

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Who is responsible for determining appropriate accommodations?

A: Southern State Disability Services (SSDS) is the office on campus that determines appropriate accommodations. The office bases decisions upon documentation collected from a student with a disability, the student's functional limitations, and the student's clarification about specific needs and limitations.

Q: Am I required to provide exam accommodations to students who request it?

A: Yes. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, as well as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) protect students with disabilities. These laws require that qualified students with disabilities get equal access to an education, including exam accommodations.

Q: A student has asked for accommodations. How do I know the student truly has a disability and needs accommodations?

A: You may ask the student to provide you with a letter verifying that he or she has a disability. The student, if registered with SSDS has a file with documentation of the disability for every student who is registered with the office. The specifics of the disability cannot be disclosed due to confidentiality issues.

Q: A student with a disability has requested that she take an exam at SSDS. How do I know that my exam will be safe and that the student will get no unfair advantage?

A: SSDS has developed a secure procedure for getting exams from faculty and returning them once the student has taken the exam. Students are monitored by SSDS or library staff during the exam.

Q: When I have a student who is deaf in class, am I required to have an interpreter or transcriber in the class, too? My class is very crowded, and the students sometimes watch the interpreter instead of me.

A: Yes. You are required by law to have what is essential for the student to have equal access to an education, and this includes having a sign language interpreter or transcriber in the classroom when there is a need. Students will adjust in a few days and eventually will ignore the interpreter.

Q: A student in my class asked me for assistance getting notes. After I have made these arrangements, the student has missed most of the lectures. Should he be getting these notes?

A: If a student with a disability regularly skips class, then he or she has no right to get notes on the days skipped. The note taker should be informed of this. If the student has a legitimate excuse for the absence, i.e. illness, death in the family, handle the situation as you would with all other students.

Q: I have a student who is having difficulty in my class. I think he may have a disability. What should I do to help him?

A: Talk privately with the student to discuss your observations. The student may reveal he has a disability. If this is the case and the student is registered with SSDS, suggest that he talk to the Coordinator to schedule an appointment at 937-393-3431 Ext. 2604.

Q: Am I required to lower the standards of a required assignment because the student has a disability?

A: No. Standards should be the same for all students; however, some students with disabilities may exhibit their knowledge, production, and other course expectations differently than their peers. For example, a student with a learning disability in writing may produce an essay exam by using a computer or scribe rather than writing out an answer without the use of accommodations. The quality of the work should be the same.

Q: I have a student with a disability who is behind in her schoolwork. This student has missed a number of classes and has not handed in several assignments. Although she has taken a midterm and used accommodations, she received a D for the midterm. At this point, she is not passing the class. Do I have a right to fail a student with a disability?

A: The student with a disability has the same right to fail as anyone else. Their work should be equivalent to their peers. It may be a good idea to discuss your observations with this student just as you would with anyone else in your class who is experiencing difficulty.

Q: I have a student who is blind in my chemistry lab. How is he going to participate and be graded in his lab work?

A: If possible, assist the student in getting a lab partner or assign a student assistant to work with the student with a disability. In either situation, the student who is blind should direct the assistant to carry out the functions of the lab assignment. If a volunteer lab partner cannot be found, suggest to the student that he needs to contact SSDS as soon as possible for assistance in getting a lab partner. The speed in making these arrangements is critical so that the student will not fall behind. In most situations, students have made arrangements for a lab assistant prior to classes starting if informed consent is on file.

Q: Do I have any recourse if I disagree about requested accommodations?

A: To clarify any disagreement about a requested accommodation, first contact Coordinator of Disability Services at 937-393-3431 Ext. 2604. Occasionally, some students may ask for unreasonable accommodations. These requests are not authorized by SSDS. When in doubt, call the office to discuss your concerns.

Q: We are making a decision about accepting a student with a disability into our professional degree program. I am concerned about the cost of providing accommodations, the extra time this student will require, etc. Are we required to accept this person?

A: Students with disabilities need to meet the same requirements as all other students when considering acceptance in a program. If a student with a disability meets the same requirements as other applicants and is otherwise qualified, then any disability-related concerns cannot be taken into consideration.

Q: A student came to me in the sixth week of the quarter requesting accommodations. I feel this is too late to ask for accommodations and arrangements should be made at the beginning of the quarter. I even made an announcement on the first day of class to meet with me about these arrangements. Do I have to provide accommodations for someone this late?

A: Yes. There could be numerous reasons why a student makes a late request. Perhaps he or she could not get documentation of his or her disability any earlier and, therefore, could not initiate accommodations earlier. Some students try to take a class without accommodations but find that they aren't doing well and need accommodations. **Whatever the reason, students may make requests for accommodations any time during the quarter.** There may be a few situations where students make a request for accommodations so late that appropriate arrangements are impossible to make. An example of such a request might be a student requesting an entire textbook be converted to alternate format at the end of a quarter. You must provide accommodations only at the point when a student makes a request and you and SSDS are able to make appropriate arrangements. The student is too late if he or she reveals a disability after the completion of a class and requests deletion of unsatisfactory grades.

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Be Responsive to the needs of Students with Specific Disabilities

Examples of such situations are:

- Don't turn your back to a student who is deaf or hard of hearing. He or she may be reading your lips.
- If you have a student who is blind, refrain from vague language such as “Look at this” and “Examine that.” Use words to describe what you and others see.
- Assist with preferential seating when necessary, and provide students who are blind with orientation to the classroom by describing the physical layout of the room including any obstacles, furniture, lecture position, location of steps, or any low-hanging objects.
- Assist with making arrangements for a room change if the room is inaccessible and you have a student who needs an elevator in order to gain access to the classroom. Do not suggest to the student to drop the class. Students must have access to all classes.
- Students with disabilities may have additional helpful suggestions. Most are knowledgeable about their disability, the strategies and accommodations that work for them, and the assistive technology that they use.
- Learning support strategies are helpful to students with learning disabilities, ADHD, head injuries, or other cognitive disorders.
- Particularly helpful are strategies and aids that provide structure. Some examples are a comprehensive syllabus that clearly delineates expectations and due dates; study aids such as study questions, study guides, opportunities for questions and answers; and review sessions to help the student who needs a lot of repetition.
- Be receptive to students meeting with you for clarification during office hours.
- Also, students may ask for assistance in identifying a “study buddy,” another student who is willing to meet regularly to review notes, explain complex materials, and provide two-way quizzes.
- Be sensitive to disability-related classroom etiquette. For example:
 - If a student has a guide dog, understand that this is a working animal. They must be allowed in the classroom, but do not feed or pet a guide dog.
 - Interpreters are in the classroom only to facilitate communication and must not be asked to do other things like run errands, proctor an exam, etc. Speak to the student who is deaf and not to the interpreter. The interpreter will voice student questions.
 - Never discuss disability-related arrangements in front of the class unless it's a situation where there is no chance that the student with a disability will be identified.

Seizures

Most persons who have a seizure disorder are able to control their seizures through the use of medication; however, medical management of a seizure disorder is not always totally effective. Seizures may occur in your classroom. Students with an active seizure disorder will likely speak to you about their seizures and direct you how to respond to the seizure. Some students have unexpected or infrequent seizures.

What to do during a seizure:

- Keep objects away from the individual's mouth
- Cushion the head with an available sweater, sweatshirt, coat, etc.
- Turn the individual on his/her side
- Do not restrain the individual

What to do after a seizure:

- If the individual is disoriented, look for a medical I.D.
- Ask the person to identify self and location.
- If the person is confused, incoherent, or is not able to answer, dial 911. An alert will be reported to necessary administration notifying an emergency in specific location.

Call for emergency assistance (911) in any of the following situations:

- The seizure lasts longer than one minute
- The person is passing from one seizure to another
- The person has difficulty breathing or pulse is faint or nonexistent
- The person is extremely disoriented after emerging from the seizure

Instructors and staff should assess the situation and use their best judgment in determining the need for immediate medical intervention. Erring on the side of caution is usually the best course of action when a student is having a seizure.