people who are deaf

Not the visually impaired
Use people who are visually impaired

Not the disabled
Use people with disabilities

If it is appropriate to refer to a person’s disability, choose the correct terminology for the specific disability.

Appropriate Terminology: The following terms are examples of appropriate terms to describe people with disabilities: People who are blind; visually impaired; deaf; hard of hearing; mentally retarded; non-disabled; physically disabled. People with or who have Cerebral Palsy; Down Syndrome; mental illness; paraplegia; quadriplegia; partial hearing loss; seizure disorder; specific learning disability; speech impairment.

Be careful not to imply that people with disabilities are to be pitied, feared, or ignored, or that they are somehow more heroic, courageous, patient, or “special” than others. Never use the term “normal” in contrast.

Not Trina held her own while swimming with normal students.
Use Trina qualified for her “Swimmer” certificate.

A person in a wheelchair is a “wheelchair user” or “uses a wheelchair.” Avoid terms that define the disability as a limitation such as “confined to a wheelchair” or “wheelchair-bound.” A wheelchair liberates; it doesn’t confine.

Never use the terms “victim” or “sufferer” to refer to a person who has had a disease or disability. This term dehumanizes the person and emphasizes powerlessness.

Not victim of AIDS or AIDS sufferer
Use person with HIV/AIDS
Not polio victim

Use had polio

*From Campus Guidelines for Using Inclusive Language and Illustrations in University Publication – University of Maryland at College Park*.
Identifying Disabilities

Each student brings a unique set of experiences to college, and a student with disabilities is no exception. While many students learn in different ways, their differences do not imply inferior capacities. There is no need to reduce course requirements for students with disabilities. However, special accommodations may be needed.

Determining that a student has a disability may not always be a simple process. Visible disabilities are noticeable through casual observation. For example, use of a cane, wheelchair, or crutches may indicate that an individual has a physical impairment. Other students may have hidden disabilities, such as hearing impairments, legal blindness, cardiac conditions, learning disabilities, cancer, diabetes, kidney disease, psychiatric or seizure disorders, among others. Such disabilities are not visible; therefore they are considered hidden.

Finally, there are students with multiple disabilities, which are caused by such primary conditions as muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, or traumatic brain injury. Depending on the nature and progression of the condition or injury, it may be accompanied by a secondary impairment, such as difficulty with mobility, vision, hearing, speech, or coordination. These secondary impairments may, in fact, pose greater difficulties than the primary disabilities.

Some students with disabilities will identify themselves as such by contacting the Office of Disability Services and their instructors before or early in the semester. Others, especially those with “hidden” disabilities, may not identify themselves because of their fear of others’ disbelief either about the legitimacy of their disability or about the need for accommodation. Such students, in the absence of instructional adjustment, may run into trouble in their college work. In a panic they may identify themselves as disabled just before an examination and expect instant attention to their needs. If that happens, the faculty member should contact the Assistant Director of Disability Services for assistance in dealing with unanticipated accommodations.

The faculty member must make an announcement at the beginning of the term and put a statement in the syllabus inviting students with disabilities to schedule appointments. If you suspect that a student has a disability, discuss your concern with the student or the Assistant Director of Disability Services. You may find such an approach awkward, at least initially, but the end result will be beneficial if the student’s circumstances are made known at the very outset.

If a disability is brought to your attention and the student has not registered with the Office of Disability Services, the instructor should refer the student to the Office of Disability Services.
Confidentiality of Student Records

1. Student records maintained in the Office of Disability Services are deemed confidential. Only that information which is of a public record will be released without the written consent of the student involved. Public information includes: name, local address, home address, local telephone number, and electronic mail address.

2. Information contained in student records except that data which is public information will be open for inspection only by the student, or parents of dependent students as defined by the Internal Revenue Service, and designated members of the professional staff of the University.

3. The Assistant Director of Disability Services is the official custodian of the records in the Office of Disability Services and will designate those staff members who have access to student records.

4. Student records are not maintained longer than seven years after departure from the University.

5. All policies and procedures governing the maintenance and release of student records in the Office of Disability Services are made public and are subject to review periodically by appropriate administrative groups.
Disabilities

Defining Disability: To be considered disabled under either the ADA-AA or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a person must have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a “major life activity,” have a record of such an impairment, or be regarded as having such an impairment.

Each student requesting classroom accommodations must present appropriate documentation to the Office of Disability Services. Listed below are the five categories of disabilities as outlined by the State of Florida.

Visual Disability: A visual disability is considered any disorder in the structure and function of the eye as manifested by at least one of the following: (1) visual acuity of 20/70 or less in the better eye after the best possible correction, (2) a peripheral field so constricted that it affects one’s ability to function in an educational setting, and (3) a progressive loss of vision that may affect one’s ability to function in an educational setting. Examples include, but are not limited to, cataracts, glaucoma, nystagmus, retinal detachment, retinitis pigmentosa, and strabismus.

Physical Disability: Conditions that impact the musculoskeletal, connective tissue, or neurosmuscular system are physically disabling conditions which may require an adaptation to one’s school environment or curriculum. Examples include, but are not limited to, cerebral palsy, absence of some body member, clubfoot, nerve damage to the hand and arm, cardiovascular attack (CVA), head injury, spinal cord injury, arthritis, rheumatism, intracranial hemorrhage, embolism, thrombosis, poliomyelitis, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson’s disease, congenital malformation of brain cellular tissue, and physical disorders pertaining to muscles and nerves (usually as a result of disease or birth defect, including, but not limited to, muscular dystrophy and congenital muscle disorders).

Hearing Disability: A hearing disability is considered any hearing loss of 30 decibels or greater, pure tone average of 500, 1000, 2000 Hz, ANSI, unaided, in the better ear. Examples include, but are not limited to, conductive hearing impairment or deafness, sensorineural hearing impairment or deafness, high or low tone hearing loss or deafness, and acoustic trauma hearing loss or deafness.

Specific Learning Disabilities: Specific learning disabilities are any disorder in one or more of the basic psychological or neurological processes involved in understanding or in using spoken or written language. Disorders may be manifested in listening, thinking, reading, writing, spelling, or performing arithmetic calculations. Examples include dyslexia, dysgraphia, dysphasia, dyscalculia, and other learning disabilities in the basic psychological or neurological process. Such disorders do not include learning problems due primarily to visual, hearing, or motor handicaps; mental retardation; emotional disturbance; or an environmental deprivation.

Other Disabilities: There are numerous other disabilities. Only a few are listed below, therefore the full range of disabilities is not limited to those listed below.
Speech Disability: Disorders of language, articulation, fluency or voice that interfere with communication, pre-academic or academic learning, vocational training, or social adjustment are considered speech disabilities. Examples include, but are not limited to, cleft lip and/or palate with speech impairment, stammering, stuttering, laryngectomy and aphasia.

Mental, Psychoneurotic or Personality Disorders: Mental, psychoneurotic, or personality disorders include any emotional or behavioral neurosis that has, or could create, an unstable condition in the individual’s ability to learn.

Cardiovascular and Circulatory Conditions: Cardiovascular and circulatory conditions include, but are not limited to, congenital heart disease, rheumatic fever, chronic rheumatic heart disease, arteriosclerotic and degenerative heart disease.

Blood Serum Disorders: Blood serum disorders include hemophilia, sickle cell anemia, HIV/AIDS, and disorders where the cause is unknown.

Respiratory Disorders: Respiratory disorders include tuberculosis of the respiratory system, emphysema, pneumoconiosis, asbestosis, bronchiectasis, chronic bronchitis, sinusitis, and other diseases of the respiratory system. The preceding list are only a few of the conditions listed in the other category. Other conditions that require an administrative or academic adjustment such as class schedules, parking and course adjustments, and do not fit into any of the above categories may also qualify.
Teaching Students with Learning Disabilities

A learning disability is any of a diverse group of conditions that cause significant difficulties in perceiving and/or processing auditory, visual and/or spatial information. Of presumed neurological origin, it covers disorders that impair such functions as reading (dyslexia), writing (dysgraphia) and mathematical calculation (dyscalculia). No two students have exactly the same pattern or type of learning variance associated with a given learning disability.

A student may have average to superior intelligence and adequate sensory and motor systems, and yet have a learning disability. The extraordinary achievements of numerous people with learning disabilities confirm the coexistence of learning disabilities and average to superior intelligence. But learning disabilities only recently have been identified, and these conditions still often go undiagnosed. That is why many people often mistakenly believe a learning disability is an intellectual deficiency, which it emphatically is not.

In fact, the marked discrepancy between intellectual capacity and achievement is what characterizes a learning disability. Documentation of the disability is required not only to establish the need for special services, but also to determine the kind of special services that are indicated. Students who are believed to have a learning disability that has not been previously or reliably identified should be referred to the Director of Disability Services.

While a learning disability cannot be “cured,” its impact can be lessened through instructional intervention and compensatory strategies. In general, a variety of instructional modes enhance learning for students with learning disabilities, by allowing them to master material that may be inaccessible in one particular form.

In working with a student with a learning disability, a faculty member should try to identify the nature of the student’s disability in order to determine the kind of strategies that the student may need. Drawing upon the student’s own experience offers invaluable clues to the types of adaptations that work.
**Characteristics:** Students with specific learning disabilities may exhibit some of the following characteristics:

- Inappropriate social behavior
- Attention disorders
- Inconsistent performance
- Failure to memorize basic number facts
- Disorientation in time
- Poor note taking skills
- Passive learning style
- Poor handwriting, letter and number formation
- Difficulty shifting from one task to another
- Poor strategies for monitoring errors
- Impulsivity
- Poor listening skills
- Poor recall
- Test anxiety
- Disorganization
- Poor study habits
- Difficulty following directions
- Confusion of mathematical symbols
- Poor vocabulary
- Difficulty aligning numbers

Despite learning problems, students with specific learning disabilities still have a number of talents and gifts and are of average to superior intelligence. With support, motivation, and appropriate intervention, they can successfully complete the work required for a college degree. The extraordinary achievements of numerous people with learning disabilities evidence the coexistence of learning disabilities and superior intelligence. Learning disabilities still often go undiagnosed.

The marked discrepancy between intellectual capacity and achievement is what characterizes a learning disability. Documentation of the disability is required not only to establish the need for special services but also to determine the kind of special services that are needed.

While a learning disability can not be “cured,” its impact can be lessened through instructional interventions and compensatory strategies. In general, a variety of instructional modes enhances learning for students with learning disabilities.

**Educational Implications:** It is important to note that the effects of a specific learning disability on academic performance result from long-term retrieval, short-term memory, processing speed, auditory, visual, and/or other cognitive processing deficits. Students with these disabilities are not less intelligent than other students nor are they lazy. The student with a specific learning disability may exhibit problems in one or more of the following areas:
**Reading:** Slow reading rate and/or difficulty in modifying reading rate in accordance with the difficulty of material; poor comprehension and retention of written material; difficulty in identifying important/relevant points or themes; inability to distinguish between sounds, creating poor mastery of phonics, confusion of similar words, and difficulty integrating new vocabulary; poor tracking skills resulting in skipped words, phrases or lines and losing place on the page.

**Written language:** The disability may be manifested as difficulty with sentence structure resulting in incomplete sentences, poor use of grammar, and missing inflectional endings; frequent spelling errors, transpositions of letters, omissions or substitutions of sounds especially in unfamiliar vocabulary; inability to copy correctly from written information; poor penmanship, poorly formed letters, incorrect use of capitalization, trouble with spacing, and overly-large handwriting.

**Oral language:** Inability to concentrate on and comprehend oral language; difficulty in orally expressing ideas and/or in proper sequencing of events; difficulty in managing more than one task at a time or retaining a list of information; and inability to distinguish between sounds or combination of sounds.

**Mathematics:** The disability may be manifested as incomplete mastery of basic facts resulting in poor comprehension and computation; number reversals, confusion of operational signals, difficulty recalling the sequence of operational processes; difficulty understanding and retaining abstract concepts; poor comprehension of word problems and limited understanding of proportions or relative size; and reasoning deficits and inability to eliminate irrelevant data in applied problems.

**Organization:** Inability to manage time effectively; difficulty staying on or completing tasks; tendency to work slowly, rush through work carelessly, or impulsively start before listening to or reading instructions; deficiency in listening to lectures and taking notes at the same time; inability to identify key points in a lecture or chapter; and short attention span.

**Gross and fine motor coordination:** Poor coordination, slow motor movements, and noticeable problems in using equipment/tools; and motor weakness in both upper and lower body posture.

**Social:** Avoids eye contact and speaks softly; inability to read and respond to verbal/non-verbal cues and voice inflections; and tendency to stand too close when talking to others or communicates too loudly; and inappropriate comments.
**Strategies:** Once a faculty member knows the nature of an individual student’s disability, the faculty member may find the following strategies helpful.

**Learning Disability that Affects Auditory Processing:** Some students with LD may experience difficulty integrating information presented orally, so they may not be able to follow the logic and organization of a lecture. For these students a faculty member could:

- Provide students with a course syllabus at the start of the semester.
- Permit students to tape a class, so the students may listen to the class discussion more than once.
- Outline class presentations, and write new terms and key points on the chalkboard.
- Allow students to use notetakers.
- Repeat and summarize segments of each presentation and review its entirety.
- Provide students with a written copy of major points, models, outlines, etc.

In dealing with abstract concepts, paraphrase them in specific terms, and illustrate them with concrete examples, personal experiences, hands-on models and such visual tools as charts and graphs.

**Learning Disability that Affects Visual Processing:** Reading may be slow and deliberate, and comprehension may be impaired for a student with a learning disability, particularly when dealing with large quantities of material. For such a student, comprehension and speed are expedited dramatically with the addition of auditory input. Read aloud material that is written on the chalkboard or that is given in handouts or transparencies.

In addition, an instructor may:

- Make required book lists available prior to the first day of class to allow students to begin their reading early or to have texts put on tape.
- Provide students with chapter outlines or study guides that cue them to key points in their readings.

**Learning Disabilities that Affect Memory Processing:** Memory or sequencing difficulties may impede the execution of complicated directions for a student with a learning disability. To accommodate, an instructor may:

- Keep oral instructions concise and reinforce them with a brief cue word.
- Repeat or re-word complicated directions.

**Note-Taking Alternatives:** Some students with learning disabilities need alternative ways to take notes because they cannot write effectively or assimilate, remember, and organize the material while listening to a lecture. To accommodate an instructor could:

- Allow note takers to accompany the student to class.
- Permit tape recordings or make notes available for material not found in texts or other accessible sources.
- Assist the student, if necessary, in arranging to borrow classmates’ notes.
- Provide copies of notes and transparencies.
Participation: It is helpful to determine the student’s ability to participate in classroom activities. While many students with learning disabilities are highly articulate, some have severe difficulty in talking, responding, or reading in front of groups. Stress of performing can exacerbate the effect of the learning disability on the student’s performance.

Specialized Limitations: Some students with learning disabilities may have poor coordination, or trouble judging distance or differentiating between left and right. Such devices as demonstrations from the student’s right-left frame of reference, and the use of color codes or supplementary symbols, may overcome the student’s difficulties with perceptions.

The Science Laboratory: The science laboratory can be especially overwhelming for students with learning disabilities. Unfamiliar equipment, exact measurement, and multi-step procedures may demand precisely those skills that are most difficult for students with some learning disabilities. To accommodate an instructor could:

- Provide an individual orientation to the laboratory and equipment to minimize student anxiety.
- Label equipment, tools, and materials.
- Make available to a student cue cards or labels designating the steps of a procedure to expedite the mastering of a sequence.
- Use specialized adaptive equipment to help with exact measurements.

Learning Disabilities that Affect Writing Processing: Some students with a learning disability have difficulty organizing written material or may misspell words. Allowing a student to have access to appropriate tools may help students with learning disabilities more clearly express their comprehension of the course material.

- Permit a student to use a dictionary during a test.
- Allow a student to use a computer and a spell-checking program.

Learning Disabilities that Affect Behavior or Interactions: Because of perceptual difficulties, some students with learning disabilities are slow to grasp social cues and are slow to respond appropriately. They may lack social skills, or they may have difficulty sustaining focused attention. If such a problem results in classroom interruptions or other disruptions, it is advisable for an instructor to discuss the matter privately with the student or with the Assistant Director of Disability Services.

Learning Disabilities Requiring Accommodations during Evaluations: When learning disability affects performance during evaluations, accommodations should be made to evaluation methods and procedures. An instructor might:

- Allow students to take examinations in a separate, quiet room with a proctor. Students with disabilities are especially sensitive to distractions. Testing services are available through the Office of Disability Services.
- Grant time extensions on exams and written assignments when there are significant demands on reading and writing skills.
- Avoid overly complicated language in exam questions, and clearly separate them in their spacing on the exam sheet. For a student with perceptual deficits, for whom transferring answers is especially difficult, avoid using answer sheets, especially computer forms.
• Try not to test on material just presented, since students with learning disabilities generally require more time to assimilate new knowledge.
• Permit use of a dictionary, a word-processing program, and proofreader or, in mathematics and science, a calculator. In mathematics, the student may understand the concept, but may make errors by incorrectly aligning numbers or confusing mathematical facts. A student may need to use grid paper or other special materials.
• When necessary, allow students to use a reader, scribe, word processor, tape recorder or typewriter.
• Consider alternative test designs. Some students with learning disabilities may find essay formats difficult. A student with a perceptual impairment may have trouble with tests requiring students to match different items.
• Consider alternative or supplementary assignments to evaluate a student's mastery of the course material. Taped interviews, slide presentations, photographic essays, or handmade models may lead to more accurate evaluations.
Teaching Students with Attention Deficit

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD) is a neurological disorder that is characterized by chronic difficulty in sustaining attention and significantly impacts learning and behavior.

**Characteristics:** A comprehensive assessment assists in determining both the severity of the impairment and the best accommodations for an individual student. ADD/ADHD may present many of the same symptoms as academic difficulties or co-occur with other disorders, such as Learning Disabilities, Anxiety Disorders, or Depression. For these reasons, the documentation requirements for students with ADD/ADHD include a comprehensive psycho-educational evaluation by a psychologist. The most common accommodations for students with ADD/ADHD are a low distraction environment, extra time on tests, a reduced course load, tape recording of lectures, and obtaining copies of overheads prior to lectures. Many students find that individualized coaching in time management, study skill, and organizational skills are necessary for their academic success.

Some persons with ADD/ADHD also may display hyperactivity as evidenced by excessive physical movement and difficulty in sitting still for long periods of time or impulsivity as evidenced by poor planning and poor attention to details. ADD/ADHD is often first diagnosed during childhood, but many people with less severe symptoms and minimal hyperactivity are not diagnosed until late adolescence or adulthood. For many years, it was thought that ADD/ADHD was “outgrown” after adolescence. We now know that it is a lifelong disability, but that the severity of symptoms, especially physical hyperactivity, may decrease after childhood.

**Educational implications:** The impact of ADD/ADHD varies from individual to individual. Within the educational setting, it can range from a minimal impairment that can be managed easily, to a severe impairment that impacts both academic and interpersonal success and requires treatment with medication. In college, the student’s ADD/ADHD may impact his or her organization and efficiency in areas such as reading, listening to directions or lectures, taking notes, prioritizing tasks, completing assignments, and taking tests. Students with ADD/ADHD may have difficulty adhering to schedules and expectations, unless these are communicated clearly both verbally and in writing. Some will display an impulsivity and impatience in their interpersonal interactions that may make communication with instructors and peers problematic.

**Strategies:** The way a class is organized and material is presented can be critical for a student with ADD/ADHD. Students with ADD/ADHD often lack the ability to organize and structure information or activities. A course syllabus with all requirements, materials, and deadlines clearly marked will assist the student with meeting those requirements. A graphic or bullet format for presenting information with key terms and dates highlighted or underlined may be helpful for many students with ADD/ADHD. When lecturing, an instructor could provide advanced organizers and verbal cues in the form of introductory statements, transition statements, and concluding summaries. Most students with ADD/ADHD will benefit from sitting near the front of the class where they can stay focused and mentally engaged in the lecture with fewer distractions. Instructors should explicitly state both
verbally and in writing what is expected of students in terms of quality, quantity, and deadlines for all assignments. In addition, instructors could encourage students to meet with them during office hours to review deadlines and expectations in a quieter and less distracting environment.

Teaching Students with Visual Disabilities

Visual impairment is the loss of visual function of such magnitude that special aids and use of other senses are necessary to achieve performance ordinarily directed by visual clues. Visual impairment varies greatly. Persons are considered legally blind when visual acuity is 20/70 or less in the better eye with the use of corrective lenses. Most persons who are legally blind have some vision. Others who have low vision may rely on residual vision with the use of adaptive equipment. Persons who are totally blind may have visual memory, the utility of which varies depending on the age when vision was lost. Whatever the degree of impairment, students who are visually impaired should be expected to participate fully in classroom activities, such as discussions and group work. To record notes, some students will use lap-top computers or computerized Braille writers. Students who are visually impaired may encounter difficulties in laboratory classes, field trips, and internships. With planning and adaptive equipment, these difficulties can be minimized.

**Educational implications:** The student who is visually impaired may exhibit problems in one or more of the following areas:
Inability to utilize visuals such as films, graphs, demonstrations, and written materials; difficulty in taking traditional paper and pencil tests; need for a longer period of time to complete assignments; difficulty in focusing on small-group discussion when there is more than one group functioning; and need for a variety of low-vision aids.

**Strategies**

**Before or early in the semester:** Instructors can accommodate for students with visual impairments before or early in the semester by:
- Providing reading lists or syllabi in advance to allow time for arrangements to be made (e.g., the taping or Brailleing of texts).
- With cooperation from the Office of Disability Services, assisting the student in finding readers, notetakers, or tutors, or teaming the student with a sighted classmate or laboratory assistant.
- Reserving front row seats for low-vision students; making sure seats are not near windows (glare can make it hard for a student to see the instructor or the board). If a guide dog is used, the dog will be highly disciplined and require little space.
- Verbalizing the content printed on transparencies or chalkboard notations.

**During the semester:** During the semester instructors can accommodate for students with visual impairments by:
- Facing the class when speaking.
- Conveying in spoken words whatever is put on the chalkboard and whatever other visual cues or graphic materials are used.
- Providing copies of all materials or requesting another student to write everything down for later transfer to tape or Braille.
- Permitting lectures to be taped and/or providing copies of lecture notes.
- Providing large-print copies of classroom materials by enlarging them on a photocopier, or print in at least 18 point using high-contrast, non-encumbered fonts.
- Being flexible with assignment deadlines.
- Planning field trips and special projects (e.g., internships) well in advance and alerting field supervisors to whatever adaptations may be needed.
- Considering an alternative assignment if a specific task is impossible for the student to carry out.

**Examinations and Evaluations:** Students should not be exempt from examinations or be expected to master less content or achieve a lower level of scholastic skills because of a visual impairment. Alternative means of assessing understanding of the material may be necessary, however. The students themselves, because of their experience in previous learning situations, and the Assistant Director of Disability Services may offer suggestions on testing and evaluation strategies. The most expedient devices are alternative examinations (e.g., oral, large-print, Braille or taped), time extensions for exams, and the use of such aids as print enlargers, specialized computer programs, or tape recorders. The Assistant Director of Disability Services is available to assist with the administration of classroom exams.

Other adaptations suited to specific situations, such as tactile materials in presenting diagrams or illustrations in certain subjects, may be helpful.

### Teaching Students with Physical Disabilities

A wide range of conditions may limit mobility and/or hand functions. Among the most common permanent disorders are musculoskeletal disabilities, such as partial or total paralysis, amputation or severe injury, arthritis, active sickle cell disease, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, and cerebral palsy. Additionally, health impairments (e.g., cancer, HIV/AIDS, cystic fibrosis, respiratory and cardiac diseases) may be debilitating and, consequently, affect mobility. These conditions also may impair the strength, speed, endurance, coordination, and dexterity necessary for proper hand function. Conditions such as cerebral palsy often involve sensory and speech dysfunction. While the degree of disability varies, students may have difficulty getting to or from class, performing in class, or managing out-of-class tests and assignments.

**Educational implications:** A student with a physical disability may exhibit a problem in one or more of the following areas:
- Difficulty moving from one location to another; impaired writing and/or speaking due to the physical disability; inability to sit, stand, or walk for prolonged periods of time; difficulty participating in classes involving physical activity; needs special assistance in lab situations, difficulty in taking traditional paper and pencil test; and requires additional time to move from class to class.

### Strategies
**Going to and from Classes**: Physical access to classrooms is a major concern of students who have physical disabilities. Those who use wheelchairs, braces, crutches, canes, or prostheses, or who fatigue easily, find it difficult to move about, especially within the time constraints imposed by class schedules. Occasional lateness may be unavoidable. Tardiness or absence may be caused by transportation problems, inclement weather, elevator or wheelchair breakdown, or the need to wait for physicians’ appointments. Leaving a class may pose similar problems, especially in cases of emergency. Instructors may accommodate students with physical disabilities by:

- Considering whether physical access to a classroom is a problem before or early in the semester, discuss it with the student, and, if necessary, the Assistant Director of Disability Services.
- Being prepared to arrange for a change of classroom or building if the classroom or building is not accessible to students with mobility impairments; being prepared to move class temporarily if an elevator is out of service.
- Becoming familiar with the building’s emergency evacuation plan and assuring that it is manageable for students who have mobility impairments.

Some courses and classrooms present obstacles to the full participation of students who have physical disabilities. In seating such students, every effort should be made to integrate them into the class. Relegating students to a doorway, a side aisle or the back of the room should be avoided. Even such apparently insurmountable barriers as fixed seating may be overcome by arranging for a chair to be unbolted and removed to make room for a wheelchair.

Laboratory stations that are too high for wheelchair users to reach or transfer to, or that have insufficient under-counter knee clearance, may be modified or replaced by portable stations. Without such accommodations, the student may need the assistance of a personal assistant to perform the activities in a laboratory.

Students with hand-function limitations may have difficulties both in the laboratory and in the classroom, taking notes, completing in-class writing assignments, and taking written tests. The instructor should be prepared to utilize accommodations like the following:

- Permitting the use of a notetaker or tape recorder.
- Teaming the student with a laboratory partner or assistant. (Note: Educational assistants can be provided by the Assistant Director of Disability Services.)
- Allowing in-class written assignments to be completed out of class with the use of a scribe or other appropriate aid.

The Office of Disability Services will administer oral or taped tests, or will provide space and supervision for extended testing time. The Assistant Director of Disability Services is also available for alternative testing arrangements.

**Out-of-Class Assignments**: For students who have mobility impairments or hand-function impairments, using the library for reading or research assignments may present obstacles. The student may have to arrange with library personnel for access to card catalogs, book shelves, microfiche, and other equipment. Because the completion of required work may be delayed, the extension of deadlines and the use of “Incomplete” grades may be appropriate.
Off-campus assignments and fieldwork may pose similar problems of access to resources. Instructors should consider such accommodations as advance notice to students who rely on special transportation, the extension of deadlines, alternative assignments, and the use of “Incompletes.”

Teaching Students with Hearing Disabilities

Hearing impairment refers to a reduction in sensitivity to sound, even when amplified. Students who are deaf or hard of hearing may use a wide range of services depending on the language or communication system they use.

Some people who are deaf consider themselves members of a distinct linguistic and cultural group. However, many students with hearing impairments do not consider themselves part of a separate identity group, and work towards assimilation. Often people who are hearing impaired have been deaf for a long time. Some may live in a community or extended family that includes numerous other individuals who are hearing impaired. They may use American Sign Language as their first language. Therefore, members of this cultural group are bilingual, and English is their second language. As with any cultural group, people who are deaf have their own values, social norms and traditions. Because of this, faculty should be sensitive and attentive to cross-cultural information in the classroom setting. Some students who are hearing impaired may use American Sign Language interpreters in the classroom setting.

Indications that a student has a hearing loss may include a student’s straining to hear, intense concentration on the speaker’s face, use of loud or distorted speech, requests to repeat or spell words, and consistent failure to respond.

Hard of hearing refers to those individuals who may use speech, reading, and/or hearing aids to enhance oral communication. Hearing aids or amplification systems may include public address systems and transmitter/receiver systems with a clip-on microphone for the instructor. For those who use speech reading, only 30 to 40 percent of spoken English is comprehendible even for those who are highly skilled.

For people who are deaf or hard of hearing who choose to speak, their feedback mechanisms are limited; therefore, vocal control, volume, intonations, and articulations may be affected. These secondary effects are physical and should not be viewed as mental or intellectual weaknesses.

A variety of services are available to students who are hard of hearing. Students may use Signed English, American Sign Language, Cued Speech, or oral transliterators in the classroom—visual systems that enhance the reception and expression of spoken English.

Educational implications

General: Delayed development of the English language, affecting comprehension of written materials, test questions, speaking, and writing; increased dependence on visual cues; and inaccurate assessment of strengths and weaknesses based on standardized test scores.

Social: Social isolation, reluctance to ask for assistance or to have something repeated.

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Strategies: The following accommodations will assist many students who have hearing disabilities.

- Students who are deaf or hard of hearing will benefit from front-row seating. An unobstructed line of vision is necessary for students who use interpreters and for those who rely on speech reading and visual cues. If an interpreter is used, the student’s view should include the interpreter and professor. If the speaker is in a shadow or standing by a window with movement outside of it, the person who is speech reading may have difficulty seeing or attending to the speaker’s mouth.
- Instructors should keep their faces within view of the student and they should speak in natural tones.
- When an interpreter is being used by a student with a hearing impairment, an instructor should speak directly to and maintain eye contact with the student, not the interpreter.
- Recognize the processing time the interpreter takes to translate a message from its original language into another language (whether English to American Sign Language or vice versa). This processing time may cause a short delay in the student’s receiving information, asking questions, and/or offering comments. During translation lag times, the instructor should maintain a comfortable eye contact and postural regard with the student.
- Repeat questions and remarks of other people in the room.
- Use visual aids and chalkboard to reinforce spoken presentations when possible.
- If requested, assist the student with identifying a notetaker.
- When possible, provide the student with class outlines, lecture notes, lists of new technical terms and printed transcripts of audio and audiovisual materials.
- Do not hesitate to communicate with the student in writing when conveying important information (e.g., assignments, scheduling, deadlines).
- Do not obstruct the student's view of the interpreter by walking between them.
- If speaker has facial hair that covers part or all of the lips, remember that a student who speech reads will have a hard time following a lecture or class discussion.
- Use audiovisual equipment that provides good audio clarity.
- Try to reduce the amount of ambient noise in the environment, such as fans or background noise.

Teaching Students with Emotional/Social Disabilities

Students with emotional and social disabilities present some of the most difficult challenges to an instructor. Like some disabilities, these impairments may be hidden or latent, with little or no effect on learning. Unlike students with other kinds of disabilities, emotional disabilities may manifest themselves in behavior ranging from indifference to disruptiveness. Such conduct may make it difficult to remember that students with emotional and social impairments have little control over their disabilities.

Educational implications: One of the most common psychological impairments among students is depression. The condition may be temporary—a response to inordinate pressures at school, on the job, at home, or in one’s social life. Depression may be manifested as a pathological sense of hopelessness or helplessness which may provoke, in
its extreme, threats or attempts at suicide. It may appear as apathy, disinterest, inattention, impaired concentration, irritability, or as fatigue or other physical symptoms resulting from changes in eating, sleeping, or other living patterns.

Anxiety also is prevalent among students and may be the reaction to stress. A student need not be psychologically impaired to experience anxiety. Mild anxiety, in fact, may promote learning and improve functioning. Severe anxiety, however, may reduce concentration, distort perception, and weaken the learning process. Anxiety may manifest itself as withdrawal, constant talking, complaining, joking, crying, or extreme fear, sometimes to the point of panic. Bodily symptoms might include episodes of light-headedness or hyperventilation.

Students are susceptible to a myriad of other social and emotional disorders, including expressing inappropriate classroom behavior or inadequate performance on assignments. Some troubled students who are undergoing treatment take prescription medication to help control disturbing feelings, ideas, and behaviors. This medication might cause undesirable side effects, such as drowsiness or disorientation.

**Strategies:** In dealing with psychological conditions that impair the functioning of a student, follow the principles outlined for working with students with any disabilities in the Overview section of this handbook. If the behavior begins to affect others, your course, or your instructions, consider the suggestions below:

- Discuss inappropriate behavior with the student privately and forthrightly, delineating the limits of acceptable conduct. It may be appropriate to have a witness to your conversation.
- In your discussions with the student, do not attempt to diagnose or treat the psychological disorder, but only the student’s behavior in the course.
- If you sense that discussion would not be effective, or if the student approaches you for therapeutic help, refer the student to Counseling Services, the Health Center, or the Assistant Director of Disability Services.
- If abusive or threatening behavior occurs, refer the matter to the Assistant Director of Disability Services.

**Teaching Students with Other Disabilities**

Many other conditions may interfere with a student’s academic functioning. Some of their symptoms, like limited mobility or impaired vision, and the types of intervention required may resemble those covered elsewhere in this handbook. The general principles set forth in the Overview section apply, particularly the need to identify the disability and to discuss with the student both its manifestations and the required accommodations. Below are brief descriptions of some of the more prevalent disabilities among students, as well as recommended accommodations.

**Speech Impairments:** Speech impairments range from problems with articulation or voice strength, to complete loss of voice. They include difficulties in projection, as in chronic hoarseness and esophageal speech; fluency problems, as in stuttering; and nominal aphasia, which alters the articulation of particular words or terms.
Some of these difficulties can be managed by such mechanical devices as electronic “speaking” machines or computerized voice synthesizers. Others may be treated through speech therapy. Speech impairments can be aggravated by the anxiety inherent in oral communication in a group.

**Strategies:** When interacting with a student who has a speech impairment, instructors should consider using the following accommodations:

- Give students the opportunity, but do not compel them to speak in class.
- Permit students the time they require to express themselves, without unsolicited aid in filling in gaps in their speech. Don’t be reluctant to ask the student to repeat a statement. While waiting for a student to find a word or to complete an expression, maintain comfortable eye contact and posture with the student.
- Address students naturally and in a regular speaking voice. Don’t assume the “spread phenomenon”—that they cannot hear or comprehend.
- Consider course modifications, such as one-to-one presentations or the use of a computer with a voice synthesizer.

**HIV/AIDS:** HIV/AIDS is caused by a virus that destroys the body’s immune system. This condition leaves the person vulnerable to infections and cancers that can be avoided when the immune system is working normally. The virus is transmitted primarily through sexual contact or needle sharing with intravenous drug users. It is not transmitted through casual contact.

Although manifestations of HIV/AIDS are varied, depending on the particular infections or diseases the individual develops, extreme fatigue is a common symptom. Because of the different manifestations, classroom adaptations will likewise vary.

Students with HIV/AIDS may be afraid to reveal their condition because of the social stigma, fear, and/or misunderstanding surrounding this illness. It is therefore mandatory that confidentiality be maintained. In addition, if the issue should arise in class it is important for faculty to deal openly and non-judgmentally with it, and to foster an atmosphere of understanding.

For general classroom considerations, refer to the Overview section. If cancer is involved, see the section below. For particular impairments, see the applicable sections on specific disabilities.

**Cancer:** Because cancer can occur in almost any organ system of the body, the systems and particular disabling effects will vary greatly from one person to another. Some people experience visual problems, lack of balance and coordination, joint pains, backaches, headaches, abdominal pains, drowsiness, lethargy, difficulty in breathing and swallowing, weakness, bleeding, or anemia.

The primary treatments for cancer (i.e., radiation therapy, chemotherapy, surgery) may engender additional effects. Radiation therapy can cause violent nausea, drowsiness and fatigue, thus affecting academic functioning or attendance. Surgery can result in amputation, paralysis, sensory deficits, and language and memory problems.
For general accommodations, refer to the Overview section. For particular impairments, see the applicable sections on specific disabilities. Accommodations may be provided to deal with the medical symptoms of the student.

**Traumatic Brain Injury:** Students with traumatic brain injuries are becoming increasingly more prevalent. These students often exhibit one or more of the following symptoms: short-term memory problems, serious attention and concentration deficits, sensory dysfunction, cognitive deficits, behavior problems, problems of judgment and organization, anxiety attacks, and difficulties with mobility.

For general classroom considerations, refer to the Overview section and the sections on learning disabilities and/or seizure disorders.

**Respiratory Problems:** Many students have chronic breathing problems, the most common of which are bronchial asthma and emphysema. Respiratory problems are characterized by attacks of shortness of breath and difficulty in breathing, sometimes triggered by either physical or mental stress. Fatigue and difficulty climbing stairs also may be major problems, depending on the severity of the attacks. Frequent absence from class may occur, and hospitalization may be required when prescribed medications fail to relieve the symptoms.

For appropriate classroom accommodations, refer to the section on physical disabilities and the Overview section.

**Seizure Disorders:** There are two types of seizures: generalized or partial. Generalized seizures cause a loss of consciousness; the whole body is affected when the electrical discharge crosses the entire brain. Tonic-clonic seizures (once known as grand mal) and absence seizures (pronounced ab-SAHNZ) are generalized seizures. A student who has a tonic-clonic seizures falls, loses consciousness, and has a convulsion, which is a sudden involuntary contraction of a group of muscles. During an absence seizure, the person also loses consciousness, but only for a brief period lasting from a few seconds to a half minute or so. The student, teachers, and peers might not realize a seizure has taken place. Absence seizures can occur up to 140 times a day and severely affect learning.

**Educational implications:** The student with a seizure disorder may exhibit problems in one or more of the following symptoms.

Brief lapses of consciousness or “staring spells” causing disruptions in the learning process; side effects from anticonvulsant medication resulting in slowed reactions, clumsiness and poor hand coordination, eye focusing difficulty, and flatness of affect; increased absences if tonic-clonic seizures are not well controlled; memory deficits due to complex partial seizures or temporal lobe epilepsy; and clouded thinking cause by chronic seizure disorders and effects of medication.

**In the event of a tonic-clonic seizure:** Follow these procedures if a student experiences a tonic-clonic seizure:

1. Keep calm. Although its manifestation may be intense, a seizure is generally not painful.
2. Remove nearby objects that may injure the student during the seizure.
3. Help lower the person to the floor and place cushioning under his/her head.
4. Turn the head to the side so that breathing is not obstructed.
5. Loosen tight clothing.
6. Do not force anything between the teeth.
7. Do not try to restrain bodily movement.
8. Clear the classroom or immediate area.
9. Send someone to call Campus Safety at x8333.
10. Provide a protected space for the person.

After a seizure, faculty should deal forthrightly with the concerns of the class in an effort to forestall whatever negative attitudes may develop toward the student. Assure a student who has experienced a seizure that all is well and that you understand. Attempt to give the student privacy if bladder incontinence occurs after a tonic-clonic seizure. Allow the student who has experienced a tonic-clonic seizure to rest and check their condition frequently. They will usually be disoriented and extremely tired. Do not give food or drink unless seizure activity has passed. Call an ambulance when another seizure follows the first (within a half-hour or so) or when a seizure state persists for a prolonged period of time. These conditions require prompt medical attention.

**Sickle Cell Anemia:** Sickle cell anemia is a hereditary disease that reduces blood supply to vital organs and reduces oxygen supply to the blood cells. These conditions make adequate classroom ventilation an important concern. Because many vital organs are affected by Sickle Cell Anemia, the student also may suffer from eye disease, heart conditions, lung problems, and acute abdominal pain. At times, limbs or joints may be affected. The disease is characterized by crisis periods with extreme pain, which may necessitate hospitalization and/or absence from class. Completing academic assignments during these periods may not be possible. For appropriate classroom accommodations, refer to sections on visual and hand-function impairments, as well as the Overview.

**Substance Abuse:** Substance abuse is a condition of physiological and/or psychological dependence on any of a variety of chemicals, such as illegal drugs, some prescription drugs, or alcohol. Individuals who are recovering from drug or alcohol abuse, or who are in treatment programs to assist their recovery, are covered by federal antidiscrimination legislation and are eligible for college services for students with disabilities.

These students may experience psychological problems, such as depression, anxiety, or very low self-esteem during their treatment and rehabilitation. They may exhibit poor behavioral control and, if they are using medication as part of their treatment, they may experience undesirable side effects.

Refer students showing symptoms of substance abuse to the Health Center or Counseling Services.

**Pervasive Development Disorder:** Autism and its related disabilities under the Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD) classification are neurobiological-based developmental disabilities that are characterized by difficulties in communicating effectively
(e.g., asking for help or clarification), developing social relationships, and interacting with others appropriately. The significance of impact varies widely, but an estimated 20% -25% of individuals who have been diagnosed with this disability have the ability to perform academic functions at or beyond the level of other university students.

**Educational implications:** People with PDD, specifically Autism and Asperger's Syndrome, often have difficulty in processing abstract language and difficulty with peer relationships. They often lack social reciprocity, show impairment in the use of non-verbal behaviors, adhere to routines or rituals, and exhibit stereotypic and repetitive motor mannerisms.

**Strategies:** Students can benefit if the instructor uses:
1. Visual accommodations (such as an advanced copy of overheads, or specific written directions about assignments) to support auditory information provided during a lecture;
2. a regular schedule;
3. direct statements to communicate instructions;
4. concrete examples;
5. limited group work
6. a “safe zone” that allows the student to remove himself from stressful situations.

The preceding list describes only a few of the conditions for which students may present documentation. Other conditions that require an administrative or academic adjustment (e.g., class schedules, parking, and course adjustments) and do not fit into any of the above categories may also qualify the student for disability services.
Rehabilitation Act of 1973
Section 504.
Federal Register / Vol.45, No. 92, pp. 30937-30944
Section 504 is designed to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. It states that no qualified person with a disability shall, on the basis of the disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity that receives or benefits from federal financial assistance. “Persons with disabilities” means any person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such impairment, or is regarded as having such impairment.

Admissions and Recruitment: Qualified persons with disabilities may not, on the basis of disability, be denied admission or be subjected to discrimination in admission or recruitment. Institutions may not make preadmission inquiry as to whether an applicant for admission is a person with a disability. After admission, Saint Leo University may make inquiries on a confidential basis as to disabilities that may require accommodation.

Academic Adjustments: Universities shall make such modifications to academic requirements as are necessary to ensure that such requirements do not discriminate or have the effect of discriminating, on the basis of a disability, against a qualified applicant or student with a disability. Academic requirements that the program can demonstrate are essential to the program of instruction being pursued by such student, or to any directly related licensing requirement, will not be regarded as discriminatory within the meaning of this section. Modifications may include changes in the length of time permitted for the completion of degree requirements and adaptation of the manner in which specific courses are conducted. Universities shall take such steps as are necessary to ensure that no student with a disability is denied the benefits of, excluded from participation in, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under the education program or activity operated by the school because of the absence of educational auxiliary aids for students with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills.

All questions relating to students with disabilities are to be referred to the Assistant Director of Disability Services, 352-588-8464.
Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law on July 26, 1990. This act protects millions of Americans with disabling conditions from discriminatory practices in public accommodations (including colleges and universities), employment, transportation, and telecommunications. The ADA extends the coverage of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The ADA-AA amendment was signed in 2008 and put into effect January 1, 2009. The ADA-AA protects every person who either has, used to have, or is treated as having a physical or mental disability which substantially limits one or more major life activities. Individuals who have serious contagious and non-contagious diseases (e.g., HIV/AIDS, cancer, epilepsy, and tuberculosis) also are covered under the auspices of ADA-AA. For a complete copy of the law, contact the Assistant Director of Disability Services.

**Employment:** Saint Leo University, as employer of students, faculty and staff, may not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabling conditions and must reasonably accommodate the disabilities of qualified applicants or employees unless undue hardship would result.

**Public Services:** Saint Leo University may not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabling conditions by excluding them from participating in or denying them the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of the university.

**Public Accommodations:** Public facilities of Saint Leo University, including student unions, athletic arenas, auditoriums, libraries, recreational facilities, etc., must be accessible to individuals with disabling conditions.

**Telecommunications:** Telecommunication relay services for hearing and speech impaired persons must be provided.

**Questions:** All questions relating to issues of disability related to faculty, students, or staff should be referred to the Assistant Director of Disability Services, 352-588-8464.
Emergency Evacuation Plan

Emergency Evacuation Procedures for Individuals with Disabilities:
At some time almost everyone requires assistance in some way. People with disabilities are no different. Not everyone with a disability will require assistance in an emergency. Each individual must evaluate their own situation and decide if they need assistance. It is the responsibility of each person to ask for help when needed.

Many staff, students, and faculty, with mobility related disabilities have asked the following question: What am I supposed to do in the event that an emergency occurs in the area where I work and/or live? If you have asked this question you are not alone.

What should be done to plan for the assistance needed to evacuate?
- The time to plan for an emergency is before the emergency occurs. You should think about what you will do in the event of an emergency evacuation.
- Plan ahead – know the areas where you work and study. Check all areas out completely. Is there ground floor access? If there is not, and you normally use an elevator to enter and leave a building, you will need evacuation assistance. Do this for all areas to which you travel on campus.
- Once you have a plan, practice that plan. If you would like someone to assist with developing an emergency assistance plan, contact the Assistant Director of Disability Services at 352-588-8464.
- Write down the emergency numbers and contacts from this pamphlet and keep them with you.
- Employees should discuss emergency concerns with their supervisor. Students should discuss concerns with the Director of Disability Services. If you will need some type of assistance, notify the appropriate people.
  Employees and students are responsible for seeking appropriate assistance.
- Find a friend/co-worker who is willing to assist during an emergency. It is suggested you find more than one friend/co-worker in the event that person is unavailable during an emergency.

What to do in an emergency: Call Campus Safety (588-8432) or their emergency number x 8333. Report your name, location (room number, or other area and building name). If you are going to an emergency exit, give the location of that exit (floor, campus location, e.g., NE door, Lewis Hall). Report your situation --- what type of assistance you may require (e.g., wheelchair user, breathing difficulties, blindness).

Know the building in which you work or study.
- Where are the entrances and exits on the floor where you work or live? Learn the location of all exits on each floor of the buildings you routinely use. When developing your Emergency Plan include at least two exits at each location. Check each area you use carefully. Examine stairwells and doorways for clearances.
• Do you have access to the ground floor? Do you need an elevator? DO NOT USE ELEVATORS DURING AN EMERGENCY UNLESS INSTRUCTED TO DO SO BY EMERGENCY STAFF.
• Know the location of a telephone in each area you frequent.

Identify where you go in case of an emergency.
  • Do you stay in the classroom or office until help arrives?
  • Do you go to the nearest fireproof stairway?
  • The answers will depend upon the immediate situation and the building in which you are located. That’s why it is important to be familiar with all areas you frequent. Have a plan and use it.

When there is no ground floor access, determine how you will exit the building and where you should go.
For more information on developing an individual emergency assistance plan, contact the Office of Disability Services.

Do you have a question or concern about safety compliance? Contact:
Office of Campus Safety
352-588-8432

Acknowledgement
Special thanks to the ADA Compliance Office at the University of Florida for giving us permission to use this material from their Providing Service and Access to Students and Employees with Disabilities in Higher Education: Effective and Reasonable Accommodations.