

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:
A Guide for Faculty, Staff, and Students at
Hagerstown Community College

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INTRODUCTION

Hagerstown Community College is committed to providing support services to students with disabilities. The College provides various accommodations to students with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and its amendments. Accommodations are determined on an individual basis and allow students to be evaluated NOT on the effects of their disability but instead on their knowledge and understanding of course material. All accommodations are based upon documentation that is provided by a licensed or certified professional. All documentation regarding the specific nature of a student's disability is kept confidential unless the student agrees otherwise.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

The Office for Students with Disabilities is located in the Administration and Student Affairs Building, Room 601. Jaime Bachtell is the Academic and Special Student Advisor in that office. She may be reached at 301-790-2800 ext. 273 or via e-mail at bachtellj@hagerstowncc.edu. This office houses documentation of disability for students, provides verification of disability for faculty, provides accommodations, acts as a liaison to other offices and community agencies, and generally coordinates services for students with disabilities. Please feel free to contact this office at any time with questions, comments, and concerns that you may have.

PROCESS OF OBTAINING ACCOMMODATIONS:

Step 1: Contact Jaime Bachtell, Academic and Special Student Advisor at 301-790-2800 ext. 273 to make an appointment.

Step 2: If a student has current documentation, he/she will need to bring it to their appointment.

Step 3: At the appointment, the student will complete an intake and all initial paperwork. If the student does not have current documentation, the Academic and Special Student Advisor will explain how to obtain documentation.

Step 4: The student will stop by the Special Student Advisor's office during the first week of classes to pick up their accommodation forms before the start of their first class.

Step 5: Students must take their accommodation forms to each of their professors, discuss the necessary accommodations, and have their professors sign the form.

Step 6: Students must sign the form and return it to the Special Student Advisor's office. The Special Student Advisor will make copies of the accommodation forms for the student and a copy will be mailed to their professors.

STUDENTS HAVE THE RIGHT:

- To receive accommodations and use of auxiliary aids as appropriate.
- To have information pertaining to their disability kept confidential as according to Federal Laws.
- To receive information in accessible formats.

STUDENTS HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY:

- To identify himself/herself as having a disability with the Special Student Advisor.
- To provide appropriate documentation to the Special Student Advisor from a qualified professional.
- To follow standard procedures outlined in this handbook to obtain reasonable accommodations.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR FACULTY:**Before Classes Start/Early in the Semester**

1. Contact Jaime Bachtell at ext. 273 with any problems, questions, or concerns that you may have.
2. Include a statement in your syllabus that invites students with disabilities to meet with you concerning arrangements for appropriate accommodations.
3. During the first class, announce that students with disabilities will need to discuss arrangements for accommodations with them after class or during office hours. When meeting individually with students remind students that it is pertinent to give professors a copy of their 'Student Accommodation Form', as professors will not provide accommodations unless this form is received. This form allows professors to be aware of the particular accommodations that each student should receive.
4. Follow procedures listed below to arrange testing accommodations.
5. Encourage students to remain in contact with the Special Student Advisor with problems and/or concerns.

During the Semester

1. Allow alternative testing arrangements if this is noted as an accommodation on the 'Student Accommodation Form', as documentation indicates this is an appropriate accommodation. Contact the testing center (301-790-2800 ext. 305) if the student will need to take the test outside of the classroom.
2. Be supportive and encouraging. Let students know you are willing to talk with them about their progress.
3. Contact Jaime Bachtell at any time with problems, questions, or concerns that may arise.

PROCEDURE TO OBTAIN NOTETAKERS:

The Special Student Advisor will coordinate note taking services. If a student has a note taker listed as an accommodation, the Special Student Advisor will contact someone to have in place no later than the second week of classes.

PROCEDURE TO OBTAIN TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS:

Students that use the accommodation of extended testing time, isolated testing, or verbatim reading of tests will need to make special arrangements with their instructors. Students will need to discuss specific arrangements for taking the exam with their professor. If a student is entitled to extended testing time, a quiet testing area, or verbatim reading of tests, professors will need to send the test to the testing center, located in LRC-322. It is preferred that professors provide the testing center with at least 48 hours advance notice to ensure the appropriate arrangements can be made. The professor should also remind the student that it is their responsibility to contact the testing center in advance to set up a time to take their test.

COMMON ACCOMMODATIONS INCLUDE:

- Quiet, non-distracting area for tests
- Extended testing time
- Test read to the student
- Note takers
- Use of a tape recorder
- Special seating, usually in the front of the room
- Written copies of orally presented materials
- Lecture outlines
- Use of a calculator
- Use of a word processor for assignments
- Use of interpreters

APPROPRIATE DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES:

Students must provide documentation to the Special Student Advisor from a certified professional. The documentation must be recent and generally be no more than 3 years old. This documentation must include a formal evaluation, diagnosis of a disability, and provide recommendations concerning academic accommodations. If students suspect that they have a disability and do not have appropriate documentation, they may contact Jaime Bachtell, ext. 273 for a referral list of certified professionals that may be able to conduct an evaluation and provide the necessary documentation. This list is also accessible at:

<http://www.hagerstowncc.edu/academics/advisement/disability.php>

Information such as contact person, address, phone number, fax, as well as fees for service are included on the referral list. If students or professors have further questions concerning documentation, please contact Jaime Bachtell.

Disability Summary Sheets

Please keep in mind that all disabilities are individualized and that no two people with the same disability share every characteristic or will respond to every listed instruction strategy. However, the following pages are summary sheets which will provide general information to assist faculty in learning about and teaching students with disabilities.

ATTENTION-DEFICIT/HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER

ADD and ADHD are neurological conditions affecting both learning and behavior. They result from chronic disturbances in the areas of the brain that regulate attention, impulse control, and the executive functions that control cognitive tasks, motor activity, and social interactions. Hyperactivity may or may not be present. Treatable, but not curable, ADD and/or ADHD affects three to six percent of the population.

Common Signs/Characteristics

- Easily distracted
- Poor time management skills
- Difficulty in being prepared for class, keeping appointments, and getting to class on time
- Reading comprehension difficulties
- Difficulty with math problems requiring changes in action, operation, and order
- Inability to listen selectively during lectures, resulting in problems with note taking
- Lack of organization in work, especially written work and essay questions
- Difficulty following directions, listening, and concentrating
- Blurting out answers
- Difficulty making transitions
- Difficulty in producing work at a consistently normal level

Instructional Strategies

- Since these students often also have learning disabilities, effective instructional strategies may include those also used with students with learning disabilities.
- Briefly review the previous lecture
- Use visual aids such as overheads, diagrams, charts, and graphs and a hands-on approach
- Allow the use of tape recorders
- Give assignments in writing as well as orally
- Create study guides
- Face the class when speaking
- Write key terms or an outline on the board
- Emphasize important points, main ideas, and key concepts
- Allow student to sit at the front of class

LEARNING DISABILITIES

A learning disability is a permanent neurological condition that affects the manner in which information is received, organized, remembered, and then retrieved or expressed. Students with learning disabilities possess average to above average intelligence. The disability is characterized by a significant discrepancy between intellectual potential and academic achievement resulting from difficulties with processing information. This disability may affect listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical skills. The effects may change depending upon the learning demands and environments and may manifest in a single academic area or impact performance across a variety of subject areas and disciplines.

Common Signs/Characteristics

- Frequent spelling and grammatical errors
- Problems with organization
- Poor vocabulary and word recall
- Slow reading rate, Poor reading comprehension
- Poor tracking skills while reading (skip words, loose place, miss lines)
- Number reversals
- Confusion of math symbols
- Spatial disorientation
- Difficulty copying math problems
- Inability to effectively pronounce multi-syllabic words
- Difficulty attending to long lectures
- Difficulty taking notes while listening to class lectures
- Difficulty organizing tasks, such as written work
- Difficulty in interpreting social cues

Instructional Strategies

- At the beginning of class, review the previous lecture
- Use visual aids such as overheads, diagrams, charts, and graphs
- Use a hands-on approach to learning
- Allow use of tape recorders
- Explain technical language terminology
- Leave time for questions periodically
- Give assignments in writing as well as orally
- Write key terms or an outline on the board or provide a lecture handout
- Administer frequent quizzes/assignments to provide feedback for students
- Speak distinctly and at a relaxed rate, pausing to allow students time for note-taking

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

Brain injury may occur in many ways. Traumatic brain injury typically results from accidents. However, Brain injury may also be caused by insufficient oxygen, stroke, poisoning, or infection. Traumatic brain injury can cause physical, cognitive, social, and vocational changes that affect an individual for a short time or permanently. Depending on the extent and location of the injury, symptoms caused by a brain injury vary widely.

Some common results are seizures, loss of balance or coordination, difficulty with speech, limited concentration, memory loss, and loss of organizational and reasoning skills.

Common Signs/Characteristics (Highly Individual)

- Difficulty organizing thoughts
- Difficulty processing information and retrieval of words
- Memory difficulty
- Poor balance and coordination
- Difficulty in communication processes and speech
- Difficulty making generalizations and integrating skills
- Limited ability in social interactions
- Difficulty in understanding cause-effect relationships and problem solving

Instructional Strategies

- Provide a routine in class
- Give step-by-step instructions for assignments, projects, etc.
- Utilize visual aides during class
- Provide the opportunity for students to learn using a hands-on approach
- Keep in mind that recovery may be inconsistent, a student may take one step forward and two steps back at times
- Present instructions and demonstrations in more than one way
- Provide the syllabus at the start of the semester

DEAFNESS/HARD OF HEARING

Hard of hearing is any type or degree of auditory impairment while deafness is an inability to use hearing as a means of communication. More individuals in the United States are hard of hearing than any other type of physical disability. Hearing loss may be due to multiple factors including an impairment of the auditory nerve or a defect in the auditory system. A person who is born with a hearing loss may have language deficiencies and exhibit poor vocabulary and syntax. Students who are deaf and hard of hearing may use a variety of communication methods, including lip-reading, cued, speech, signed English, and/or American Sign Language (ASL).

Common Signs/Characteristics

- Difficulties with speech, reading, and writing skills due to the close relationship between language development and hearing.
- May be unfamiliar with vocabulary used in class
- Some students use speech only or a combination of sign language, finger-spelling, speech, writing, body language, and facial expression to convey ideas to others.
- Students may be members of a distinct linguistic and cultural group. As a cultural group, they may have their own values, social norms, and traditions.
- Students may be skilled lip-readers but many are not. Only 30% to 40% of spoken English is distinguishable on the mouth and lips under the best conditions.

Instructional Strategies

- Look directly at the student during a conversation, even when an interpreter is present, and speak in natural tones.
- Make sure you have the student's attention before speaking. A light touch on the shoulder, wave, or visual signal may be of assistance.
- Recognize the processing time the interpreter takes to translate a message from its original form into another language.
- The student that is deaf may also need more time to receive information, ask questions, and/or offer comments.
- Establish visual warning system for building emergencies
- Provide unfamiliar vocabulary in written form, on the blackboard, or in a handout.
- Provide handouts in advance so the student can watch the interpreter rather than read or copy new material at the same time.
- Utilize visual aids as much as possible, including captioned versions of videos and films.
- Repeat questions and comments from other students.
- Provide seating that allows the student that is deaf or hard of hearing with an unobstructed view of the speaker's face and mouth, as well as the blackboard, etc.
- While using an interpreter, allow only one person at a time to speak during group discussions.
- Do not turn off all lights when presenting a video in class, as it may be difficult to see the interpreter.

PSYCHOLOGICAL DISABILITIES

Psychological disabilities refer to a wide range of behavioral and/or psychological problems characterized by anxiety, mood swings, depression, and/or a compromised assessment of reality. The majority of psychological disabilities are controlled using a combination of medications and psychotherapy. However, the behavior of students with psychological disabilities may still cycle due to side effects of medication and other personal issues.

Common Signs/Characteristics (This is a broad category and highly individual)

- Limited social functioning
- Difficulty concentrating
- Limited motivation
- Inability to tolerate stress
- Sleep disturbances
- Difficulty attending to lectures
- Incomplete assignments or exams
- Occasional disruptive behavior
- Indifference
- Side effects of medication such as drowsiness, fatigue, memory loss, and decreased response time

Instructional Strategies

- Break up information into smaller steps, especially when involving sequential memory tasks such as math formulas.
- Allow beverages in class due to medications which may cause extreme thirst.
- Provide an understanding and accepting environment in the classroom, keeping in mind that students may not be comfortable disclosing the specifics of their disability.
- If students seem to need counseling for disability-related issues, encourage them to contact the Office for Students with Disabilities.
- Provide some flexibility in the attendance requirements in case of health related absences.
- Allow students to check their perceptions of a situation or information you have presented in class to be sure they are on the right track.

PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

Students may exhibit a variety of physical disabilities including but not limited to spinal cord injury (paraplegia or quadriplegia), spina bifida, amputation, muscular dystrophy, cardiac conditions, cystic fibrosis, paralysis, polio/post polio, and stroke. Physical disabilities may result from congenital conditions, accidents, or progressive neuromuscular diseases.

Common signs/Characteristics (highly individual)

- Lack of coordination
- Inability to walk without crutches, canes, braces, or walkers
- Ability to stand or walk but may use wheelchair to conserve energy or gain speed
- Inability to stand or walk and use wheelchair for total mobility
- Limited lower body use but full use of arms and hands
- Limited use of lower body and limited use of arms and hands
- Impairment of speech or hearing
- Limited head and/or neck movement
- Decreased physical endurance
- Decreased eye-hand coordination

Instructional Strategies

- When talking with a person who uses a wheelchair, try to converse at eye level; sit down if a chair is available.
- Take time to understand the student if he/she has difficulty with communication. Repeat what you understand and let the student know when you do not understand them.
- Ask before giving assistance and wait for a response.
- Let the student set the pace when walking and/or talking.
- Ask the student if he/she will need assistance during an emergency evacuation and assist in making a plan if necessary.
- Plan in advance for field trips to make ensure accessibility.
- Provide an accessible place to meet with the student for office hours, etc.

BLINDNESS/LOW VISION

Visual disabilities vary widely. Students may be totally blind, legally blind, or exhibit low vision. Legal blindness and low vision may be caused by tumors, infections, injuries, retrolental fibroplasia, cataracts, glaucoma, diabetes, vascular impairments, or myopia.

Low vision refers to a severe vision loss in distance and near vision.

Common Signs/Characteristics

- Some students may use a guide dog, others may use a white cane, while others may not require any mobility assistance.
- Totally blind students learn via Braille or other non-visual media.
- Legally blind students have less than 20/200 vision in the more functional eye or a very limited field of vision.
- Students with low vision use a combination of vision and other senses to learn, and they may require adaptations in lighting or the print size, and in some cases, Braille.

Instructional Strategies

- Identify yourself at the beginning of a conversation and notify the student when you are exiting the room.
- Verbally reinforce key points made in the conversation to facilitate the communication process, keeping in mind that nonverbal cues depend on good visual acuity.
- Allow the student to determine the most ideal seating location. He/She should be able to see, hear, touch as much of the presented material as possible.
- Assist the student in labeling lab materials using large print and color contrast so that they are easily identifiable.
- Provide verbal description of class activities. For example, when a show of hands is requested, state how many hands were raised.
- Ask if the student will need assistance during an emergency evacuation, and assist in making a plan if necessary.
- When giving directions, be clear. Say “left” or “right”, “step up” or “step down.” Identify obstacles for the student stating “the chair is on your left” or “the stairs start in about 3 steps.”
- Recommend the use of the Kurzweil, and tell students to contact the Office for Students with Disabilities in order to have access to the Kurzweil. The Kurzweil is a software program which reads books and written assignments outloud.

RECENT LEGAL DECISIONS

A college or university must provide the accommodation. Students are not required to assume the responsibility for securing a necessary accommodation. The university is required to provide reasonable accommodations for a student's known disability so that the student has an equal opportunity to participate in the courses, activities, or programs. The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) ruled that a university may not charge students for necessary accommodations.

Expense of accommodation is not undue hardship. Providing an auxiliary aid or incurring an expense to ensure access would not constitute undue hardship to the university. In determining what constitutes an undue hardship, the OCR view the entire financial resources of the university rather than any single department or college.

Altered form of exam. The form of an exam must be altered if the testing procedure puts a student with a disability at a disadvantage based on the student's documented disability. There may be an exception when the purpose of the test is to measure a particular skill.

Accommodation must be documented. The university may refuse to grant a student's request for an accommodation that is not specifically recommended in the student's documentation.

Handouts in alternate format. If a student with a visual disability is enrolled in a class, the instructor must provide all handouts in the alternate format requested by the student. In addition, all handouts must be made available to students on the same day they are distributed to students without disabilities.

Classroom must be accessible. A classroom's location must be changes to provide accessibility for a student with a mobility disability. A college or university does not need to make every classroom accessible, but must provide for the participation of students with disabilities when "viewed in its entirety."

Confidentiality of diagnostic information. Faculty/staff do not have the right to access diagnostic information regarding a student's disability. Faculty and staff need only know the accommodations that are necessary to guarantee an equal opportunity for the student.

Personal liability. An individual faculty member who fails to provide an accommodation to a student with a documented disability may be held personally liable.

Personal services and aids. A college or university is not required to provide personal services such as attendant care or personal aids such as wheelchairs or eyeglasses.

Career counseling. Career counselors are prohibited from counseling a student with a disability into more restrictive career paths than are recommended to students without disabilities with similar interests.

BASIC DISABILITY ETIQUETTE

- It is appropriate to shake hands with a person who has a disability even if they have limited use of their hands.
- When talking with a person who has a disability, speak directly to that person rather than to a companion or interpreter.
- Ignore guide dogs or other service animals. Don't pet them, they are working.
- When offering help, wait until the offer is accepted. Make sure to listen or ask for instructions.
- When greeting a person with a vision disability, always identify yourself and anyone else that is with you. Ask, "Shall we shake hands?" Let the person know when you are leaving or exiting the conversation.
- Don't worry about common phrases such as "See ya later," or "Gotta run."
- Treat adults as adults. You may choose to use simple language depending upon the situation. However, do not use childish language.
- Do not patronize people who are in wheelchairs by patting them on the head or shoulder. Do not lean on the wheelchair.
- To get the attention of a person who is deaf, tap the person on the shoulder or wave your hand.
- Do not assume that all people who are deaf can read lips. However, if he/she can read lips, speak slowly and clearly without exaggerating your lip movements.
- Give your undivided attention to someone who has difficulty speaking. Ask short questions which require short answers. Wait for the person to finish their answer and do not cut them off.
- When speaking to someone in a wheelchair, sit down or kneel in place if possible to place yourself at his or her eye level.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions when you are unsure of what to do.

APPROPRIATE WORDS AND PHRASES

Remember to always emphasize the person and not the disability. People are not conditions so do not label them with the name of the condition. We don't say "the cancerous," nor should we say "the blind."

Do Not Use	Instead Use
Handicap The handicapped Crippled with Victim Patient (except in hospital) Invalid Paralytic Stricken with	Physically disabled Person with a disability Person who has multiple sclerosis Person with a learning disability Person who is blind Paraplegic (limited use of lower limbs) Quadriplegic (limited use of all limbs)
Birth defect Inflicted Afflicted/afflicted by Deformed/deformed by Incapacitated Unfortunate	Caused by Disabled since birth Born with
Deaf and dumb Deaf mute	Deaf person Pre-lingually deaf (deaf at birth) Post-lingually deaf (deaf after birth) Deaf/profoundly deaf (no hearing capability) Hard of hearing (some hearing capability)
Confined to a wheelchair Restricted to a wheelchair Wheelchair bound	Person in a wheelchair Person who uses a wheelchair Person who walks with crutches
Normal (acceptable only for quoting statistics) "Regular"	Nondisabled Students without disabilities

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

National Clearinghouse on Post-Secondary Education for Individuals with Disabilities, HEATH Resource Center, The George Washington University

Accommodating Students with Disabilities: Faculty/Staff Handbook, Minnesota State University, Mankato

A Faculty/Staff Guide: Optimizing the Learning Environment for Students with Disabilities, Towson University

Access for Students with Disabilities: Policies, Procedures, and Resources. A Desk Reference Guide for Faculty and Staff, North Carolina State University

Employment and Individuals with Disabilities: A Guide for Businesses, Frederick Works Project

The Faculty/Staff Guide: Optimizing the Learning Environment for Students with Disabilities, Montgomery College

Student Guide to Disability Support Services, Montgomery College

Access Utah Network Publication Web Site – A Division of the Labor Commission of Utah