

Cowley College Disability Services

Faculty and Staff Handbook

Jim Brown, Student Accessibility Coordinator

620-441-5557

Jim.Brown@cowley.edu

Purpose of this Handbook

Federal legislation mandates that Cowley College provide reasonable accommodations that afford equal opportunity for all students. Achieving reasonable accommodations for students living with disabilities involves shared responsibility between the students, faculty, and staff. This faculty handbook is designed to serve (1) as an introductory overview of disabilities that affect learning in a college setting and (2) as a quick reference for the various adjustments that can be made to accommodate students living with disabilities.

It is important to note that each student living with a disability will have a different level of functioning even within the same disability category. Compensation skills will also vary from one student to another and in the same student across time. Consequently, while the information presented in this handbook can be used as a general guide, specific knowledge of a student's needs should come to you via a letter or e-mail prepared by the Disability Services Office and discussed with you by the student.

Disability-Related Legislation and Faculty Impact

The following are federal and state laws which require that institutions like Cowley College do not discriminate against persons with disabilities in either the delivery of services or in employment. These laws are designed to provide persons living with disabilities an equal opportunity to succeed--not an advantage over students without disabilities.

- ***Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*** provides that "No qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity, or be subjected to discrimination by any such entity." This is federal civil rights legislation. The major impact on faculty and staff is that if accommodations determined appropriate to prevent discrimination based on disability are not implemented, students have recourse through federal agencies as well as the court system.
- ***Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973*** provides that "No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States, as defined in section 706 (20) of this title, shall, solely by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits or, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." Again this is federal civil rights legislation. The Rehabilitation Act impacts recipients of federal funds. In addition to the impact described above for the ADA, institutions risk loss of federal funds.
- ***The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)*** provides for "...the privacy of student education records...Generally, schools must have written permission from the eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record." Faculty need to be aware that unless there is a demonstrated need to know disability information they should not share information about the disability with others. In seeking advice from a department chair or others within the academic department on implementation of accommodations, it may be necessary to

disclose information specific to a student with a disability. In general it is best to seek advice from within the academic department without sharing names.

General Considerations

Confidentiality

Under FERPA, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, student records and the information contained within them are confidential; to be shared with others only when there is a demonstrated need. This means that whatever you know or have read about a student's disability, you should not share in any way either intentionally or unintentionally with other faculty, students, staff, and administrators. This includes the context of recommendations for other schools, scholarships, and jobs.

Focus on Abilities

A major barrier to success for students living with disabilities is the tendency of others to focus on their disabilities instead of their abilities--what they cannot do versus what they can do. Approach a student who has a disability with the attitude that he or she has the ability to do the work, but simply needs to accomplish some things in a manner that is different from the traditional way. Viewing the student as pitiable or incapable reinforces the belief some have that students living with disabilities are "not college material."

An example from *"Think Ability: the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, Educational Kit"* (1999) surmises that a lawyer is effective if he or she has a solid grasp of law and can present a complete case before a jury or judge; that the lawyer accesses law books through Braille because he or she is blind is immaterial to the outcome. Therefore, the key is to focus on the effective use of the student's own unique abilities and skills for classroom success.

Empowering Students

It is the goal of Disability Services to empower students living with disabilities to take charge of their lives by becoming more knowledgeable and skilled in expressing their needs, preferences, and desires. The University of Washington conducted research with young people and adults living with disabilities and came up with seven (7) empowering strategies.

- Define success for self.
- Set personal, academic, and career goals with realistic, but high expectations.
- Understand one's own abilities and disabilities and play to the strengths.
- Develop strategies to meet self-defined goals.
- Use technology as an empowering tool.
- Persevere while working hard; yet also is flexible.
- Develop a support network of family, friends, and instructors.

In addition, Cowley College Disability Services encourages students to do the following:

- Learn their legal rights and responsibilities.
- Understand what accommodations will best enable them to succeed both in school and on the job.
- Communicate their needs effectively.
- Become successful self-advocates.

Students as Experts on Their Disability Needs

There is a wide diversity among people within a given disability type, and a wide range of previous experiences that people have had in accommodating their disabilities. It is important to keep in mind that two people with the same disability may require different accommodations. For example, one student who is deaf may request an interpreter for exams, and another may not. Similarly, one student with low vision

may request exams and handouts in large print, while another may be able to read the small print using a magnification device.

Many students are comfortable with their disabilities and very familiar with the accommodation process that works for them. Those who have limited experience with what accommodations they need to succeed in your class may be, for example, freshmen, students whose disabilities are recent or have changed over time, and students who are taking a certain type of class for the first time, such as a computer class or lab science.

Not all students will feel at ease initiating the arrangements needed for appropriate accommodations. There are a number of reasons why students become apprehensive within this process. Some of these may include: drawing attention to their differences, acquiring labels that stigmatize, experiencing negative reactions in the past, asking for accommodations others may perceive as unfair, lacking confidence in approaching those in power, and/or having never been required to assess their own needs and initiate required action(s).

Accommodation Examples

The Disability Services Office will determine accommodations as mandated under federal law. Please remember that student needs are highly individualized and what works for one student with a particular disability may not be effective for another student living with the same disability. Examples of accommodations are numerous. Below is a list of some common accommodations.

- Extended time for exams
- Low distraction testing room
- Large print exams
- Braille exams
- Oral testing
- Sign Language Interpreters
- Transcribers
- Assistive Technology Software
- Note takers
- Copies of instructor's overheads and/or PowerPoints
- Recording lectures
- Books in digital format
- Accessible room and/or desk
- Other accommodations that are reasonable and documented

Critical Ways Faculty Can Support All Students with Disabilities

When students with disabilities are admitted to the College, they have met the same standards for admission as all other students. Faculty can support the continued success of students with disabilities by implementing certain practices described below, in sections that refer to students with specific disabilities (found later in this handbook).

Syllabus Statement

It is important that faculty include in each syllabus a statement asking students to inform them of any special needs to ensure that those needs are met in a timely manner. A further recommendation is that the statement be read aloud by the faculty member during the first week of class. This approach demonstrates to students that you are someone who is sensitive to and concerned about meeting the needs of ALL students you teach. Furthermore, it affords students the opportunity to make their accommodation needs known to you early in the semester. Sample syllabus statements are found in the faculty portion of the Disability Services web page.

Emergency Evacuation Plan

Instructor/Supervisor Responsibilities

Make an announcement at the beginning of class each semester advising students of procedures to follow during an emergency.

Discuss accommodation needs with disabled students and assist them in locating "buddies" willing to assist them if needed.

Be familiar with all exits, ramps, stairwells, telephones, evacuation/safe area maps and procedures.

Confidentiality

It is essential that disability information be kept confidential. At no time should the class be informed that a student has a disability, except at the student's request. All information that a student gives to the faculty member is to be used specifically for arranging reasonable accommodations for the course of study. Disability Services Office recommends that students bring letters verifying their disabilities to faculty during office hours or by special appointment. At that time, arrangement of accommodations can be discussed in private.

Textbooks, Course packs, Syllabi, and Videos

Please make your book selections, compiled course packs, and syllabi available in a timely manner. Students, who are blind, have visual impairments, or have learning disabilities affecting their reading rates and comprehension, require printed materials that are transformed into alternate formats. Conversion of text into a spoken format or Braille can be a time consuming process, taking as much as six months to complete. Your syllabus is required to determine the extent to which each text will be used and the order in which reading assignments will be completed. I use a service called ACCESS Text to provide me with electronic copies of texts. If they don't have it, I can usually get it from the publisher.

Some students will rely on having printed material scanned and saved in computer format that can be listened to using voice output software. If you are collating various journal articles and portions of books into course pack for, please use original copies or copy that is as clean as possible. Creating course packs using second, third, and fourth generation copies of material (copies made from copies, made from copies, etc.) may cause images of text that are fuzzy. Such blurring often makes it impossible for character recognition software to decipher images as readable text. If material included in course packs is not all of top quality, Disability Services would appreciate being able to briefly borrow your originals for scanning.

If you wish to be very supportive, you may ask if the publishers of the books you are considering have created electronic text (e-text) and/or audiotape versions of them. Several states are in the process of adopting legislation requiring book publishers to automatically create alternative format versions for all books they market. If possible, select a textbook with an accompanying study guide to maximize comprehension for all students. The Student Accessibility Coordinator will work with local publishers to attain texts in this format if requested.

In addition, using captioned versions of videos is extremely helpful for deaf or hard of hearing students and students who have other auditory processing difficulties. Although some videos used in classes are already captioned, others are not.

How to Refer to People with Disabilities

The following are some suggestions for communication that can make both you and a student with disabilities more comfortable:

- A person living with a disability is first and foremost a PERSON with many unique qualities, only one of which may be a disability that is handicapping in particular settings.
- Second, avoid references, phrases, and words that suggest restrictions, limitations, or boundaries because these phrases tend to carry stereotypes and contribute to discriminating attitudes. Even if a person living with disabilities refers to him or herself in particular ways, using phrases like “confined to a wheelchair” reflect poor judgment on the part of the speaker or writer. If you feel awkward in how to refer to a person with disabilities, your best bet may be to ask the person.

Receiving a Request for Accommodations

Procedurally, formal requests for accommodations will come to you in a letter or e-mail authorized by The Student Accessibility Coordinator. The accommodations recommended in these forms are not meant to give students living with disabilities unfair advantage, but rather to give them an opportunity to demonstrate mastery of course content. No accommodations need be provided if they cause undue hardship, such as when a student does not give sufficient notice that an accommodation needs to be made. Also, Disability Services does not ask that instructors modify essential course requirements for the sake of the student. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this form, please contact the Student Accessibility Coordinator.

Special Testing Accommodations

Some accommodations described in the accommodation letter relate to test taking. Double time for testing is the usual accommodation given to students who, for disability related reasons, work slowly and require additional time to complete tests. A few students may also need to take tests in a room with limited distractions or with no other students present. For example, a student may need to read test questions aloud, and this would be disturbing to other test-takers. Still other students may request the test be read aloud.

When special test accommodations are needed, it is in everyone's best interest if the proctor is another member of the academic department. This practice allows students to address any problems or questions they may have to someone with knowledge of course content and departmental procedures. Reading test questions aloud to the student or writing the student's dictated answers is not usually recommended; using a tape recorder or other independent means is preferred by most students. The Student Accessibility Coordinator can read tests to students with arrangements made in advance.

Making a Referral to the Disability Services Office

Faculty members sometimes contact Disability Services regarding students they feel might need to avail themselves of services offered by our office. Although teachers in high school are active participants in the process of identifying and referring students to special services, there is no comparable requirement in higher education. If you see a student who is struggling and wish to refer that student to Disability Services, provide them with necessary information and encourage them to make contact. They may respond best to private conversations in which you use an inquiring and supportive approach and share information about the existence and location of the Disability Services office. Only the student can decide to disclose his or her disability, or to pursue information about services available in the Disability Services office. If a

student is requesting accommodations, but has not presented you with a letter from the Disability Services Office and you haven't received an e-mail from the Student Accessibility Coordinator, you may ask the student to contact Disability Services.

The Accommodation Process

There are four main steps to the accommodation process. They start with the student completing an intake and registering with the Disability Services office. Second, documentation of disability is reviewed and eligibility for services is determined. The third step involves the Student Accessibility Coordinator and the student meeting to discuss the specific accommodation needs. And finally, students and instructors should periodically review the accommodations to ensure that they are effective. It is important throughout this process for the student, Student Accessibility Coordinator, faculty, and staff to work together as a team.

STEP 1: Student Completes the Student Accessibility Services Intake

The intake process involves students disclosing their disabilities and then working together with the Student Accessibility Coordinator to identify their accommodation needs. Identifying accommodation needs is an individualized process based on the student's documentation and educational experiences. Most students come to the Disability Services Office after being referred by an instructor, a rehabilitation counselor, a high school teacher, or other individual receiving services.

During the intake, students are informed about an accommodation letter and its importance. They are provided a copy of the letter and encouraged to visit with each instructor regarding the accommodations requested and give the instructor a copy of the letter. This letter is not meant to be an all-encompassing document that gives you all the answers, but it does identify the accommodations determined to be necessary, verify the person has a documented disability, and open the door for further discussion. The Student Accessibility Coordinator will e-mail a copy of the accommodation letter to instructors of online students.

If a student does not give you a letter from Disability Services and you haven't received an e-mail from the Student Accessibility Coordinator, you are only obligated to provide very obvious accommodations based on observation--otherwise you can require him or her to come to Disability Services. An example of an obvious need would be an alternative form of testing for someone who is clearly blind. If a student does not have a letter from Disability Services Office and you are not certain how to proceed with accommodations, please contact the Student Accessibility Coordinator.

In the intake process, students are encouraged to practice an assertive, reasonable approach to communicating their needs to faculty. The Disability Services Office is promoted as an important resource for faculty and students as we work together to achieve a positive outcome.

STEP 2: Documentation Review by Student Accessibility Coordinator

Students are responsible for providing documentation of their disabilities to the Student Accessibility Coordinator. Sometimes they bring it with them to the intake appointment, but more often the Student Accessibility Coordinator facilitates the process of getting their documentation by sending a signed consent form to the diagnosing and/or treating professionals. Once Disability Services Office has the documentation, it is reviewed by the Student Accessibility Coordinator to determine whether it supports the accommodation requests. Students are considered eligible at this point for the requested services that are supported by documentation. If documentation is insufficient to support all accommodation requests, the Student Accessibility Coordinator notifies the student, who may wish to provide additional information.

STEP 3: Student and Faculty Meet to Discuss Issues

Disability Services encourages students to approach you either before classes begin or within the first few days of the semester with their accommodation letters. The accommodations listed on these letters have

been approved as necessary to achieve equal access as required by law. The student should give you a copy of this letter for your files.

Scheduling an appointment to discuss accommodations during your office hours or at some mutually convenient time eliminates the feeling of being rushed or caught by surprise and the possibility of being surrounded by other students wanting your attention before or after class. It also ensures privacy and less distraction as well as a more comfortable working rapport. Disability Services strongly emphasizes the need for your commitment to confidentiality regarding any information students disclose to you personally, information gained through your contacts with Disability Services, or any other information about a student's disability you might have.

In your discussions with students, feel free to ask for more information than you see in the Disability Services accommodation letter to faculty. You should feel comfortable asking questions related to the need for accommodations requested, but be careful not to appear to question that there is a need. Also, when a student discloses the type of disability, you may want to ask for more information about the specific disability (e.g., "Can you explain to me what exactly a learning disability is since I don't have much experience in this area?"). However, some students choose not to disclose the type of disability and that is their right unless there is a real need to know. The information would ideally come from the student. If you would like more information than the student provides, consider contacting Disability Services. Most students give us permission to discuss their disabilities and accommodations with you.

If the student has not given you enough information to respond to his or her requests encourage the student to meet with you again. Then probe, ask questions and try to make the student comfortable enough to provide as much helpful information as possible. Again, if these efforts are not successful, you or the student should contact Disability Services. For many students, well-executed accommodations mean the difference between success and failure. Help us teach the student simply by being inquisitive and by communicating that it is okay to ask for an accommodation. When we all work together to solve problems, a solution is not far away.

Finally, work out any logistical arrangements (e.g., where the tests will be taken when extended time and a low distraction room is needed). Consider using a written record of your meeting. You can use the accommodation letter, adding your own notes about logistics, and giving a copy to the student.

STEP 4: Implementation and Periodic Review of Accommodations

Throughout the semester, you and the student should meet to discuss whether the accommodations are adequate or need revision. There is no single formula that works for everyone, and sometimes trial and error using a variety of accommodations is necessary. This is especially true for students who have never had experience using accommodations. Also, sometimes what both of you thought would work turns out to be inadequate. For example, the low distraction room has unanticipated distractions. Other unanticipated issues may arise. Periodic review can serve to identify alternatives and to get the issues resolved quickly. The Student Accessibility Coordinator will work with you and the student to find solutions to concerns.

The Team: Student, Disability Services, and Faculty

It is best to approach the issues of accommodating students living with disabilities as a team. You, the students, and Disability Services all have the same goal--to enable students to participate and compete equally in the classroom. Each of us has areas of expertise to contribute. Disability Services wants to assist and support you and our students who have disabilities.

If you have experienced success in working with students who have disabilities, please consider acting as a mentor for other faculty in your department. Disability Services will assist you in this any way we can. The more people we have to help disseminate techniques, approaches, and success stories, the better for all students with disabilities. If you have an interest in sharing your experience with others by giving a short presentation in a faculty training session, please contact Disability Services.

Student Responsibilities

Students living with disabilities are not required by law to identify themselves to Cowley College, Disability Services, or to provide documentation of a disability. However, if a student desires accommodations (particularly such things as extended time on exams), the student is obligated to complete necessary forms and provide disability documentation to support accommodation requests. It is reasonable for you to expect the student who states he or she has a disability either to have already gone to Disability Services, or to go to Disability Services at your suggestion, before accommodations are provided. Again, the exception is when a disability and the need for a specific accommodation are obvious based on your observations.

The student is responsible for letting his or her accommodation needs be known. Since the type of requirements, lecture styles, and exams will vary, the student must find out what your course requires, what activities are planned, and any other information that may be relevant. This is not necessarily resolved in one conversation. A student's needs may vary over time, the student may be learning what his or her needs are through a process of trial and error, or the nature of the assignments/exams may require that adjustments be made throughout the semester. The student should keep communicating with you throughout the semester to give you feedback.

Disability Services Responsibilities

Disability Services are here as resources to you as faculty, as well as to students. If you have any concerns that cannot be resolved through discussion with the student, again, please contact the Student Accessibility Coordinator.

Disability Services is available for consultation or to meet with you and the student to come up with satisfactory options. Sometimes finding solutions involves talking through the difficulties and possibly generating some creative solutions not yet tried. Disability Services assists students in facilitating accommodations if they do not feel they have been successful themselves. Sometimes, if a student is new and unsure of how to express his or her needs, the Student Accessibility Coordinator may contact you to discuss accommodations. If you would like more information about disability issues, the Student Accessibility Coordinator can either provide it or guide you to some resources.

In addition, Disability Services hires and schedules interpreters and transcribers for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Disability Services are also responsible for providing textbooks and other course materials in alternate formats, such as in digital format for students who have impaired vision or learning disabilities. Assistive technology software is also available on most student computers and is provided to the individual student if requested.

Staff development activities will be conducted campus-wide. If you have any special requests or an immediate need for training in your department, call Disability Services to discuss arrangements.

Faculty Responsibilities

Include an ADA statement on each syllabus

A statement regarding Disability Services should be included on every syllabus. (Sample statements are available on the Disability Services web page).

It will also help if you make a brief announcement or read this statement out loud the first day of class. This will show students who may be apprehensive that you are aware needs may exist and that you are approachable.

Advise students

As an advisor to students in your department, you may have had questions or concerns about whether accommodating students in class might make them less competitive in the job market. The Americans with Disabilities Act does provide for reasonable accommodations in private and public employment. Often, however, the kinds of accommodations required in the academic environment, such as testing modifications, are not necessary in employment since testing is not a common aspect of most jobs. Assume that your students living with disabilities are here to prepare for a career. Please contact Disability Services if you want to discuss specific issues, or if you want to set up a meeting to discuss career options.

Respond to reasonable requests

Faculty are required by federal law to provide reasonable accommodations. This is a fairly vague term, and if you are unsure whether something a student is requesting is reasonable, contact Disability Services for consultation. Anything that is requested through the accommodation letter indicates that the documentation has been reviewed and the Student Accessibility Coordinator considers these accommodations to be reasonable.

An example of a reasonable request would be a student with a learning disability and attention deficit disorder requesting:

- extended time on exams;
- to take tests orally or to have them read aloud or on a cassette tape;
- a low distraction room.

An example of an unreasonable request would be a student with any type of disability requesting that:

- he or she not be required to turn in written assignments because he or she cannot physically perform the task of handwriting.

If the student does not offer any reasonable alternatives to this request and you are not sure how to find a resolution, it is best to contact Disability Services for assistance. These examples illustrate the fact that the goal is not to change the requirements of your course. The goal is to enable the individual with a disability to meet those requirements in such a way that does not have the effect of discrimination based on disability. When this does not appear possible to you or the student, the Student Accessibility Coordinator would like to work with you to find an option that works for both parties.

Test what you want to test, not the disability (a rationale)

The rationale for providing test accommodations is that it would be discriminatory to administer any test in such a fashion that would "test the disability" instead of testing knowledge or skills you expect your students to have acquired. When a disability prevents the student from demonstrating to you what he or she knows, an accommodation is necessary.

One example is a student with a mobility impairment that causes him or her to write slower. If the test is collected with all the others and the student has only completed half of the test, the student fails the test without having the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge or skills tested on the second half. The instructor has "tested the disability," or assessed the student's writing speed rather than what the exam was designed to assess. The same thing occurs when a student with a learning disability (a processing disorder) is not given adequate time to process questions and answers.

Make the arrangements for testing accommodations

Extended time is an appropriate accommodation provided by federal law. Double time is standard. Usually the student will not use all of this time and some students will finish on time, but the extra time should be available. When the disability is very severe, the student may need more than double time, but this is rare. If scheduling extended time is a problem, consider breaking the test into sections and taking more than one day to complete it.

The Student Accessibility Coordinator will make every attempt to work with instructors to provide assistance with test accommodations. Early notification of upcoming exams will be very helpful. Students should notify the Student Accessibility Coordinator of test schedules in order to get them on the calendar.

The logistics have usually worked out with very little effort. Often the student either completes the entire exam in the Student Accessibility Coordinator's office at a prearranged time or in an alternative accessible location with proper supervision.

Accommodations

Required accommodations are those listed on the Accommodation Letter, as well as those negotiated with Student Accessibility Coordinator. These are listed below along with other helpful strategies.

Accommodations for students with psychiatric disabilities

Psychiatric illnesses can affect individuals of any age, gender, and intellectual group. The onset of these illnesses can occur at any developmental period, but the onset of many types of psychiatric illnesses most commonly occurs between the ages of 18 and 25. This is of critical importance to those of us working in postsecondary education settings since at most institutions the majority of students fall within this age range. A psychiatric illness is considered a "disability" when it results in a substantial limitation in a major life activity.

In the higher education setting, students with psychiatric disabilities have been typically underserved. The impact of these disabilities on academic achievement is not widely understood or recognized. Psychiatric disturbances are grouped into a number of categories including psychoses, organic brain syndromes, substance abuse, mood disorders and personality disorders. There are many treatments available to individuals with psychiatric disabilities, including both medication and mental health therapy.

The stigma of psychiatric labels, the stereotypes that come with these labels, and concerns over disruptive behavior (generally unfounded) often result in exclusion and isolation for the student with a psychiatric disability. Recognizing that disruptive behavior is not a defining characteristic of most people with psychiatric disabilities is important. Not every student who has a psychiatric disability is disruptive. Most are not. The converse is also true: Not every student who is disruptive has a psychiatric disability.

Many persons in this group are without sufficient community support and relevant interventions. The higher degree of social stigma also separates this group from the rest of the population of persons with disabilities at Cowley College and may prevent us from providing adequate support. Sometimes students choose not to seek assistance from Disability Services and prefer not to request accommodations from their instructors. Some choose to identify themselves to Disability Services, but not to their instructors. Others will approach you and ask for accommodations in the same way as any other student with a disability.

Issues that arise with these students may be a result of the disorder itself, the medication taken to control symptoms, or a combination of the two. Environmental factors may also have an impact. Functional limitations include difficulty concentrating and staying focused during stressful situations (including exams), maintaining orientation to the physical layout of campus, and selecting appropriate courses and a workable course load. Social skills involved in one-to-one and group interactions vary widely.

Students with psychiatric disabilities have accommodation needs just as other students with disabilities do. Individual students must identify themselves and provide documentation to Disability Services if services are needed.

General Considerations

- **The need for accommodations may vary from time to time.** The student's symptoms may vary during the semester. A student with a psychiatric disability may begin the semester in good health, but may have an episode during the semester.
- **The student may have to miss classes occasionally or may have an extended absence.**
- **The student may have symptoms that directly affect his or her ability to perform academically.** Symptoms that may have a direct impact on learning include: difficulty concentrating, fatigue, memory and recall problems, and drowsiness. These symptoms can be caused by the disability or may be side effects of medications.
- **Psychiatric disabilities are "hidden" disabilities.** Psychiatric disabilities have long carried a certain stigma. These disabilities are sometimes misunderstood or perceived in a negative light. Students with these disabilities sometimes express concerns that they will be treated differently or discriminated against once their disability is revealed. These students, therefore, may not get accommodations that would allow them to perform at their full potential. Faculty and staff can help to break this cycle by providing a safe and supportive atmosphere for students and by taking students who disclose their disabilities seriously.
- **Students with psychiatric disabilities may not be aware that they qualify for services available to people with disabilities.** If a student reveals to you that he or she has a psychiatric disability and the student is having difficulties in class, you may want to refer him or her to Disability Services.

Some of the more commonly diagnosed psychiatric illnesses - major depression, bipolar disorder, dysthymia, anxiety disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, phobia, and schizophrenia - are described briefly at the end of this section.

Classroom Guidelines

- **Allow early access to syllabi and reading assignments.** Getting organized ahead of time and beginning reading assignments early may help the student stay on track in case of later absences.
- **Facilitate the process for the student to use a classmate as a note taker.** You may be asked to help recruit a volunteer. You can make a brief announcement in class to see if anyone might be interested in note taking. In your initial private meeting with the student clarify whether the student wants to be pointed out as the person to contact or would prefer not to be pointed out to the class as a person with a disability. Most people with disabilities that are not immediately visible prefer not to be pointed out to others, and we must honor this request. The student can pick up some 2-part self-carbon paper from Disability Services for the note taker to use.
- **Provide copies of overheads or PowerPoint slides, either on paper or electronically.**
- **Allow students to tape record lectures.** Students with disabilities are legally entitled to tape record lectures.
- **Consider providing copies of your class notes.** Some faculty prefer to post these on a website for all students.
- **Support modifications in seating arrangements.** Seating location in the classroom can have an impact on ability to focus and concentrate.

- **Tolerate the student leaving the classroom for breaks.** Some medication regimes cause extreme thirst as a side effect.
- **Offer alternative ways of completing assignments.** For example, a student with severe anxiety may perform better doing a written assignment or a pre-recorded presentation versus an oral presentation. In doing so, do not lower your standards; just consider other ways the course objectives might be met.
- **Allow for periodic appointments outside of class to discuss progress, provide support and feedback.** A symptom of some psychiatric illnesses is extreme self-doubt, while other illnesses may result in an inflated self-esteem. Meeting with the student regularly to give the student a realistic picture of his or her progress in your class may help the student stay on track.
- **Provide flexibility in attendance policies.** Some instructors provide points for attendance. This approach may result in a lower grade for a student with a disability. Consider alternative ways for giving credit for participation, or increase the number of absences permitted before the grade is affected.
- **Allow the student to take an "incomplete" or grant a late withdrawal rather than failure in case of prolonged absences due to severe symptoms or hospitalization.** Such cases may need to be reviewed or discussed with staff in Disability Services.

Testing Guidelines

- **Provide extended time (double time is standard),** and access to you as instructor for questions during the test. Since the ability to concentrate may be compromised by either the illness or the medications, extended time may be an appropriate accommodation.
- **Provide low distraction rooms to take exams.** Being easily distracted is a symptom of some psychiatric disabilities. Taking a test in an environment with fewer distractions may improve performance. The Disability Service office has a conference room nearby to provide distraction reduced testing if needed.
- **Remember that the same accommodations apply to pop and other quizzes, in-class writing, or other in-class assignments as to a full-length exam.** For quizzes, the student should be scheduled to complete the quiz either the same day or as close as possible to the same day. A possible solution for quizzes when a low distraction room is not an accommodation would be to have the student start in class and finish after class. For in-class assignments consider giving the student until later that day or the next day. Discuss these issues in your initial meeting with the student.

Commonly Diagnosed Psychiatric Illnesses

- **Anxiety Disorder:** This can be diagnosed as either a generalized anxiety disorder or a panic disorder. Symptoms can include changes in sleep patterns, rapid heart rate, dizziness and fainting, tremors, tension, and general uneasiness. People with anxiety disorders often seem to be unable to relax. They may focus on mistakes, worries, regrets, or potential future problems.
- **Bipolar Disorder:** This disorder is characterized by the alteration between two states: mania and depression. It is also called manic-depressive disorder and bipolar affective disorder. In the manic phase, individuals may experience an inflated self-esteem, a decreased need to sleep, inappropriate irritability, grandiose notions, poor judgment, inappropriate social behavior, and disconnected and racing thoughts. In the depressive phase, individuals may experience any of the characteristics associated with a diagnosis of depression including but not limited to feelings of worthlessness, inactivity, appetite changes, and feelings of sadness.
- **Dysthymia:** This is another type of depression that is less severe in nature. It involves more long-term, chronic symptoms that do not disable, but keep a person from functioning at full capacity or from feeling good about himself or herself. Individuals who experience dysthymia can have episodes of major depression.
- **Major Depression:** A person can be diagnosed with depression at any age. Characteristics of major depression include a persistent sad or anxious mood, feelings of sadness, inactivity,

- difficulty with thinking and concentration, thoughts of suicide, insomnia, feelings of worthlessness, feelings of guilt, an increase or decrease in appetite, and persistent physical symptoms such as headaches and stomach aches. Depression affects a person's mind, body and thoughts, and certainly affects the way a person feels about himself or herself.
- **Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder:** Individuals with this disorder think thoughts or behave in ways they do not want to. They cannot control their behavior despite recognizing that the behavior is bizarre, unhealthy, irrational, or illegal. Individuals may not always act out obsessive thoughts but the thoughts disturb the person and prevent him or her from functioning in daily life. Compulsive behavior is repetitive and ritualistic in nature, and although perceived as bizarre, seems purposeful to the individual.
 - **Phobia:** Phobias are extreme, irrational fears that severely interfere with an individual's daily functioning. Everyone has certain fears. However, an individual diagnosed with this disorder has a fear to such an irrational extent that life becomes severely disrupted.
 - **Schizophrenia:** This psychiatric illness is categorized as a psychotic disorder. Schizophrenia is characterized by extreme distortions of reality and a loss of contact with the environment. Some characteristics include a retreat from reality, emotional blunting, and disturbed thinking. All of these characteristics can vary in severity within individuals. Individuals may experience hallucinations, delusions, withdrawal, loss of self-control, and bizarre behavior. A diagnosis of schizophrenia is very serious and ultimately can affect all functional areas of an individual's life.

Accommodations for Students with Learning Disabilities

Students with learning disabilities by definition have average or better than average intelligence. Learning disabilities result from neurological differences that may alter an individual's ability to store, process, retrieve, or produce information. Some people with learning disabilities may have difficulty in only one of these areas; others may have difficulty in more than one. These difficulties may impact the following tasks:

- Reading
- Auditory processing
- Visual processing
- Writing
- Speaking
- Retrieving information from short--term memory
- Performing mathematical calculations

Every person processes information through a combination of a visual mode, an auditory mode, and a kinesthetic (or hands--on) mode. The difference for the person with learning disabilities is that one or more of these modalities may be impaired and the ability to attend to tasks is unreliable. This causes the message to become scrambled as it enters the brain during the learning process, and can trigger a scrambled response or output. The brain may not store information in an efficient manner, particularly when moving input from short--term to long--term memory. This results in poor memory, or difficulty retrieving information quickly in its complete form.

It is important to remember that students with this disability compensate by receiving and transmitting information in a modality or combination of modalities that works best for them and may need extra time to "unscramble" information. They may learn to "learn differently," which does not mean they are "unable to learn."

It is not uncommon for people with learning disabilities to be undiagnosed or misdiagnosed. If you have a student you believe may need diagnostic testing for learning disabilities, please contact Disability Services for more information or suggestions.

Additional support services may be available through the Student Support Services (IMPACT) program. Eligible students may receive tutoring, and work with counselors on studying and test taking strategies.

There is no one set of methods for each individual type of learning disability. The key to providing accommodations is to facilitate the student's ability to access and express information he or she has mastered. Otherwise, just as with the person who writes slowly due to a physical impairment, you risk "testing the disability" rather than what you wanted to test. The overall goal of classroom and testing accommodation is to allow the student to access his or her compensatory learning process through the following strategies.

Assistive Technology

Many students with learning disabilities may use assistive technology that assists them in accessing information and also in writing papers. An example is screen reader software that voices digitized text. Some screen readers have study strategies built in, such as the ability to add your own notes, highlight, color code, or bullet text easily. Another example is software to assist students to organize their writing by creating a concept map, and then outlining text from the graphic representations created. Voice to text software (Dragon Naturally Speaking) can assist students with written assignments. A primary software used by students is the Premier Technology. This software is loaded on many student computers on campus and is made available to individual students of use at home if they so desire. The Premier software will read electronic texts and web pages aloud. Writing software is also included in the package.

Classroom Guidelines

- **Allow students to use equipment in the classroom** (e.g., tape recorders, electronic spellers, laptop computers, or assistive listening devices). Students with disabilities are legally entitled to tape record lectures.
- **Facilitate the process for the student to use a classmate as a note taker.** You may be asked to help recruit a volunteer. You can make a brief announcement in class to see if anyone might be interested in note taking. In your initial private meeting with the student clarify whether the student wants to be pointed out as the person to contact or would prefer not to be pointed out to the class as a person with a disability. Most people with disabilities that are not immediately visible prefer not to be pointed out to others, and we must honor this request. The student can pick up some 2-part self-carbon paper from Disability Services for the note taker to use.
- **Provide copies of overheads or PowerPoint slides, either on paper or electronically,** or email these directly to the student, working out the specifics with each student. When creating a PowerPoint presentation, always use the auto layouts provided. If you create additional text boxes, the text in those boxes will not be accessible to students using adaptive technology.
- **Consider providing copies of your class notes.** Some faculty prefer to post these on their webpage for all students. Ask for assistance if needed to make your website accessible to screen readers.
- **Be available for individual questions about lecture content.** The opportunity to ask questions will increase students' understanding of information and concepts.
- **Hand out the syllabus as soon as possible to the student,** even before the semester starts if requested, and provide ample opportunity through office hours for the student to ask questions clarifying course requirements, projects, and timelines.
- **Make reading assignments available before the semester begins, especially for students who use books on tape or digital format.** By making textbooks and other readings available at least 10 to 12 weeks prior to the start of the course, faculty members assist in making it easier to obtain adapted materials. As you make textbook selections, please make this information available through your departmental office, the campus bookstore, Student Accessibility Coordinator, and to any students who may request it. Indicate if a previous edition will suffice, since an earlier edition may have already been recorded and should be available much more quickly. Students may call you to find out if there is any reading that is not made available through the bookstore such as articles copied from journals, or anything put on reserve at the library. It is critical that these readings be available to the student as soon as possible. Alternate format texts will be acquired through the Student Accessibility Coordinator.

- **Clarify concepts by breaking them down.** Provide tips or strategies on how to complete projects or prepare for exams. This is extremely helpful to the student with a learning disability and does not give the student an "unfair advantage" over the other students.
- **Have "model" papers/projects available** so the student can see what you consider excellent work and learn by example. You could either use work of past students or an example you work up yourself.
- **Provide a calendar that shows due dates for important assignments and tests.**
- **Provide instructions for exams and assignments in print as well as orally.**
- **Supply names of potential tutors.** If you have upper level students that are available to tutor, make these contacts available to all students. Facilitate help groups led by upper level students if possible. Campus tutoring is available to all students at all campus locations.
- **Provide vocabulary lists.** Consider providing handouts of new or technical vocabulary with examples of terms used in context. This will allow all students, especially those with learning disabilities, to organize material presented in class.

Some of these techniques can benefit the average learner in your classroom as much as a student with a learning disability. Your availability through office hours is crucial for these students, for many of whom a five to ten minute interchange can make a world of difference.

Testing Guidelines

- **Provide extended time (double time is standard)** and access to you as instructor for questions during the test. If the test is lengthy consider separating the testing into two days.
- **Provide a separate, low distraction room if needed and again access to you as the instructor for any student questions.** (Contact the Student Accessibility Coordinator or your campus director for assistance as well).
- **Consider arranging for alternate grading for everyone.** If alternate assignments to tests are equivalent measures to exams in your course, allow the student the opportunity to complete, for example, a paper or special project.
- **Put tests on cassette or allow readers** for students whose auditory processing ability is strong. A scribe or a tape recorder for responses may be needed for a student who can dictate excellent essays, but has difficulty writing them down. Allow a student who can organize thoughts well using a computer to type out answers.
- **Permit use of calculators, electronic spellers, spelling dictionaries, scratch paper, etc. on exams.** If security is a concern with electronic devices, ask the student to show you the device and seek to understand its use from a functional perspective based on the test content, its format and the student's particular disability.
- **Provide feedback on graded materials.** After returning test results to students, allow students with learning disabilities to speak to you after class or during office hours so they can gain a clear understanding of their errors. Relate test content and format back to classroom lectures, projects, and reading material.
- **If asked, provide clarification of test questions** including rephrasing a question or substituting a less complex word for a non--substantive word on the test. This is a matter of helping the student figure out what the question is asking and/or may be part of the "unscrambling" process.
- **Remember that the same accommodations apply to pop and other quizzes, in-class writing, or other in-class assignments as to a full-length exam.** For quizzes, the student should be scheduled to complete the quiz either the same day or as close as possible to the same day. A possible solution for quizzes when a low distraction room is not an accommodation would be to have the student start in class and finish after class. For in-class assignments consider giving the student until later that day or the next day. Discuss these issues in your initial meeting with the student.

There is no one set of methods for each individual type of learning disability. The overall goal of classroom and testing accommodation is to allow the student to access his or her compensatory learning process through various strategies.

Accommodations for Students with Attention Deficit Disorders

Attention Deficit Disorder is a neurological disability characterized by difficulties with tasks involving executive function. These include:

- Planning skills
- Organizational skills
- Selective attention
- Maintenance of attention
- Impulse control

Students with ADD may have difficulty maintaining their attention for a long period of time or with "screening out" unimportant stimuli in the environment. These students may also have difficulty keeping up with materials, organizing information in a meaningful way, or planning a project or paper. Attention Deficit Disorder is often treated with stimulant medications, but behavioral interventions are also recommended. Students with ADD often benefit from external supports such as the use of day planners or personal digital assistants and coaching. Breaking tasks down into manageable parts is also helpful.

It is not uncommon for people with ADD to be undiagnosed or misdiagnosed. If you have a student you believe may need diagnostic testing for ADD, please contact Disability Services for more information or suggestions. Additional support services may be available through the Student Support Services (IMPACT) program. Eligible students may receive tutoring, and work with counselors on studying and test taking strategies.

Classroom Guidelines

- **Encourage selective scheduling of classes.** Scheduling classes so that students have a break between them provides an opportunity for the student to review and organize notes, and to prepare materials for the next class.
- **Vary classroom activities and teaching methods.** Include hands--on, interactive and small group activities when possible.
- **Facilitate the process for the student to use a classmate as a note taker.** You may be asked to help recruit a volunteer. You can make a brief announcement in class to see if anyone might be interested in note taking. In your initial private meeting with the student clarify whether the student wants to be pointed out as the person to contact or would prefer not to be pointed out to the class as a person with a disability. Most people with disabilities that are not immediately visible prefer not to be pointed out to others, and we must honor this request. The student can pick up some 2-part self-carbon paper from Disability Services for the note taker to use.
- **Provide copies of overheads or PowerPoint slides, either on paper or electronically.**
- **Allow students to tape record lectures.** Students with disabilities are legally entitled to tape record lectures.
- **Consider providing copies of your class notes.** Some faculty prefer to post these on a website for all students.
- **Encourage the organization of study groups.**

- **Have "model" papers/projects available** so the student can see what you consider excellent work and learn by example. You could either use work of past students or an example you work up yourself.
- **Provide a calendar that shows due dates for important assignments and tests.**
- **Provide instructions for exams and assignments in print as well as orally.**
- **Supply names of potential tutors.** If you have upper level students that are available to tutor, make these contacts available to all students. Facilitate help groups led by upper level students if possible. Refer to campus tutors.
- **Provide vocabulary lists.** Consider providing handouts of new or technical vocabulary with examples of terms used in context. This will allow all students to organize material presented in class.

Testing Guidelines

- **Arrange for alternate grading for everyone.** If alternate assignments to tests are equivalent measures to exams in your course, allow the student the opportunity to complete, for example, a paper or special project.
- **Provide extended time (double time is standard), in a separate, low distraction room, and access to you, the instructor, for questions during the test.** If the test is lengthy consider separating the testing into two parts.
- **Provide instructions for exams and assignments in print as well as orally.**
- **Provide feedback on graded materials.** After returning test results to students, allow students to speak to you after class or during office hours so they can gain a clear understanding of their errors. Relate feedback and test content back to classroom lectures, projects, and reading material. Consider allowing students to re--take the exam for extra credit.
- **Remember that the same accommodations that apply to full--length exams also apply to pop and other quizzes, in--class writing, or other in--class assignments.** For quizzes, the student should be scheduled to complete the quiz either the same day or as close as possible to the same day. A possible solution for quizzes when a low distraction room is not an accommodation would be to have the student start in class and finish after class. For in--class assignments consider giving the student until later that day or the next day. Discuss these issues in your initial meeting with the student.

Some of these techniques can benefit the average learner in your classroom as much as a student with ADD. Your availability through office hours is crucial for these students, for many of whom a five or ten minute interchange can make a world of difference.

Accommodations for Students Who are Blind or have Low Vision

The impact that vision loss has on learning and the accommodation process will vary. Some of the factors that influence those variations are:

- Age of onset of the vision loss
- Severity of loss
- Type of loss
- Educational setting
- Opportunities for training and exposure to assistive technologies

The majority of people with impaired vision have some usable, residual vision. Very few persons are "totally blind." How much a person can see often varies throughout the day depending on variables such as lighting, color contrast, physical health, eye condition, and weather conditions. Some individuals function better in subdued lighting rather than bright lighting. Some with impaired vision can see better with glasses

or large print. Each student can help you understand what will maximize his or her functioning in your class.

Of primary concern to students with vision loss is access to information. A delay in gaining access to syllabi, handouts, and textbooks can have a major impact on a student's ability to perform in a class. It is therefore critical that these students have access to information in a timely manner. The methods that students use to access written materials will vary depending on their type of vision loss, personal preferences, and educational background. Students with low vision will likely prefer large print and magnification devices. Among students who are blind, some prefer to access information through auditory means and others prefer to use Braille.

Determining what methods will work best in a given class is a process which will take some discussion between the student, instructor, and possibly the Disability Services staff. By the time some students with impaired vision reach college, they have developed their own methods for dealing with visual materials and can inform faculty members of their needs. Others need to work much more closely with their instructors and Disability Services in an ongoing process to develop strategies that work. Even those students with the most experience will come across course requirements unlike any they have had in the past, making new strategies necessary. Students may use one of several methods or a combination of methods.

Assistive Technology

Assistive technology and equipment will be very important when working with a student who has impaired vision. There are a lot of options for students with visual impairments and no two students are alike. It is important not to make assumptions when working with a student with a vision loss. The preferred method of accessing information will depend on the student and his or her experiences. Despite the method, it will be crucial for students to achieve access. Specifics on how this can be accomplished will be described in the next section.

Alternative Formats

For students with impaired vision, print materials (including graphics) are accessed through alternative formats and adaptive devices. Faculty will probably be asked to provide handouts, including the course syllabus, and exams in another format. For the most part, Cowley College is required to provide information in the format the student requests, though there may be alternatives that can be discussed. For example, if a student asks for materials in Braille, a diskette may also be acceptable to the student.

- **Large print can be produced in a variety of ways.** The simplest may be using copy machines to increase the size of print. Some (though not most) students may be able to use a portable, hand--held magnifier to read regular print in any location. Print materials can also be enlarged through your word processing software, a relatively simple, effective, and very portable alternative. In some cases a student may request a diskette, which enables the student to read directly on the computer screen or print out the information in large font. You might ask the student to provide an example of the size print he or she can use.
- **It is important to plan ahead.** The Disability Services Office at Cowley College has little equipment to assist students with low vision difficulties. Plans and equipment will need to be accessed as soon as possible. Proper plans will take time to develop so early notification will be essential.

Classroom Guidelines

- **Provide a brief description of the layout of the classroom and furniture.** This is especially important if there are any changes from one class period to the next. Also consider any obstacles that might present a problem.

- **Be prepared to change seating arrangements if necessary to improve the students' ability to see you or others.** If the student has low vision, a seat in the front of the room may greatly improve his or her ability to participate effectively.
- **If a class is moved or cancelled, remember that a note on the board or door may not be sufficient notification for a student with vision loss.** Make sure that the message is delivered effectively to the student. If you don't have a phone number or email address for the student, contact Disability Services.
- **Keep in mind that students may be oriented to take a specific route to class each time.** If unexpected barriers occur (such as construction on a sidewalk), the student may have to seek assistance from someone to find an alternate route. Most students will be aware of time restrictions and will schedule their classes accordingly. Some barriers, however, are unpredictable. These barriers may result in tardiness on the student's part.
- **Be ready to provide reading lists, syllabi or assignments in advance.** This will allow the student time to have the materials translated into Braille, read on tape, or printed in large print. By making textbooks and other readings available at least 10 to 12 weeks prior to the start of the course, faculty members assist in making it easier to obtain adapted materials. As you make textbook selections, please make this information available through your departmental office, the campus bookstore, Student Accessibility Coordinator and to any students who request it. Indicate if a previous edition will suffice, since an earlier edition may have already been recorded and would be available much more quickly. Students may call you to find out if there is any reading that is not made available through the bookstore, such as articles copied from journals, or anything put on reserve at the library. It is critical that these readings be available to the student as soon as possible.
- **Consider the impact of the lighting on the student's ability to see.** Avoid standing in front of a light source as this may cause a glare and make seeing you more difficult.
- **Provide copies of PowerPoint slides on paper and/or disc,** or email these either directly to the student or to Disability Services to be modified. Work out the specifics with each student. When creating a PowerPoint presentation, always use the auto layouts provided. If you create additional text boxes, the text in those boxes will not be accessible to students using adaptive technology.
- **Facilitate the process for the student to use a classmate as a note taker.** You may be asked to help recruit a volunteer. You can make a brief announcement in class to see if anyone might be interested in note taking. In your initial private meeting with the student clarify whether the student wants to be pointed out as the person to contact or would prefer not to be pointed out to the class as a person with a disability. Most people with disabilities that are not immediately visible prefer not to be pointed out to others, and we must honor this request. The student can pick up some 2-part self-carbon paper from Disability Services for the note taker to use.
- **Provide copies of overheads, either on paper or electronically.**
- **Allow students to tape record lectures.** Students with disabilities are legally entitled to tape record lectures.
- **Consider providing copies of your class notes.** Some faculty prefer to post these on a website for all students. Ask for assistance if needed to make your website accessible to screen readers.
- **Be aware that some students may choose to use note taking devices that make some noise.** Some of these devices may include a Braille writer, a laptop computer, an electronic note taker, or a slate and stylus. Seating arrangements can be discussed to minimize the impact on other students of the sound of these devices.
- **Write clearly on boards or overheads with adequate spacing between words and lines.** Handouts and any printed materials including photocopies should provide maximum color contrast and adequate spacing. Be prepared to make large print copies or provide handouts on a computer diskette if requested.
- **Read aloud any material written on the board, on overheads or in PowerPoint slides.** Even though you have provided a copy of the overheads or slides, the student may be unable to read these in class. Reading what is on the overhead as you lecture will enable the student to follow the concepts and organization of your lecture more easily.
- **When pointing to an object of discussion, use the name of the object instead of "this" or "that."** If you are using the blackboard or other visual aids, describe verbally what you are

- showing to the class. Be specific in your descriptions. Make objects available for students to explore more fully before (preferably) or after class.
- **Loan a copy of charts, maps, or other large graphics to the student to follow during the class lecture, or if not possible, before or after class.**
 - **Use contrasting colors and less figure and/or ground clutter to provide better viewing when demonstrating or showing an object.** Allow the student to move closer in order to see the object or allow for demonstration through hands--on method.
 - **Keep in mind that Braille and large print differ from standard print.** If you are reading from a textbook or handout in class, remember that the page numbers in your copy may not correspond to Braille or large print versions. In addition to giving the page number, also provide descriptive information about the section you are reading, such as "the fourth paragraph in Chapter 6."
 - **When planning field trips, remember that students may need to make arrangements for a sighted guide or may need to become familiar with the new setting in advance.** Inform students well in advance of such activities. Another student in the class may be willing to be the sighted guide. Disability Services and/or the student will provide information about how this is done. If there are no volunteers, Disability Services will do everything possible to provide a sighted guide.
 - **Understand that laboratory work will be considerably more complex.** Certain assignments may require some type of adaptation, which should be agreed upon by the student and faculty member at the beginning of the course. Adaptations may include the student directing a lab assistant to take the necessary action required to complete a task that the student is physically unable to do. Some other tasks required of the lab assistant are to describe visual material in detail and to read from and record in the lab manual. Disability Services can assist by hiring the lab assistant and providing him or her with some guidelines. You and other faculty in your department might be able to help recruit someone who is familiar with your lab procedures.

Testing Guidelines

- **Discuss plans for modifying testing procedures prior to the first exam.** You and the student should agree on a mutually convenient method or combination of methods for testing accommodations in advance, with the option to modify as needed throughout the semester. Consider factors such as extended time, the availability of adaptive equipment, and a distraction--free location for taking the exam. In addition, some students experience pain, fatigue, or fluctuations in vision that may require them to take a break during testing. Time and place are important factors and it is the department's role to provide the room. Contact the Student Accessibility Coordinator for assistance in providing a suitable space.
- **Determine which format will work best for your student.** The student may choose to get the exam in Braille, in regular print (and use a magnification device), in large print, on cassette tape, or on computer diskette to be used with an adapted computer. Some students may prefer having the test read onto an audiotape or by a live reader.
- **Understand and plan for the fact that, except for Braille, faculty are responsible for producing the test format themselves or in conjunction with department staff.** A good option may be taping the test and either leaving appropriate space between questions for student responses, or using a second tape for answers. Disability Services will assist with this accommodation.
- **Consider how students will record their answers to the exam.** They may write their answers on an answer sheet or directly on the test, record their answers on an audiotape, type into an adapted computer, or use a scribe.
- **Provide extended time (time and one half is standard),** and access to you as instructor for questions during the test. The use of adaptive equipment or an alternate format such as audiotape, large print or Braille takes extra time.
- Remember that the same accommodations that apply to full--length exams also apply to pop and other quizzes, in--class writing, or other in--class assignments. For quizzes, the student should be scheduled to complete the quiz either the same day or as close as possible to the same day. A possible solution for quizzes when a low distraction room is not an accommodation would be to

have the student start in class and finish after class. For in--class assignments consider giving the student until later that day or the next day. Discuss these issues in your initial meeting with the student and consult with the Student Accessibility Coordinator.

Accommodations for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

The major challenge facing students who are deaf or hard of hearing is access to the spoken word. People with hearing loss make up a very diverse group. The impact of a hearing loss will vary from person to person. There are several factors that contribute to the diversity among people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Some of these factors are:

- Age of onset of hearing loss
- Degree of hearing loss
- Communication method
- Type of educational program(s) attended

As a result of the variety of these factors, there may be a significant impact on the student's written communication and/or reading comprehension. Students who were born deaf or became deaf soon after birth usually have learned English as a second language. Any deficit you may notice in the student's English skills is not a reflection of his or her intelligence.

Communication Issues

- The deaf or hard of hearing students you have in your class may use sign language, speech, or a combination of the two. It is best not to make assumptions about how a student will communicate.
- Students who are deaf or hard of hearing receive information in various ways: through an interpreter, speech reading, an Assistive Listening Device (ALD), real--time captioning, or a system of speech to text transcription.
- Sometimes students use a combination of accommodations (for example, an ALD and speech to text transcription).
- Having a student who is deaf or hard of hearing in your class does not mean you have to learn sign language. Although it is always appreciated when faculty learn some finger spelling or some sign language (perhaps being able to say, "My name is..." or "Good morning. How are you?") to help put the student at ease, it is not expected that teachers who only occasionally have deaf or hard of hearing students in their classroom will learn to sign. Interpreters or transcribers will be provided upon request from the student to facilitate the communication in the classroom (or the lab, field trips, etc).
- If a student requests an interpreter or any other accommodation, it will be accomplished through the Disability Services office.
- Always look at the student when you speak, whether or not an interpreter or transcriber is used.
- Address the student directly using first--person speech. Never say to an interpreter, "Tell him (or her)."
- Speak naturally and clearly. Don't exaggerate lip movements or volume.
- Use appropriate facial expressions, gestures, and other natural body language.
- Students with significant hearing loss will likely use a TDD (Telecommunication Device for the Deaf) to communicate on the telephone. If you need to contact the student by phone and don't have a TDD, be aware that the Kansas Relay Service allows you to use your telephone to call a deaf student and have a conversation through an operator who types what you say to the student, and voices what the student types to you. E-mail and instant messaging may also be appropriate methods for contacting students.

Using Interpreters

- Interpreters facilitate communication between you and your class and the student who is deaf or hard of hearing.
- Interpreters are certified professionals who train for many years to do their job and who abide by a code of ethics.
- Interpreters sign in the language or mode that the student prefers. This can include American Sign Language (ASL), signing more in English word order, or somewhere along the continuum between the two. The oral interpreter mouths without voice what is being said so students can speech read more easily. The interpretation between the spoken and/or signed message requires processing time. The processing time is usually equivalent to a few words or concepts and may vary depending on the subject matter. The communication facilitated through the interpreter allows the student to receive information, make contributions to lectures or discussions, and have individual dialogues with students and faculty.
- The interpreter will usually stand or sit near the speaker. The student then has the option of viewing both you and the interpreter to more fully follow the flow of conversation.
- If you know a student uses an interpreter and you want to catch him or her in the hall but do not see the interpreter, communicating with written notes is appropriate. For lengthier discussion, give the student a note requesting an appointment time and asking the student to bring an interpreter. Plenty of lead time will be necessary to contact the interpreter.

Using Transcribers (CART)

- Real time captioning software is a new concept in transcribing. Cowley College does not currently have this equipment. Some students may come to us with this specialized computer software. Arrangements will need to be made at that time.

Using Assistive Listening Devices

- Many students who use hearing aids effectively in quiet environments have a difficult time following information presented in large college classrooms. In the classroom, the instructor's voice is competing with background noise, room echo, and distance. Therefore, the intelligibility of the instructor's voice is degraded by the poor room acoustics as well as the hearing loss. Most Assistive Listening Device systems (ALDs) use a microphone /transmitter positioned close to the instructor's mouth to send the instructor's voice through the air to the receiver worn by the student. By placing the microphone close to the instructor's mouth, ALDs can provide clear sound over distances, eliminate echoes, and reduce surrounding noises. Assistive Listening Devices have proven to be an effective teaching tool for students with hearing loss. Providing a good listening environment can have a major impact on an individual's academic performance.
- When ALDs are being used, it is helpful to repeat what is said off-mic. For example, if a question is voiced by a student in the class, repeating it on mic will ensure that the deaf or hard of hearing student gets the information and will also likely benefit other students in the class.
- If a student or someone else in the classroom is going to speak for a long period of time, have that person wear the mic.
- If you are going to have a private conversation or leave the classroom, be sure to turn the transmitter unit off. Otherwise, you may be out of the classroom, but what you're saying isn't.
- The student will provide you with the mic and transmitter prior to each class. Return the equipment to the student at the end of class. The student is responsible for maintaining the equipment and making sure the batteries are charged.

Classroom Guidelines

- **Do not stand in front of a light source.** Standing in front of a light source puts your face in a shadow, making it very difficult to speech read you.

- **Face the student when speaking.** Try to avoid speaking any time the student can't see your face, such as when you write on the board or walk around the room.
- **Don't block your face from view.** When using an overhead projector, stand to the side of the projector so that it doesn't block your face. If a PA microphone is used in a large classroom, keep the microphone below your mouth to facilitate speech reading.
- **Use visual aids whenever possible.**
- **Be specific when referencing information.** When referring to items on the board, try to be specific about the word or phrase you're making reference to by pointing directly to it.
- **Show captioned tapes.** When showing a videotape to the class, make sure it is captioned. Make sure any videos you purchase for classroom use are captioned. Videos may be 'open captioned' (always visible) or "closed captioned" (visible only when a decoder within the television reveals them).
- **For small classrooms, arrange desks in a semi-circle.** If that is not possible, the deaf or hard of hearing student may want to sit in front and to the side to better see you, the interpreter, and the rest of the class.
- **Be aware of noise level.** Hard of hearing students, whether or not they are using an assistive listening device may be very sensitive to environmental sounds, which tend to 'mask' speech. Background noise should be kept to a minimum.
- **Repeat comments from other students if needed.** If the interpreter or transcriber was unable to hear the comments, or if the student is using an Assistive Listening Device, repeating comments or questions from the class ensures the student gets the information.
- **When new materials are to be covered which involve technical terminology not in common usage,** supply a list of these words in advance to the student and the interpreter or transcriber.
- **Facilitate the process for the student to use a classmate as a note taker.** You may be asked to help recruit a volunteer. You can make a brief announcement in class to see if anyone might be interested in note taking. In your initial private meeting with the student clarify whether the student wants to be pointed out as the person to contact or would prefer not to be pointed out to the class as a person with a disability. Most people with disabilities that are not immediately visible prefer not to be pointed out to others, and we must honor this request. The student can pick up some 2-part self-carbon paper from Disability Services for the note taker to use.
- **Provide copies of overheads or PowerPoint slides, either on paper or electronically.**
- **Consider providing copies of your class notes.** Some faculty prefer to post these on a website for all students.

Testing Guidelines

Most students who are deaf or hard of hearing will be able to take examinations and be evaluated in the same way as other students. Accommodations may be needed for some.

- **Permit students to utilize an interpreter when necessary to assess their knowledge of content.** On written exams, due to idiomatic expressions and syntactic English subtleties, some students may require an interpreter to interpret the questions in their preferred mode of communication. A voice interpreter may also be needed when students are being assessed for performance on oral presentations or in discussions.
- **Allow the student who is deaf to sign test answers to you through an interpreter when this is indicated as an accommodation.** This can be an effective way to ensure the student understands the content of the class material, and is not getting stuck on the English verbiage.
- **Provide extended time (double time half is standard),** and access to you as instructor for questions during the test. Utilizing an interpreter to communicate the content of exams takes additional time. Extended time may also be recommended due to a student's lack of proficiency in English.
- **Remember that the same accommodations apply to pop and other quizzes, in-class writing, or other in-class assignments as to a full-length exam.** For quizzes, the student should be scheduled to complete the quiz either the same day or as close as possible to the same day. A

possible solution for quizzes would be to have the student start in class and finish after class. For in-class assignments consider giving the student until later that day or the next day. Discuss these issues in your initial meeting with the student.

Accommodations for Students with Medical Disabilities

There are many chronic diseases and medical conditions that may affect a student's educational pursuits on a continuing or periodic basis. The following are examples of medical conditions that may be encountered: diabetes, seizure disorders, severe allergies, asthma, sickle cell anemia, post-polio syndrome, low back injury, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, lupus erythematosus, kidney disease, AIDS, HIV, rheumatoid arthritis, chemical sensitivities, cancer, etc. Obviously, the symptoms of these illnesses vary greatly and, as a result, the accommodations that students need vary. Accommodation is determined on an individual basis as a result of discussion and planning between the student, Disability Services, and faculty.

EMERGENCY SITUATION GUIDELINES

There are some medical conditions that may, at some time, cause an apparent emergency situation in the classroom. Knowing what to expect and what should be done can lessen anxiety and help keep the situation in perspective.

Phone Protocol

Render first aid yourself, if you know how, and send someone to call for help. Call Health Services (441-5236), give the following information and then wait for instructions:

- who is calling;
- exact location of the emergency;
- what has happened and what is being done.

If the individual can't walk to Health Services and is in need of medical attention, call 911. Station someone outside the building to direct emergency personnel to the scene.

Seizures

Seizures have different causes and vary considerably in appearance. Students with epilepsy or other seizure disorders should talk to you at the beginning of the semester to let you know what symptoms they have and what you should do. The degree of severity ranges from a brief staring episode to a grand mal seizure. The latter is the more frightening to observe.

- Don't panic. Seizures are usually short and not life threatening.
- Protect the person from injury by removing chairs or desks, not letting a crowd form, and placing a towel or coat under the person's head if needed for protection.
- Do not try to force anything into the mouth.
- If a person seems to be having trouble breathing, turn the person on his or her side; or from behind, push the lower jaw up and out; or tilt the head back to open the airway.
- Following a seizure, the person may be sleepy or confused.
- Have someone accompany him or her to Health Services.

Insulin Reactions

Occasionally, a person with diabetes may experience a rapid drop in blood sugar, causing restlessness, irritability or confusion, followed by increasing stupor and loss of consciousness.

- The immediate need is for orange juice, a regular soft drink or something else sweet, followed shortly by more substantial food. Usually a person with diabetes will carry food.
- You may need to find and get it out of the person's purse, backpack, or pockets.
- Emergencies from elevated blood sugar do not happen rapidly, so don't worry about doing the wrong thing: give the drink or candy first.

The exception to this rule is if the person is losing consciousness. In this case, do not give fluids or put food in the person's mouth. Call for help.

Breathing Emergencies

An allergic reaction, asthma or heart disease may cause a person to become short of breath.

- Staying calm will help diffuse the situation and allow you to use good judgment.
- Ask the student if he or she knows what is causing the problem and what helps.
- Follow any directions given by the person if he or she seems to be in control.
- The person may have medication to take.
- If indicated, follow the phone protocol outlined above.

Environmental Illness or Chemical Sensitivity Disorder

If a student with Environmental Illness or Multiple Chemical Sensitivity Disorder is severely allergic to something in the classroom environment, it may be necessary to move the class to another building or a room with better ventilation. For example, chemical substances associated with new carpeting, painting, or other restoration work found in one building may not be found in another. If the allergy seems to be to something like the type of markers used on overheads, you can easily accommodate the student by finding another kind, or a different way to display information. Sometimes different cleaning materials can be substituted for those that might be causing problems. Faculty may need to encourage students in the class to avoid using hair sprays, perfumes or other chemicals on the days they have a class with these individuals. Symptoms include headaches, breathing disorders, intestinal problems, memory loss, flu-like symptoms, dizziness, mental confusion, depression, and chronic exhaustion.

General Considerations

Since medical disabilities vary greatly, the implications and accommodations will vary greatly as well. An awareness of the possible implications of medical disabilities will help you determine teaching strategies and accommodations that might be helpful. Be aware of the following possibilities when teaching students with medical disabilities.

- **The student's symptoms may vary during the semester. A student with a chronic illness may begin the semester in good health but have an episode or relapse during the semester.** The need for accommodations, therefore, may vary from time to time.
- **The student may have to miss classes occasionally or may have an extended absence.**
- **The student may have symptoms that directly affect his or her ability to perform academically.** Symptoms that may have a direct impact on learning include: difficulty concentrating, fatigue, memory and recall problems, and drowsiness. All of these symptoms can be caused by an illness or may be side effects of medications.
- **The student may have other symptoms that affect his or her participation in other ways.** It is important to be aware that many symptoms influence a person's ability to participate in class. For example, a student may not be able to tolerate sitting or standing for long periods of time and may need to have the freedom to change positions during the class period. Some illnesses or medications make a person susceptible to dehydration, so students with these illnesses may need to have water available or leave the classroom to get a drink occasionally. Even though these

symptoms do not directly affect learning, they do have an impact on how the student engages in the learning process.

- **The disability may be a "hidden" disability.** There may not be outward signs that a student has a chronic illness. Students with "hidden" or "invisible" disabilities often have to deal with disbelief from others regarding the implications of their illness. This can lead to insecurities and hesitancy to request accommodations. The variability of symptoms may also contribute to the skepticism of those around them. It is important to be aware that variability of symptoms is common and a person doesn't have to "look sick" to have severe symptoms.
- **Students with medical conditions may not be aware that they qualify for services available to people with disabilities.** If a student reveals to you that he or she has a medical condition and the student is having difficulties in class, you may want to refer him or her to Disability Services.
- **Chronic pain may result from the presence of many disabilities or illnesses.** Pain has unique implications and impacts on learning. When a person is in pain, his or her ability to concentrate and perform mental tasks is often reduced. Chronic pain also results in fatigue, which in turn further reduces a person's capacity to concentrate. In addition, the medications that are prescribed for chronic pain often have a direct impact on concentration, memory, and alertness.

Classroom Guidelines

- **Allow early access to syllabi and reading lists.** Getting organized ahead of time and beginning reading assignments early may help the student stay on track in case of later illness and absences.
- **Facilitate the process for the student to use a classmate as a note taker.** You may be asked to help recruit a volunteer. You can make a brief announcement in class to see if anyone might be interested in note taking. In your initial private meeting with the student clarify whether the student wants to be pointed out as the person to contact or would prefer not to be pointed out to the class as a person with a disability. Most people with disabilities that are not immediately visible prefer not to be pointed out to others, and we must honor this request. The student can pick up some 2-part self-carbon paper from Disability Services for the note taker to use.
- **Provide copies of overheads or PowerPoint slides, either on paper or electronically.**
- **Allow students to tape record lectures.** Students with disabilities are legally entitled to tape record lectures.
- **Consider providing copies of your class notes.** Some faculty prefer to post these on a website for all students.
- **Support modifications in seating arrangements.** Seating location in the classroom can have an impact on ability to focus and concentrate.
- **Tolerate them leaving the classroom for breaks.** Some medications cause thirst or dry mouth as a side effect.
- **Consider granting extensions on assignments.** Due to fatigue or other symptoms, it sometimes takes students with medical disabilities longer to complete assignments.
- **Provide flexibility in attendance policies.** Some instructors provide points for attendance. This approach may result in a lower grade for a student with a disability. Consider alternative ways for giving credit for participation, or increase the number of absences permitted before the grade is affected.
- **Grant incompletes or late withdrawals rather than failures in the event of prolonged illness-related absences.** Such cases may need to be reviewed or discussed with Disability Services.

Testing Guidelines

- **Provide extended time (time and one half is standard),** and access to you as instructor for questions during the test. Since concentration ability may be compromised by either the illness or the medications, extended time may be an appropriate accommodation.
- **Consider providing exams divided into segments with rest breaks.** Students may need a break during an exam. In order to maintain the security of the exam, consider providing long exams in segments so that the student can leave the room if needed during the break.

- **Provide low-distraction rooms to take exams.** For students whose medication or illness causes concentration difficulties, taking a test in an environment with fewer distractions may improve performance.
- Remember that the same accommodations apply to pop and other quizzes, in-class writing, or other in-class assignments as to a full-length exam. For quizzes, the student should be scheduled to complete the quiz either the same day or as close as possible to the same day. A possible solution for quizzes when a low distraction room is not an accommodation would be to have the student start in class and finish after class. For in-class assignments consider giving the student until later that day or the next day. Discuss these issues in your initial meeting with the student.

Accommodations for Students who Use Wheelchairs or have Other Mobility Impairments

Some of the disabilities that limit mobility include spinal cord injuries, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, amputation of limbs, injuries to limbs, arthritis and back injuries. There are many other physical conditions that result in limitations in mobility. A student's mobility limitations may be consistent throughout the semester or may fluctuate depending on the cause of the disability.

Physical access is one of the major concerns of students who use wheelchairs or have limited mobility. Students must learn routes to and from classes and across campus that do not present barriers. A barrier may be a stair, a curb, a narrow walkway, a heavy door, an elevator door that has no delay mechanism, a crowded elevator, a vehicle blocking a curb cut or ramp, or a sign in the middle of a walkway. Physical barriers also include objects such as books, equipment, and laboratory materials which students must manipulate in order to complete course requirements.

It is difficult to make generalizations about the needs of students who use wheelchairs since some students are, for example, able to stand for short periods of time, while others are not able to stand at all. Some students have full use of their upper limbs, while others have minimal or no use of their upper limbs. For those who have limited hand use and upper body strength, the need for accommodation will be greater.

Most students who use wheelchairs will ask for assistance if they need it. It is best not to assume automatically that assistance is required. An offer of assistance is fine and is often very much appreciated, but do not insist, and accept a "no, thank you" graciously.

Assistive Technology

Students with mobility impairments use a variety of types of assistive technology, from canes and walkers to adapted computer systems. Computer adaptations include voice recognition software, mouth sticks or head sticks used to hit the keys, adapted keyboards, trackballs, and systems that allow the person to select something on the screen using eye gaze.

- **If a classroom or faculty office is inaccessible, it will be necessary to find an accessible location or alternate class section that is held in an accessible location.** The Student Accessibility Coordinator can assist faculty members and students as necessary to make changes in location.
- **A table may need to be placed in a classroom that normally has only desks.** The student should contact Disability Services to request the table. Ask the student where he or she would like the table placed. Ideally, the table would be placed prior to the beginning of classes or soon after classes begin and would remain in that location throughout the semester. Some students with back injuries also require a table and chair. Please do not move this furniture to department offices or locations other than classrooms since they are placed in classrooms specifically for use by students with disabilities.

- **Theater-type classrooms with raised seating may present difficulties** unless there is a large enough flat floor space in the front or rear of the room for a person to position a wheelchair (there must also be an entrance to and from that level).
- **Classrooms with adjustable, movable tables and chairs are more accessible to students in wheelchairs than are rooms with standard classroom desks.**
- **Keep in mind that students may need to wait for an elevator, take a circuitous (but accessible) route, wait for assistance in opening doors and maneuver along crowded paths and corridors.** Most students will be aware of time restrictions and will schedule their classes accordingly. Some physical barriers, however, are unpredictable. An elevator may not operate. Construction may begin on a sidewalk mid-semester. These barriers may result in tardiness on the student's part.

Classroom Guidelines

- **Facilitate the process for the student to use a classmate as a note taker.** You may be asked to help recruit a volunteer. You can make a brief announcement in class to see if anyone might be interested in note taking. In your initial private meeting with the student clarify whether the student wants to be pointed out as the person to contact or would prefer not to be pointed out to the class as a person with a disability. Most people with disabilities that are not immediately visible prefer not to be pointed out to others, and we must honor this request. The student can pick up some 2-part self-carbon paper from Student Accessibility Coordinator for the note taker to use.
- **Provide copies of overheads or PowerPoint slides, either on paper or electronically.**
- **Allow students to tape record lectures.** Students with disabilities are legally entitled to tape record lectures.
- **Consider providing copies of your class notes.** Some faculty prefer to post these on their webpage for all students.
- **Provide minimal physical assistance if needed.** If you have the class follow along with pages in a text or workbook, the student may need a classmate to help physically manipulate the pages. In the event that the student consistently needs significant physical assistance, the student is responsible for providing his or her own personal assistant.
- **If a course involves field work or field trips, evaluate whether the destination is accessible, and work out transportation.** Cowley College has a van equipped with a wheelchair lift. Since students who use wheelchairs may not have the same ability to carpool that other students without transportation have, this van is a good alternative. To reserve it, call the transportation personnel as soon as you know the dates of your trip. The van is used for many other purposes, so early reservation may be necessary. When used to transport a student with a disability there is no charge. If it is not possible to make a site accessible, alternative assignments that provide similar learning experiences can be discussed.
- **In physical education classes enlist the assistance of a classmate or provide it yourself if minimal assistance is needed.** Classmates are usually more than willing to assist, if necessary. These classes often can be modified so that students in wheelchairs can participate. Most students know their limitations and their needs and will discuss these with you. Call Disability Services when accommodation issues arise and you are unsure what to do.
- **Classes taught in laboratory settings (e.g., sciences, language labs, and art studios) will usually involve some modification of the workstation.** Considerations include: under-counter knee clearance, working counter-top height, horizontal working reach, and aisle widths. Working directly with students is the best way to provide modifications to the workstation. However, if a station is modified in accordance with established accessibility standards it will be usable by most students in wheelchairs.
- **Students who may not be able to participate in a laboratory class without a lab assistant should be allowed to benefit from the actual lab work to the fullest extent.** Students can give all instructions to a lab assistant, such as what chemical to add, what type of test tube to use, or where to dispose of used chemicals. The lab assistant may need to record answers in the lab manual. Students should do everything except the physical manipulation. Disability Services can assist by hiring the lab assistant and providing him or her with some guidelines. You and other

faculty in your department might be able to help us recruit someone who is familiar with your lab procedures.

Testing Guidelines

- **Allow dictation of responses into a tape recorder (physical assistance may be requested in setting up equipment) or use a scribe who writes as the student responds orally.** Using a secretary or work study to write out what the student has tape-recorded is an option. The Student Accessibility Coordinator may be able to help with advanced notice.
- **Provide extended time (double time is standard),** and access to you as instructor for questions during the test.
- **Allow the student to record answers on blank paper or to circle responses on the exam itself.** If necessary, department staff or other personnel can then transfer answers to the scan sheet.
- **Provide a separate time in a low-distraction room if indicated by the type of accommodation (e.g., if the student is taping his or her answers).** Student Accessibility Coordinator can assist with this accommodation with advanced notice.
- **Remember that the same accommodations that apply to full-length exams also apply to pop and other quizzes, in-class writing, or other in-class assignments.** For quizzes, the student should be scheduled to complete the quiz either the same day or as close as possible to the same day. A possible solution for quizzes when a low distraction room is not an accommodation would be to have the student start in class and finish after class. For in-class assignments consider giving the student until later that day or the next day. Discuss these issues in your initial meeting with the student.
- **If the student fatigues easily, you may need to break up the test into separate sessions.**

Accommodations for Students with Speech Disabilities

Speech impairments include a wide range of disorders including, but not limited to:

- difficulty in the expression of language;
- stuttering
- paralysis of part or all of the vocal tract
- the removal of the larynx or other structures due to cancer.

In addition, many persons who have hearing impairments will have speech impairments.

Now that more persons with severe physical limitations are exercising their rights in higher education, the instructor will likely meet individuals who cannot use the spoken word as their primary means of communication. For these persons, an Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) system may be used. AAC systems vary widely from very simple communication boards to the sophisticated electronic devices which produce synthesized or digitized speech output.

Classroom Guidelines

- **If you notice a student has a speech impairment, encourage him or her privately to talk with you about it.** In most cases, the student with the speech impairment is the best person to evaluate his or her needs and to make these needs known to the instructor. The instructor should make every attempt as early as possible to work with those individuals to make modifications which would allow the students to participate in the class.
- **Know when to contact Disability Support Services.** There may be cases in which the student cannot indicate his or her needs effectively and the instructor may not be aware of what modifications can be made to assist the student. In these cases, the instructor may want to contact the Student Accessibility Coordinator who can refer to other professionals as needed.

- **Be supportive when the student attempts to express him or herself.** Some students with speech impairments may be hesitant to participate in course-related activities that require speaking. It is important for the instructor to be supportive and respond to all appropriate attempts at self-expression by the student whether during or outside class.
- **Be patient while the student is speaking.** Do not attempt to hurry the student along or finish the student's sentences. This may increase the student's anxiety and, in turn, is likely to make it more difficult for the student to express him or herself. In many cases (especially for persons who stutter or who use Augmentative and Alternative Communication) it takes an individual with a speech impairment considerable time to express an idea.
- **Ask the student to repeat words or phrases that you do not understand.** Making an effort to truly understand the student communicates your positive regard for the student and recognizes him or her as an integral part of the class.
- **Once the student is finished speaking, summarize his or her statement or question to make sure that you understand.** Never pretend to understand when you do not. Most people quickly recognize this and this discourages the student from attempting to participate in the future.
- **Some students with speech-related disabilities may prefer not to speak in class.** Do not compel the student to speak, but consider agreeing upon a cue for the student to give you if he or she does want to participate in the conversation.
- **Never assume that because a person has difficulty speaking, that his or her comprehension is limited in any way.** Communicate with the student in the same way you communicate with other students.
- **Students may prefer to type or write their comments or questions and have another student read them aloud.** Some students may also use technology such as voice synthesizer software to participate in class discussions.
- **Consider modifying assignments such as class presentations.** Alternatives may include having the student present the material to you, accepting a paper instead of a presentation, permitting the use of a voice synthesizer, or having the student design a website or multimedia presentation to show to the class.
- **Alterations in how course requirements are met or course substitutions may need to be considered for speech communications class.** The approach to this will differ among students and may depend on the student's degree program.

Testing Guidelines

- **Make modifications in testing procedures as necessary.** When the student also has a physical impairment, such as cerebral palsy, modifications may be needed based on the physical disability. Students who use communication boards may not have vocabulary specific to the courses they take.

Disability Etiquette

Outlined below are the "Ten commandments of Etiquette for Communicating with People with Disabilities" to help you in communicating with persons with disabilities.

1. When talking with a person with a disability, speak directly to that person rather than through a companion or sign language interpreter.
2. When introduced to a person with a disability, it is appropriate to offer to shake hands. People with limited hand use or who wear an artificial limb can usually shake hands. (Shaking hands with the left hand is an acceptable greeting.)

3. When meeting a person who is visually impaired, always identify yourself and others who may be with you. When conversing in a group, remember to identify the person to whom you are speaking.
4. If you offer assistance, wait until the offer is accepted. Then listen to or ask for instructions.
5. Treat adults as adults. Address people who have disabilities by their first names only when extending the same familiarity to all others. (Never patronize people who use wheelchairs by patting them on the head or shoulder.)
6. Leaning on or hanging on to a person's wheelchair is similar to leaning on or hanging on to a person and is generally considered annoying. The chair is a part of the personal body space of the person who uses it.
7. Listen attentively when you're talking with a person who has difficulty speaking. Be patient and wait for the person to finish, rather than correcting or speaking for the person. If necessary, ask short questions that require short answers, a nod or shake of the head. Never pretend to understand if you are having difficulty doing so. Instead, repeat what you have understood and allow the person to respond. The response will clue you in and guide your understanding.
8. When speaking with a person who uses a wheelchair or a person who uses crutches, place yourself at eye level in front of the person to facilitate the conversation.
9. To get the attention of a person who is deaf, tap the person on the shoulder or wave your hand. Look directly at the person and speak clearly, slowly, and expressively to determine if the person can read your lips. Not all people who are deaf can read lips. For those who do lip-read, be sensitive to their needs by placing yourself so that you face the light source and keeping hands, cigarettes, and food away from your mouth when speaking.
10. Relax. Don't be embarrassed if you happen to use accepted, common expressions such as "See you later," or "Did you hear that?" that seem to relate to a person's disability. Don't be afraid to ask questions when you're unsure of what to do.

Source: The Ten Commandments were adapted from many sources as a public service by United Cerebral Palsy Association, Inc. (UCPA). UCPA's version was updated by Irene M. Ward & Associates (Columbus Ohio) as a public service and to provide the most current language possible for its video entitled The Ten Commandments of Communicating with People with Disabilities.

Notice of Non-Discrimination

Cowley County Community College and Area Vocational-Technical School is dedicated to providing equal opportunities to all individuals regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, genetic information, marital status, political affiliation or other legally protected category.

The college will provide all qualified individuals reasonable accommodations in the work and educational environment and ensure equal access to all College programs, activities and facilities.

The College does not discriminate in admissions, educational programs, or employment on the basis of any factor outlined above or prohibited under applicable law.

This prohibition against discrimination applies to College employees, students, contractors, or agents of the College and to anyone participating in a College-sponsored event or activity. Inquiries concerning the college's compliance with its non-discrimination policies may be referred to the Executive Director for Student Affairs or the Director of Human Resources at 125 S Second St, Arkansas City, KS 67005 or by calling 620-442-0430.