

# Accommodating Physical Disabilities in the Classroom

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APPROPRIATE CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS FOR A VARIETY OF  
PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

# Overview

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- Removing Barriers
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# Intro

A person with a disability is:

A person with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived as having such an impairment.

-Americans with Disabilities Act

# Intro

## QUIZ

The purpose of accommodations is to:

- a) Ensure student's success in the class
- b) Remove physical and educational barriers
- c) Enable students to be evaluated on their abilities rather than disabilities
- d) A and B
- e) B and C
- f) A, B, and C

# Faculty Rights and Responsibilities

## RIGHTS of Faculty:

- Right to decline accommodations without a memo (contact [adaoffice@iaia.edu](mailto:adaoffice@iaia.edu))
- Right to challenge accommodations
  - If accommodation would result in fundamental change to program or course
  - If request is of a personal nature (provide personal aide, for instance)
  - If request imposes undue financial or administrative burden
  - Must be directly challenged with the ADA Office, not the student
- Right to expect appropriate classroom behavior
  - Students must follow code of conduct and other rules regardless of disability status

# Faculty Rights and Responsibilities

## RESPONSIBILITIES of Faculty:

- Shared responsibility to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities.
- If student notifies instructor of a disability or brings a medical note to the instructor, it is the faculty member's responsibility to refer student to ADA Office.
- Due to confidentiality, the nature of the disability may not be disclosed to the faculty unless there is a specific need to know. When beneficial to the faculty/student relationship, students are encouraged to self-disclose.
- Faculty must maintain confidentiality and explicit or implicit inference to a particular student and the disability is inappropriate.

# Individuals with Disabilities Rights and Responsibilities

## RIGHTS of Individuals with Disabilities:

- Equal access to all facilities on campus.
- Equal opportunity to work, to learn, and to receive reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services.
- Appropriate confidentiality of all information regarding the disability, except as disclosures are required or permitted by law.
- Information in accessible formats.
- Reasonable accommodations that provide equal opportunity.
- Assistance from the ADA Office in removing physical, academic, and attitudinal barriers.
- Non-discrimination and freedom from retaliatory discrimination. The Americans with Disabilities Act is a civil rights law and as such is administered by the Office of Civil Rights.

# Individuals with Disabilities Rights and Responsibilities

## RESPONSIBILITIES of Individuals with Disabilities:

- Meet qualifications and maintain essential institutional standards for courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities.
- Identify as an individual with a disability and seek information, counsel, and assistance as necessary.
- Provide documentation from an appropriate professional regarding the affects of the disability on participation in courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities.
- Follow published procedures for obtaining reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services.
- Assume responsibility for testing procedures and notify faculty and Disability Services Office accordingly.
- Provide for personal disability-related needs.



# Deaf/deaf or Hard of Hearing



## Some Possible Accommodations

- Sign Language Interpreter(s)
- Real-Time Captioning (CART) service
- Note taker – we don't use these much anymore – WHY?
- Tape recorder
- FM system where the instructor uses a lapel microphone
- Preferred seating (including for interpreters)
- Visual aids – VERY visual learners
- Supplementation of lectures with written outlines, .PDF handouts, or notes on the board
- Captioning on all multimedia material (this is a legal requirement, even if material is supplemental)

# Deaf/deaf or Hard of Hearing



## General Reminders

- Communication is the primary challenge
- If listed as an approved accommodation, Sign Language Interpreters are required and cannot be asked to leave
  - they will tell you where they need to stand for the best communication with student; you also must consider appropriate seating arrangements
- Address the student, NOT the interpreter, even if student is not looking at you
- Speak at a normal pace, normal volume
- The majority of people who are deaf or hard of hearing DO NOT READ LIPS, and even if they do you cannot expect them to fully understand through lip-reading alone what's being communicated.
- Do not stand with light source behind you
- Use body language, gestures, expressions to help convey message

# Deaf/deaf or Hard of Hearing



## Class/Educational Reminders

- ADA regulation makes it OUR responsibility to provide “effective communication” for the educational setting
  - Student’s responsibility to report problems or issues
- Captioning on all multimedia displays-this is a legal requirement - you cannot distribute uncaptioned material
  - Captioning assistance by Academic Tech department is available but you MUST plan in advance and make requests at least 2-3 weeks out
  - YouTube captioning service is just okay - you MUST review and make corrections to your video captions to ensure clarity
  - Providing transcripts of videos for later review is best practice
- If reviewing handouts with group, you must project the material on a screen – student cannot read/follow along and also watch the interpreter.
- Plan ahead for class outings – interpreters must be made aware of changes in meeting locations
- If class is being cancelled, ADA Office must be made aware in order to cancel interpreters – 24 hours’ notice or we have to pay them!

# Blindness or Low Vision



## Possible Accommodations

- Use of a scribe or note taker
- Preferred seating (close to the chalkboard or screen)
- Tape recorded lectures
- Taped texts or screen-reader accessible texts
- Large print class materials
- Extended time for tests
- Alternate test format: e-format, oral, Braille, or large print
- Use of a voice or large print output computer with word processing software
- Extended time and alternate locations for examinations
- Use of a closed circuit enlargement system
- Extended time for certain assignments

# Blindness or Low Vision



## Visual Aids

- Anything on the board should be read out loud clearly and precisely.
- Do not use "this and that" phrases. For example "the sum of this and that" or "the lungs are located here and the diaphragm there." Precise verbal descriptions should be given.
- Raised line drawings of grafts, geometric designs, or mathematical equations can be obtained through Services for the Blind with advanced notice.
- Consider making copies of overhead material presented in class for use by the student who is blind or has low vision. These can be used to follow along or used for review later.
- Using large print on the blackboard, or the use of enlarged print on an overhead projector may be helpful to partially sighted students.

# Blindness or Low Vision



## Testing

- Some may take exams on own with extra time & large print
- Some need to have a reader and scribe (or digital recorder)
- Some need accessible documents to be used with screen reader/computer

## Texts

- Audio texts (recorded)
- Digital or e-texts can be read via a screen reader – these can be requested from the publisher and are beneficial for students with other types of disabilities, too.
- Delays or changes in text requirements can put blind students at a disadvantage to other students. We are obligated to provide the materials to all students at the same time.

# Blindness or Low Vision



## Other considerations

- Announce yourself when you enter the room (greet the student).
- For students with severe visual impairments, a general layout of the classroom should be described.
- Inform the student if the furniture has been rearranged.
- Clear pathways of obstructions.
- A guide dog accompanies some students who are blind. Guide dogs are services animals and should not be distracted from their work of guiding their handler.
- When offering a seat to the student, ask first, then place the student's hand on the back or arm of the seat and allow the student to seat him or herself.
- Once a student who is blind is oriented to campus offering to "guide" the student by a different route can be deleterious to the orientation. However, walking "with" the student will not mar the orientation.

# Mobility Impairments



## Mobility Impairments (aka Physical Disabilities)

- Partial or total loss of a function of a body part
  - Weakness, lack of stamina, lack of muscle control, or total paralysis
  - Wheelchair, cane, brace, crutches, walker, or no aids
- Can be visible or invisible



# Mobility Impairments



## Some possible accommodations

- Relocation of the class to a more accessible location.
- Provision of classroom space for a wheelchair or a wheelchair accessible desk/table.
- Advanced notice if a class activity will be held elsewhere or of cancellation.
- Reduction of the writing load thorough the use of handouts, instructor's notes, PowerPoints, supplementary texts, etc.
- Use of a note-taker or digital recorder.
- Reasonable consideration for lateness due to difficulties in the location of classroom or schedule.
- *Extended time for testing.*
- *Use of specialized software and/or a computer or for written work.*
- *Use of a scribe for testing.*
- *Oral or taped test responses.*

# Mobility Impairments



## Reminders

- Not all mobility/physical disabilities are visible
- Wheelchairs are personal/body space – don't encroach
- Speak to wheelchair users at eye-level
- Transportation and destination for fieldtrips must be accessible – contact ADA office with questions
- Workstations may need adjustments or specialized equipment
- Students with such disabilities may need additional support performing certain tasks in the classroom (lifting, reaching, etc.)
- Don't insist on helping – you may ask, but respect the person's response

# Speech Impairment

## Speech Impairments

- Physical (illness or injury), developmental
  - Stuttering, chronic hoarseness, difficulty finding words or terms
- May require minor adjustments in the classroom depending on the nature of the class

## Typical Accommodations:

- Increased writing, decreased speaking tasks
- Option to record verbal presentations, if appropriate
- Use of voice output computer or other tech
- Extra time with instructor to clarify course material (student may not want to ask questions in front of class)

# Speech Impairment

## Suggestions:

- Allow the student time to express him or herself.
- Accept and respond to all appropriate attempts at communication.
- Resist the temptation to complete words or phrases for persons with speech impairments.

# Other Physical Disabilities

## Medical Impairments - Examples

- Cancer
- Cerebral Palsy
- Seizure Disorders
- Respiratory Disorders
- Brain Injury
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Auto-immune impairments - Examples
  - HIV/AIDS
  - Hepatitis C
  - Lupus
  - Rheumatoid Arthritis
- Medication side-effects



Questions?

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