

# Tips for Accommodating Students with Disabilities at BYU

University Accessibility Center (UAC)

## PERSPECTIVE

- Be aware of the university-wide responsibility to implement Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which extends civil rights to people with disabilities and provides for reasonable accommodations.
- Be willing to participate in the interactive process (between professor, student, and UAC) to determine how to implement accommodations and whether particular accommodations are reasonable in a specific class.
- Realize that most accommodated students do have a documented disability and are not trying to “take advantage” of the system.

## CAMPUS RESOURCES

- If a student has disclosed a disability or a suspected disability to you, share your knowledge of UAC services (e.g., accommodations, Learning Disorder and ADHD evaluations, scholarships, assistance with career placement, support for petitions, technology lab in the HBLL).
- Include a statement regarding disability and the UAC on your syllabus (see “Faculty” tab at [uac.byu.edu](http://uac.byu.edu)).
- Become familiar with other campus resources that you can recommend to students (e.g., CAPS, Academic Success Center, Writing Center, YServe tutors).
- Consider Incompletes and Withdrawals when disability-related needs arise.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

### **In General:**

- Know that accommodations are not retroactive; for example, you are not required to accept late assignments when you did not know about the accommodation previously.
- Understand that accommodations should be reasonable and should not alter the essential functions of a course or program.
- Hold accommodated students to the same academic standards as other students. Remember that accommodations are designed to offer equal access, not guaranteed success.
- If you feel that a student is using his/her accommodations inappropriately, contact the UAC.

### **Specific Accommodations:**

NOTE: With regard to the first three accommodations listed below, students are instructed to use them sparingly, on an as-needed basis related to their disability, and only by specific request.

- Leniency with absences:
  - Remind accommodated students to contact you as close to the beginning of the semester as possible to establish with you a reasonable absence limit for the course. The most typical absence accommodation is an additional 50% allowance.
  - Remind students that, if they miss a class, they are still responsible for all material covered during the class period.
- Additional time on assignments:
  - At the beginning of the semester, remind students to contact you in advance of each assignment for which additional time is needed, in order to negotiate a new due date. The typical extension is 3-4 days.
  - Remind students up front that this accommodation does not allow for extension beyond the last day of class.
- Flexible exam dates:
  - Remind students that they need to contact you prior to the examination deadline, as soon as the student believes an extension will be necessary. The typical extension is 3-4 days.
  - Remind students up front that this extension does not allow for an extension beyond the last day of finals.
  - If the exam is given in the Testing Center, contact the Testing Center to inform them of when the student will be taking the exam and that the late fee should be waived.
- Distraction reduced testing:
  - Remind students that, for Testing Center exams, accommodated students need to reserve a private or distraction reduced room in the Testing Center ([testing.byu.edu](http://testing.byu.edu)).

- Be aware that, for in-class exams, accommodated students can reserve a private room proctored by the University Accessibility Lab in the HBLL (testing.byu.edu). The student would need to make the reservation at least two business days in advance.
- Since testing space proctored by the Accessibility Lab is limited, be amenable to making arrangements for the student to take the test in your office or an empty classroom (proctored by you or a TA) if at all possible. It is the student's responsibility to make a reasonably timely request of you prior to the day of the test.
- Be aware that students who have the accommodation of extra time on tests do not automatically have the accommodation of distraction reduced testing as well.
- Textbooks in alternative format:
  - Submit book selections as early as possible so that the UAC can convert them into electronic format for accommodated students. (This can take from 6-8 weeks.)

## **COMMUNICATION**

### **In General:**

- Keep information about the student confidential from other class members, and refrain from revealing personally identifiable information to other professors.
- Allow the student to take the lead on the issue of disclosing personal information. (Instead of asking, "Do you have a disability?" ask questions such as "Is there any more I can know about your situation to help you?" or "What can you tell me about your learning style?")
- Be accessible to the student.
- Contact the UAC regarding how to work with a student. Also see the "Faculty" tab at uac.byu.edu.

### **Regarding Accommodations:**

- Be aware that the UAC strongly encourages students to make direct contact with their professors after the students have sent their professors electronic accommodation letters. In addition to sending their letters electronically, students may also print out and hand a hard copy to their professors.
- In order to encourage students with accommodations to visit you, you can make announcements in class and/or add that information to your syllabus.
- You are welcome to reach out individually (e.g., via email) to the students who have sent you letters. (See "Email Student" button at the bottom of each electronic letter.)
- Encourage early submission of letters, explaining that by doing so, students will help you be aware of their situation and more able to help them succeed. If students end up not needing any accommodations in the class, that is fine. But if they do, a plan will already be in place for how to work together. Emphasize to the class that students will not be viewed negatively based on their submission of a letter.
- Be aware that there may be valid reasons for why a student who sends you a letter does not follow up with you personally (e.g., the student may not need his/her accommodations in your particular class; the student's accommodations may not need coordination with the professor [e.g., note taker]; the student may be waiting to see if he/she actually needs to utilize accommodations in your particular class).
- Also be aware that you may be receiving accommodation letters at any time during the semester, as some students may not be diagnosed, may not be able to obtain documentation paperwork, or may not realize that they have a need for accommodations until part way through the semester.

## **LETTER MANAGEMENT**

- Be aware of when it is appropriate to utilize TAs (e.g., for coordinating testing accommodations).
- If needed, download or print accommodation letters and hand or email them to the TAs.
- If needed, contact GeriLynn Vorkink at the UAC, who may be able to run a report and send an email to all students in your class who have accommodations, asking them to meet with you.
- If you use Learning Suite, keep track of which students have sent you accommodation letters by viewing the disability icon displayed next to their names on class lists.

## **TEMPORARY MEDICAL CONDITIONS**

- Work directly with students who have temporary medical conditions (e.g., broken limbs, surgery, flu, pregnancy). However, in some situations the UAC may be able to provide some volunteer services (e.g., note taker for a broken wrist), so you may also refer students to schedule an appointment at the UAC to brainstorm options for handling their situation.