

Florida International University

Accommodating Students with Disabilities: A Faculty Guide

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INTRODUCTION

How We've Grown

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) at Florida International University opened in 1976 with approximately ten registered clients. Currently, several hundred FIU students have identified themselves as having disabilities and have requested accommodations. Students with disabilities are a rapidly growing group in higher education. Approximately one in six Americans has a disability. Nationally, there is a growing trend of students with disabilities entering and successfully completing university programs. Reasons for the increase of student numbers include: the creation of Federal and State laws mandating non-discrimination against individuals with disabilities and other rights for accommodations and equal access in education and employment; advances in adaptive computer technology, greater reliance on computers, and increased job specialization.

Mission Statement

" The Disability Resource Center's overarching mission is to provide our students the necessary support to successfully complete their college education while promoting their independence and self-determination. We advance the expressed choice of our students and seek their full inclusion into the mainstream of university life and into that of the larger society."

Our Primary Functions

The main functions of the Disability Resource Center are: (1) to provide students and faculty with assistance in meeting the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; (2) to provide opportunities for students with disabilities to participate in University activities, ensuring they have physical and programmatic access to all college programs; (3) to provide preadmission counseling in meeting with prospective students and parents; (4) to counsel students regarding available support services; (5) to serve as a full-time advocate for students with disabilities, and, (6) to serve as a liaison with local and state agencies.

Visiting DRC

Anyone is welcome to visit or telephone DRC to obtain information and ask questions. In order to register with DRC as a client and to receive services, an individual needs to voluntarily self-identify. Self-identification may take place during the Admissions process and/or interaction with faculty and staff after having been admitted. Please note that people with disabilities are not required by law to identify themselves as having a disability.

Registering with DRC

When registering with Disability Services, students should provide current, supportive documentation substantiating a disability. If a student's documentation is vague, unclear, or inconclusive, the student should be encouraged to provide clarification regarding the nature of his or her disability. Once provided, appropriate, necessary, and reasonable accommodations are discussed. After the accommodations are agreed upon, the faculty member will be asked to assist the Disability Resource Center with the provision of those accommodations.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality of records is maintained within the Disability Resource Center. Only upon a student's written release can Disability Services verify disabilities and make recommendations for necessary accommodations. When Disability Services discloses students' disabilities, it is for the purpose of aiding students in achieving their fullest potential while at the University. Disability Services will thus identify students' disabilities and discuss reasonable accommodations. However, records of disabilities are kept confidential and are not released.

What Kinds of Disabilities?

Disabilities include, but are not limited to, some of the following:

Learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, traumatic head injury, recovering substance abusers (drug or alcohol), cerebral palsy, paraplegia, quadriplegia, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, sickle cell anemia, HIV/AIDS, cystic fibrosis, visual impairments/blindness, hard of hearing /deaf, lupus, fibromyalgia, psychological disabilities, speech impairments, diabetes, seizure disorders, cardiovascular and circulatory conditions, rheumatoid arthritis, scleroderma, chronic fatigue syndrome, cancer, and temporary injuries.

Note that, at the time of this printing, the following are NOT considered disabilities in and of themselves:

Test anxiety, a healthy pregnancy, lack of fluency in the English language, eyesight weakness, (eyeglass, bifocal, or contact lens usage) without being legally blind, eating disorders, and the flu or the common cold.

How Can I Learn More?

By reviewing and familiarizing yourself with the contents of this handbook, you'll be off to a great start! You might consider participation with the *Disabled Student/Employee Access Subcommittee of the University Access and Equality Committee* or the *Employees Accommodation Committee*. The functions of these committees include, but are not limited to: (1) reviewing existing campus services and programs; (2) strengthening and augmenting services where appropriate; and, (3) identifying and recommending removal of impediments to accessibility of campus facilities and programs. Please phone the Disability Resource Center for further details.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF STUDENT WITH MUCH ABILITY

What We Say

Students with disabilities are more similar than dissimilar, and they prefer that you focus on their **abilities**, not their differences. Positive word choices play a key role in creating positive attitudes. With positive word choices, we can discard "disabling" choices.

Example: The word "handicapped" is falling into disuse and should be avoided. "Handicapped" was first used in Britain after the Crimean War. To aid veterans with severe disabilities, Parliament legalized begging. Veterans could keep a "cap handy" to accept donations from passers by. Because the "handicapped" implies making beggars out of people with disabilities, the term is not acceptable. The preferred term is "**people with disabilities.**"

The preferred term "people with disabilities" stresses the essential humanity of individuals and avoids objectification. Alternatively, the term "disabled people" is acceptable, but note that this term still defines people as disabled first and people second. When it is appropriate to refer to a person's disability, choose the correct terminology for the specific disability.

Below are some examples:

<i>AFFIRMATIVE PHRASES</i>	<i>NEGATIVE PHRASES</i>
<i>Person</i> who is blind or visually impaired	The Blind, Blind as a Bat, Sightless

<i>Person</i> who is deaf or hard of hearing	Mute, Deaf and Dumb
<i>Person</i> with epilepsy or seizure disorder	Epileptic, Fits
<i>Person</i> who uses a wheelchair or has paraplegia/quadriplegia	Wheelchair-bound, confined to a wheelchair, Paraplegic/Quadriplegic
<i>Person</i> with a learning disability	LD, Stupid, “There’s no such thing!” “We all have learning disabilities.”
<i>Person</i> with HIV/AIDS	“Afflicted”, AIDS sufferer, AIDS victim
<i>Productive, Successful</i>	Courageous (implies person is a hero/martyr)
<i>People with disabilities</i>	Normal (implies people with disabilities are not normal)

In general try to examine your language and how it impacts the individual to whom you are referring. Does it suggest a victim or an object of sympathy? Does it focus on a person's disability? Does it imply that people with disabilities should be pitied, feared, or ignored? If so, you need to use different language.

How We Think

In addition to making terminology changes, it is important to reexamine attitude. Negative attitudes can stem from fear, guilt, and inexperience, which can lead to isolation of people with disabilities and damage their confidence. Negative treatment may undermine scholastic performance or access to educational opportunities. Revising our attitudes is a most important step in accommodating students who learn or perform in non-traditional ways. We are dealing with, first and foremost, students. They have the same desire for academic success, interaction, and acceptance as all students.

Faculty and staff may wish to consider these general suggestions when reviewing attitudes:

- **Learn all you can about a student's disability.** Disability Services offers information about many disabilities. The student is also a good source of information and can be asked to state specific needs and allow you advance notice for needed accommodations.

- **Be generous with yourself** and realize that the uneasiness you feel will pass with time and experience. If your goal is to teach or assist, you will, in time, see a person and not the disability. Also remember that you have no obligation to like everyone with a disability, just as you have no obligation to like everyone without a disability.
- **Don't feel that students with disabilities are receiving unfair advantages.** You may spend more time and energy assisting a student with a disability than you do with students without disabilities. This minimal extra effort merely assures that students with disabilities will receive an educational opportunity equal to that of their peers. Students with disabilities do not get by with less work. They usually must work harder than their peers without disabilities.
- **Don't apply blanket accommodations.** Needs vary among individuals, including those with the same disability. Because needs vary, so may the accommodations. Do not overestimate the student's limitations and do not accommodate the student beyond what is reasonable.
- **If failing, allow that student the opportunity to fail.** The sensitive faculty or staff member needs to provide opportunities for success and to create a supportive environment for the student facing failure. The objective is not to eliminate the experience of failure but to capitalize on its potential for learning. Legislation does not intend that institutions pass students with disabilities because they feel sorry for them. It is important to expect the same academic performance with requested accommodation/s, from the student with a disability as from the student without one.

WHAT FEDERAL LAWS MANDATE

Why do we at FIU provide accommodations and accessibility to many individuals with disabilities? Since 1977, institutions receiving federal funding must be prepared to provide appropriate academic adjustments and reasonable modifications to policies and practices to accommodate people with disabilities. Thus, FIU and the State University System are federally required to make those provisions. There are two major mandates that protect the rights of people with disabilities.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Title V of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is regarded as the first civil rights legislation for people with disabilities at the national level. **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973** is a program access statute. It prohibits discrimination

on the basis of disability in any program or activity offered by any entity or institution receiving federal funds. The legal imperative embodied in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act states, in part: *No otherwise qualified person with a disability in the United States... shall, solely on the basis of disability, be denied access to, or the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity provided by an institution receiving federal financial assistance.*

Who then, according to federal legislation, is an "**otherwise qualified person with a disability?**"

An "**otherwise qualified person with a disability**" with respect to post-secondary educational services means "a person, on who meets the academic and technical standards requisite to admission or participation in the education program or activity, with or without reasonable modifications to rules, policies or practices; the removal of architectural, communication or transportation barriers; or the provision of aids and services." Note that a person with a disability is "**otherwise qualified**" if able to perform the **essential tasks** of a program or assignment **when appropriate accommodations are made**, if necessary.

"**Individual with a disability**" means "any person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities including walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working; has a record of such impairment; or is regarded as having such impairment."

Section 504 Coordinator: Institutions are required to appoint and maintain at least one person to coordinate its efforts to comply with the requirements of Section 504. This individual has the responsibility of assuring that the institution practices nondiscrimination on the basis of disability and should be included in any grievance review procedures developed to address possible instances of discrimination brought against the institution.

Section 504 Coordinator at the Postsecondary Setting: The impact of Section 504 on postsecondary settings is extensive. Under its provisions, a college or university may **NOT**:

- Limit the number of students with disabilities admitted.
- Make preadmission inquiries regarding whether or not an applicant has a disability.

- Use admission tests or criteria that inadequately measure the academic level of applicants with disabilities, unless measures used have been validated as a predictor of academic success in the education program or activity in question.
- Give students with disabilities access to examinations that are not administered in the same frequency as tests given to students without disabilities. In addition, any admissions test given to an applicant with a disability must be administered in an accessible location.
- Give tests and examinations that do not accurately reflect the student's aptitude and achievement levels.
- Limit access or excuse a student with a disability who is "otherwise qualified" from any course of study solely on the basis of his or her disability.
- Counsel students with disabilities toward more restrictive careers than are recommended for students without disabilities. However, counselors may advise students with disabilities about strict licensing or certification requirements in a given profession.
- Institute prohibitive rules that may adversely affect students with disabilities such as prohibiting the use of tape recorders or laptop computers in the classroom, auxiliary aids, such as four-track recorders. Hand-held spell-checkers must be permitted when students with disabilities view them as appropriate academic adjustments that will help to ensure full participation.
- Refuse to modify academic requirements that would afford qualified students with disabilities the opportunity for full educational participation. Permitting additional time to meet degree requirements or allowing a student to receive a course substitution for foreign language requirements are examples of such actions.
- Provide less financial assistance to students with disabilities than is provided to students without disabilities, or premise financial aid decisions on a person's disability status.
- Provide housing to students with disabilities that is not equivalent and accessible and at the same cost as comparable housing available to students without disabilities.

- Prohibit full participation in campus services or activities that are nonacademic in nature, such as physical education, athletics, or social organizations (adapted from Brinckerhoff, 1985, p. 93).

THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

On July 26, 1990, President Bush signed into law the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA, now in full effect, protects approximately 34 million Americans with disabilities from discriminatory practices in higher education, employment, public accommodations, transportation, and telecommunications. The ADA is a federal civil rights statute designed to remove barriers that prevent qualified individuals with disabilities from enjoying the same opportunities available to persons without disabilities.

The ADA is therefore an amalgam of two great civil rights statutes: the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title V of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The ADA generally uses the framework of Titles II and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 for coverage and enforcement and the terms and concepts of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 for what constitutes discrimination.

ADA Coordinator: The ADA required institutions to designate an ADA Coordinator. This person may be the same person who is the Section 504 Coordinator.

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. FIU may not make pre-admission inquiry regarding an applicant's disability. Applicants may voluntarily provide such information.

Employment: State University System institutions, as employers of students, faculty, and staff, may not discriminate.

Public Services: State University System institutions may not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities by excluding them from participating in or denying them the benefits of services, programs, or activities of the University.

Transportation: The ADA provides access by requiring that all new public buses, all new rail vehicles, and all new rail stations be accessible to persons with disabilities.

Public Accommodations: The inclusion of public accommodations in the ADA provides access to the daily societal mainstream. From aquariums to zoos, the ADA covers a broad spectrum of sales, rental and service establishments, as well as educational institutions, recreational facilities, and social centers. Public facilities of State University System institutions, including student unions, museums, athletic arenas, auditoriums, libraries, and recreational facilities, must be accessible to individuals with disabilities.

How Does the ADA Relate to Section 504? Institutions that receive federal funds are covered under Section 504. The ADA does not supplant Section 504, but, in those situations where the ADA provides greater protection, the ADA standards apply.

1. Students with disabilities must be afforded an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from all post-secondary education programs and activities.
2. Rules that would limit students with disabilities from fully participating in a program or activity may not be imposed.
3. Academic requirements must be modified on a case-by-case basis, to afford qualified students with disabilities an equal education opportunity.

Auxiliary Aids and Services

Auxiliary aids and services enable qualified individuals with disabilities to enjoy equal educational opportunity and access. Universities make modifications in academic requirements to ensure that they do not discriminate or have the effect of discrimination, on the basis of a disability, against a qualified applicant or student with a disability. Under both Section 504 and the ADA, the term "auxiliary aids and services" include: qualified interpreters, note takers, transcription services, written materials, telephone handset amplifiers, qualified readers, taped texts, Braille materials, acquisition or modification of equipment or devices, or other similar services and actions.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do I have the right to know what type of disability a student has when s/he asks for an accommodation?

No. A student does not have to inform the faculty member about the disability, only the needed accommodation/s. If you have a question regarding the need for the accommodation/s, then you as a faculty member may contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC). DRC should have documentation of the student's disability on file. DRC cannot give details about the disability, unless the student has signed a written consent form, but can inform you if the student has a documented disability and if the academic adjustment requested is appropriate. The student may disclose his/her disability to you. You are then obligated to maintain confidentiality regarding the student's disability.

It is important to remember that the confidential nature of disability-related information has been an over-arching principle of nondiscrimination since Section 504.

Section 504 states: "A recipient may not impose upon handicapped [sic] students other rules, such as the prohibition of tape recorders in classroom or of dog guides in campus buildings, that have the effect of limiting the participation of handicapped [sic] students in the recipient's education program or activity.

What can I do if I disagree with the academic adjustment requested?

If you disagree with the academic adjustment requested, you should discuss your disagreement with a DRC Staff Representative but continue to provide the academic adjustment/s. An instructor may not forbid a student's use of an aid if that prohibition limits the student's participation in the school program. However, if a requested accommodation would result in a substantial modification of course material or content, the accommodation might not need to be provided --the faculty or staff member should contact Disability Services before making the decision to deny the requested accommodation.

Does the student receive "special privileges" under this legislation?

No. Providing accommodations should not be regarded as giving students "special privileges", but rather as minimizing the impact of the student's disability to the greatest extent possible. Institutions are not required to make changes in requirements if it can be shown that the change would require a major or substantial change in an essential element of the curriculum. The institution has the right to set academic standards, but the institution must prove that a requested change would create a substantial change. The burden of proof lies with the institution.

Because academic ability is the basis for participation in education, it is in no way suggested that course content be "watered down" or significantly altered. What is strongly suggested is that departments, faculty, and teaching assistants examine their teaching styles, test procedures, and course assignments so viable alternatives can be designed and established for students with disabilities and learning differences while maintaining course integrity. The means of achieving this ideal require judgment, knowledge, and sensitivity.

Does the student with a disability need to ask for academic adjustments in a certain time frame prior to classes?

The student should indicate the need for an accommodation with reasonable advance time. This is not always possible or done, but it is important to provide the academic adjustments as soon as possible.

Do I have to provide academic adjustments, if the student is taking the class for an audit or if the student is an international student?

Yes. Students with disabilities are eligible for all services because FIU receives federal aid. Also, international students are entitled to the same protection from nondiscrimination on the basis of disability, as are U.S. citizens. Section 504 states the prohibition of discrimination covers any "otherwise qualified person with a disability in the United States." Section 504 does not state the student must be a U.S. citizen.

Who pays for these academic adjustments?

Each institution is responsible for the provision of appropriate auxiliary aids and services at no cost to the student. Each institution may determine which department pays for a particular accommodation. The institution cannot place a limit on its

expenditure for auxiliary aids or services or refuse to provide auxiliary aids because it believes that other providers of these services exist.

What are my responsibilities concerning field trips and outside programs?

The legislation is very explicit about this. Persons with disabilities are entitled to participate in the most integrated settings possible. If field trips or other special programs are scheduled, steps must be taken to accommodate student with disabilities if needed. If transportation is provided to students attending field trips, accessible transportation for students with disabilities must also be made. For example, a student who uses a wheelchair is enrolled in your class, and you decide to use a college van to take the students to a museum. You must offer accessible transportation to the student with a disability, who may accept or reject the accommodation.

What are possible personal consequences if I do not provide the accommodation requested?

If a student is denied auxiliary aids or services, he/she can file a complaint under Section 504 with the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education and/or under ADA Title II, which is under the jurisdiction of the Department of Justice. Under ADA, monetary damages may be enforced and the student may name both an individual, such as a professor and the institution in the complaint. If named in the complaint, you as well as the institution may be liable.

UNIVERSITY ACCOMMODATIONS & CONSIDERATIONS

It is the student's responsibility to request accommodations if desired, but a faculty member can make a student comfortable by inquiring about special needs and by providing general accommodations. General accommodations may include one or more of the following listed below. Although these are intended for students with disabilities, many of these benefit students without disabilities as well.

Accommodation Statement for Publications

All academic departments, student organizations, student clubs, etc. are strongly encouraged to include the following accommodations statement on all brochures, flyers, and pamphlets announcing upcoming events to which the public is invited: *"In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Florida International University will honor requests for reasonable accommodations made by individuals with disabilities. Requests must be made at least 5 days before the event. Direct*

accommodation requests to sponsoring department and include phone number. If the department sponsoring the publication needs assistance a representative should call the Disability Resource Center.

Invitation Statements

It is helpful if faculty routinely invite, at the beginning of each semester, students with disabilities to self-identify in private and with Disability Services to discuss accommodations. This invitation can be an announcement during the first class session or a written statement on the course syllabi, or both. The invitation statement on the course syllabi may be as follows:

"If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible. My office location and hours are... "

Accessibility

According to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and to state law, programs and activities, in their entirety, must be offered in accessible settings. If multiple sections of a course are offered, at least one section of the course must be in an accessible location. In the case of students with mobility impairments, classes must be located in buildings with ground-level entry, working elevators if the class is not located in buildings with ground-level entry, and doorways that are at least 32 inches wide. Classes must be relocated either temporarily or permanently if these specifications are not met.

Confidentiality

You should maintain the confidentiality of the student's disability. It is inappropriate to focus on, or draw attention to, the disability in front of the class. Discussions of the disability should be held in private between the instructor and student. *It is important to remember that the confidential nature of disability-related information has been an over-arching principle of nondiscrimination since passage of Section 504.*

Priority Registration

Students with disabilities may register for classes with Disability Services during Priority Registration. Students register with DRC approximately one week before other students at FIU, so they generally meet with their advisors one week earlier than other students. This ensures that students, with disabilities can receive the assistance they require for registration; for example, a Scribe to complete the

registration form. Priority registration allows DRC to make arrangements for Interpreters and books on tape for students who need the services.

Early Provision of Syllabi and Course Materials

Make book lists and syllabi available prior to the beginning of the term. Select course materials early. Advanced distribution of syllabi, assignments and reading lists facilitates the translation of materials into audiotape, Braille, and large print-- which assists in the completion of assignments.

Disclosure with Confidential Letters to Professors

The Faculty is contacted by the Disability Resource Center only if requested by the student, and that request must be made each term. Disability Services prepares confidential letters which: (1) identify the student; (2) outline appropriate accommodations; and, (3) recommend that the student meet with faculty members early in the term to discuss the logistics of each accommodation. The faculty member should ease the student's adjustment by initiating discussion about the needs as they relate to the course. Dialogue between the student and instructor is essential early in the term, and follow-up meetings are recommended.

Attendance and Promptness

Students using wheelchairs or other assisting devices may encounter obstacles or barriers in arriving to class on time. Others may have periodic or irregular difficulties, either from their disability, from medication, or from emergency hospitalizations (for example, when students have HIV/AIDS, Sickle Cell Anemia, or Cystic Fibrosis). Flexibility in applying attendance and promptness rules to such students is helpful.

Functional Problems

Understanding is required to work with the more subtle and sometimes unexpected manifestations of a disability. For example, chronic fatigue and weakness characterize some medical conditions. Drowsiness, fatigue, and/or impairments of memory or speech may result from prescribed medications. Such difficulties and interferences with the student's ability to learn should be distinguished from apathetic behavior, which certain impairments may resemble.

Seating Arrangements

Many students require preferential seating, such as front row seats, in the classroom (i.e., wheelchair users and students with visual impairments, hard of hearing, epilepsy, attention deficit disorder, or learning disabilities). Some students, such as those with back injuries, other neuromuscular disabilities, or connective tissue

disorders, may need to bring a pillow for their backs, prop their legs upon a chair, occasionally stand and stretch their backs and legs, or take a short walk to alleviate physical or neurological stress. Wheelchair users will need adjustable work surfaces or a table in the classroom and laboratory. Telephone Campus Services for an appropriate work surface.

Tape-record

Tape-recording class lectures are a viable option for some students with disabilities who are unable to take notes. As prescribed in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, taping of class lectures must be permitted if requested by a student with a physical or learning disability. Students need to sit close to instructors to ensure clear recordings. Many times faculty members are concerned with the use of a tape recorder in their classroom because they feel it may infringe on their freedom of speech or potential copyrighted material. They should contact Disability Services for a Tape Recording Agreement Form. The instructor may ask the student to sign this form which states that: (1) the tapes will not be shared with other students unless the lecturer provides written consent; (2) the tapes will not be used in any way against the faculty member, other lecturer, or other students in the classroom; (3) the tapes of the lectures may be protected under federal copyright laws and may not be published or quoted without the lecturer's consent; and, (4) the tapes are solely for the purpose of personal studies.

Video Taping

In select cases, video taping of classes is an appropriate accommodation. Meet with a Disability Services Staff Representative to determine if this accommodation should be provided for you.

Note Taking

Some students, such as those with epilepsy, traumatic head injury, quadriplegia, learning disabilities, hard of hearing, multiple sclerosis, fibromyalgia, carpal tunnel syndrome, or temporary injuries to the dominant hand, may require the assistance of a note taker. **Professors announcing the need at the beginning of the class session may secure NOTE TAKERS.** An announcement may be as follows:

"In this class is a student with a disability (do not mention the student's name). Because of this student's disability, the student is not able to effectively take notes. Would someone please volunteer to share his or her notes with that student for the semester? It would be of great value and assistance to the student. If willing, please see me after class. Then visit Disability Services, copy your notes there at no cost, and leave them therefore the other student to retrieve. Or Disability Services can

provide special carbon less (NCR) paper that allows immediate copies of your notes. Thank you."

Continue announcing the need for a note taker until one is secured. If a student does not immediately volunteer, you may approach a student and request his or her note taking assistance. Until that time, you should provide the student with copies of your lecture notes.

Sign Language Interpreter

By request, sign language interpreters are provided to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. Otherwise the appropriate accommodations for all lecture and laboratory classes can be discussed with a counselor in the Disability Resource Center.

EVALUATION ADJUSTMENTS

If the student requires alternative evaluation assessment, discuss the particulars with the student. Depending upon the individual disability, alternative arrangements may include one or more of the following:

1. Oral administration of examinations
2. Use of Readers and & or Scribes for tests
3. Time extension for examinations in distraction-reduced environments (maximum double time, unless otherwise specified)
4. Enlargement of exam print. For students with visual impairments, enlargement to 18 point font minimum. Enlarging exam print benefits some students with visual impairments. Some students with learning disabilities find that the enlarged print assist their processing ability (example: although Nelson Rockefeller spoke fluently in several languages, his speeches were written in large letters and spaced in such a way that he could decipher them when giving speeches for television).
5. Use of aids during tests, such as calculators, dictionaries, or electronic spell-checking devices.
6. Alternative scheduling of examination dates and times

7. Some students with medical conditions, such as Sickle Cell Anemia, Multiple Sclerosis, HIV/AIDS, or Rheumatoid Arthritis, may need to miss a scheduled exam due to hospitalization or the need for bed rest.
8. Use of computers for tests, with adaptive software and hardware (Disability Services houses these)
9. Unless demonstration of knowledge through a specific test design is thought to be essential to the course, alternative test designs for evaluating a student with a learning disability or other cognitive processing disability may be more appropriate. A professor may:
 - Avoid overly complicated language in exam questions, and clearly separate items when spacing them out on an exam sheet.
 - Avoid using answer sheets, especially multiple choice, "bubble-in" scantron forms for students with perceptual deficits for whom transferring answers are especially difficult.
 - Avoid visual search and match items.
 - Allow students to write answers separately or to dictate responses. Consider oral exams or hands-on demonstrations.
 - A student with dysphasia (an impairment of the ability to speak or sometimes understand language) may benefit from an exhibit of some sort.
 - Consider alternative or supplementary assignments to evaluate a student's mastery of course material. Taped interviews slide presentations, photographic essays, or hand-made models may lead to more accurate evaluations.
 - When dealing with students who have Disorders of Written Expression or Reading, it is important to consider the content of their written information rather than their spelling/grammar. The following helps offset their writing deficits: a dictionary, thesaurus, electronic spelling device, typewriter, word processing program, proofreader, reader, scribe, tape recorder, or adaptive computer software programs.
 - In mathematics, students may understand concepts but still show error by incorrectly aligning numbers or confusing simple mathematical facts. A

student may need to use a grid paper or other special materials. Allow calculators if necessary.

- Avoid testing on material just presented, since additional time is generally required to assimilate new knowledge for students with cognitive processing deficits.

QUIZZES AND POP-QUIZZES

Quizzes and pop quizzes fall within the same category as exams. Thus, if a student receives accommodations for exams, that student must also receive accommodations for quizzes and pop quizzes.

EXTENDED TEST-TAKING TIME IN A DISTRACTION REDUCED ENVIRONMENT

Some students with disabilities require extended test taking time in a distraction-reduced environment. Professors are responsible for providing these test accommodations. Some students, especially those with Attention Deficit Disorder, are especially sensitive to distractions. Students must take examinations in a separate, quiet room with a proctor (hallways and reception rooms are unacceptable testing locations. If professors are unable to make the appropriate arrangements for an alternative test site, the student may contact DRC to reserve a test site. **Call DRC at least one week in advance.** If professors cannot arrange necessary accommodations due to class schedules or a lack of space, DRC will assist in quiz/examination administration with one week's notice.

Note: Whether DRC is opened or closed; it is still incumbent upon the University and its faculty to assist students with disabilities with their testing needs. Because DRC is closed during the evening and weekend hours, professors and their departments need to assist DRC students during those times. DRC recommends that evening and weekend faculty meet with their departments to outline adaptive testing procedures, including who will proctor their exams. Options for testing include:

1. *Taking an exam at the same time as other students, but in another room.*
2. *If an exam's adaptation includes double-time, students may: (a) begin the test before the class starts it and finish with the rest with the class; (b) Begin the test with the class and complete the test after the class has ended, (c) Take the test over the course of two evenings (the first night taking one*

part of the exam, the second night taking the second part); or, (d) Take the test with the academic department or with DRC during the day DRC can proctor the quiz/exam earlier that same day or the following day.

ADDITIONAL ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT SERVICES

The University population has varying needs for assistance. The Disability Resource Center has made available to its students, faculty, and staff adaptive equipment and services to accommodate disability needs. The following list of equipment is currently available (at the time of this printing):

Scan and Read Programs: Computer programs for individuals with visual impairments, allowing large volumes of text to be scanned and read with speech output.

Speech Recognition: Voice-activated computer software which provides voice capacity for print on the monitor.

Screen Reading Programs: Software for individuals with visual or print impairments. With speech output, the computer reads the screen line by line.

Large Screen Monitors with screen-enlarging software: Software for individuals with visual impairments

CCTV (closed circuit TV device): which magnifies written materials for persons with visual impairments who have difficulty reading smaller type or low-contrast material.

Screen Magnifier: Computer software, which enlarges materials on a 21-inch computer monitor so individuals with visual impairments can independently read.

Braille Printer and Interface: Device, which allows for printed materials to be in Braille form for those persons who are visually impaired/blind and utilize Braille Communication.

FM Assistive Listening Devices: Hearing systems for people with hearing loss designed for amplifying the speaker's voice in meetings, classrooms, auditoriums, theaters, and arenas.

Taped Texts: Print disabilities affect many students with visual, learning, or physical disabilities. Assistance is available in applying for and ordering recorded textbooks from Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic (RFB&D) at (609) 452-0606. Disability

Services will provide recordings not available through RFB&D. Ordering recorded texts may take an extensive amount of time, so *Disability Services must be notified two months prior to the semester, that they are needed Therefore, it is important that professors and departments know which texts they'll be using for courses in advance, so recorded books can be rearranged*

Scribe: Scribes are available for students with temporary manual or permanent disabilities requiring testing assistance through DRC.

Library Study Room with Adaptive Equipment for Students with Disabilities: Specialized study rooms are available on both campuses.

DISABILITY PARKING PERMITS

Faculty, staff, and students with long-term or permanent disabilities should purchase a Florida Disabled Parking Permit from their county auto tag agency in addition to a Florida International University parking decal. The combination of these two permits allows an individual to park in any space designated disabled parking.

One Week Disabled Parking Permits

Students, faculty, or other staff members of FIU may request a temporary disabled parking permit from DRC. Documentation demonstrating a temporary disability must be provided at the time the permit is requested. Once provided, a permit may be issued for one week. If a temporary disabled parking permit is required for a longer time period, the individual should then visit the nearest tag agency where an application for a 90-day temporary state permit can be obtained. The application is brought to a physician for signature and the applicant returns it to the tag agency with a \$15.00 fee (the fee at the time of this printing).

Note: Parking in the disabled parking spaces is limited to a first-come-first-serve basis without guarantee of reserved parking.

LIBRARY ASSISTANCE

Faculty, who have reading/research assignments on reserve in the libraries are encouraged to provide copies of the reserved material to Disability Services. The services and policies that the FIU Library offers to patrons with disabilities are available in the form of a document entitled *Access Services Policies for Persons with Disabilities*. Free copies of this document are available in the Libraries.

GOLDEN PANTHER EXPRESS

An accessible bus service between the Biscayne Bay Campus and University Park Campus is available. Call (305) 919-5565 for additional information.

EMERGENCY CONCERNS

There may be an occasion when a student's condition needs immediate intervention in the classroom. The most likely examples are seizures, diabetic shock (insulin reaction), and heart attacks. Should such a situation arise, the quickest way to summon assistance is to telephone Public Safety at 305 348-2911 (emergency) or 305 348-2626 (police) on the University Park campus. Or call 305 919-5555 or 305 919-5911 on the Biscayne Bay Campus.

Intervention Techniques

Until emergency personnel are on the scene, there are some intervention techniques that may be started. In the case of heart attacks, CPR treatment should be started immediately if the person is not breathing. Such emergencies are rare, but it is best to be prepared, remain calm, and know what to do if and when the need arises. If you are not already CPR certified, you may contact the American Red Cross for information about classes. In regards to seizures, contact the Disability Resource Center for proper assistance.

Building Evacuation Routes

Students with disabilities are responsible for studying and remembering the important parts of each building they are in, including stairways, exits, phone locations, and elevator procedures. Students should be asked by their instructors to assume responsibility for asking several persons in their classes to assist them if emergency evacuation becomes necessary. Faculty members who have students in their classes who might have problems leaving the building during emergencies should discuss procedures during the first week of class.

Students with Visual Impairments

Most persons with visual impairments will be familiar with the immediate vicinity. In the event of an emergency, tell the student specifically how and where to exit. Have the student take your elbow and escort him or her. This is the preferred method when acting as a "sighted guide". As you walk, tell the person where you are and advise him or her of any obstacles. When you have reached safety, orient the person regarding where he or she is and ask if any further assistance is needed.

Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Since persons with hearing loss may not perceive audio emergency alarms, an alternative warning technique is required. Two methods of warning are the following: (1) Write a note telling what the emergency is and the nearest evacuation route (ex. "Fire - go out rear door to the right and down. Now!"); or, (2) Turn the light switch on and off again to gain attention, then indicate through gestures or in writing what is happening and what to do. It may be prudent to escort the student as you leave the building.

REFERENCES

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- Burgstahler, S., & Stauber, N. (1994) Do-it: working together: faculty and students with Disabilities Seattle: University of Washington.
- Davis, K. C. Disabled student services faculty handbook Florida: Daytona Beach Community College.
- Gregory, M. W. (1994) Rights and responsibilities of faculty concerning students with disabilities. Missouri: Center for Innovations in Special Education.
- Skipper, T. L., Waltrip, B., & Leach R- H. (1992) A Guide to reasonable accommodations Florida: Florida State University.
- University of Florida (1995) Reasonable accommodations: Guide to resources for students with disabilities. Gainesville: University of Florida.
- Williams, S.S. (1995). Reasonable accommodations: Faculty guide. Georgia: Georgia Southern University.
- Young, A. Cystic fibrosis in the classroom. Washington: Kings Road Publishing.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Disability Resource Center

University Park (UP)
Graham Center (GC) 190
(305) 348-3532
(305) 348-3852 (TTY)

And

Biscayne Bay Campus (BBC)
Wolfe University Center (WUC) 139
(305) 919-5345
(305) 919-5390 (TTY)

Director

Julio Garcia, Ed.D.

Associate Director

Kathryn Trionfo, M.R.C.

Assistant Director

Beverly Paden-Saballos, Ph.D.

The Office of Equal Opportunity Programs

University Park (UP)
PC 511
(305) 348-2785
TTY via FRS (800) 955-8771

Director and 504/ADA Coordinator

Bennie L. Osborne, Ph.D.