

# FACULTY GUIDE TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (FAQ)

## GENERAL INFORMATION

William Woods University is committed to providing an environment where all students have the opportunity to equally participate in the academic experience, including students with disabilities. Students with disabilities have rights as determined by federal and state laws which require institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for the student's disability in order to afford an equal opportunity to participate in the university's programs, courses, and activities.

Faculty members, who play an integral role in the process, should work closely with the Student Disability Office (SDS) rather than informally provide accommodations. If a student makes reference to having a disability, please refer them to SDS.

The information contained in this guide has been presented as a resource to help faculty members, administrators, and staff understand their vital role in accommodating students with disabilities and to address common questions about working with these students.

### An individual with a disability is:

- Any person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the person's major life activities (such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working).
- Any person who has a record of, a history of, or who has been classified as having a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more of the person's major life activities.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended through the Rehabilitation Amendments of 1992 (Rehab Act), and Section 504 establish criteria and offer guidance regarding the provision of services to students with disabilities in post-secondary education. While the scope and specific language of each of these laws differ, their goal in the higher education setting is the same: to provide meaningful access to the educational services offered by colleges and universities so that students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate.

### Syllabus statement

Faculty are **strongly encouraged** to include a statement on their syllabus directing students to SDS to make it clear that it is their responsibility and right to get the process of receiving accommodations started. The syllabus template provided by the university already includes an ADA statement, but this can be altered to fit your specific course.

### What exactly is an accommodation?

An academic accommodation is defined as **any alteration** in the usual manner of teaching, demonstrating, or evaluating a course objective, that enables a qualified student with a disability to have an equal opportunity to participate in the educational experience.

## How do you determine accommodations?

The particular accommodations that a student utilizes will depend upon their **particular characteristics and needs**, as well as the demands of the course and learning environment. Accommodations are developed from the individual student's documentation that is provided to the Office of Student Disability Services. Two students with the same disability may qualify for and be eligible to receive different accommodations.

## Am I being fair to other students by granting one student an accommodation?

Appropriate accommodations **do not compromise** the essential elements of the course, nor do they weaken the academic standards or integrity of the course. Accommodations simply provide an alternative way of accomplishing the course requirements by eliminating or reducing disability-related barriers. The goal of accommodations is to provide a level playing field, not an unfair advantage.

## Can you remind me what the "Blue Card" is?

"Blue Cards" is the term that William Woods Office of Student Disability Services uses for the student's accommodation letter. This laminated letter is to be kept by the student and is the student's responsibility to maintain on their person. Students are expected to show this and discuss with their professors at the start of the semester—we recommend within the first 2 weeks.

Professors can ask for a digital copy by emailing SDS at [ADA@Williamwoods.edu](mailto:ADA@Williamwoods.edu) or can scan a copy of the student's letter with permission.

## Why can't we just receive this letter from SDS staff directly?

Many universities are now leaning towards the direction that William Woods University follows on this statement. SDS staff believe that it is the student's responsibility to self-advocate. Students need to discuss and make practical arrangements with their instructors. Also, some students do not wish to alert instructors to their accommodation needs if they are unnecessary to a certain course.

## What do I do if a student does not tell me about their Accommodations?

Students **do not have** to tell instructors if they do not wish to disclose. However, responsibility of compliance lands on the student, not the instructor. If the professor **does not know** that the student receives services, how would the instructor know to comply? If any faculty feels that a student is hiding their Blue Card or just not informing them about their needs, the faculty can make a **general statement** to the entire class asking if anyone has accommodation needs and how to communicate that to the instructor in a private setting. SDS **recommends discussing this in faculty office-hours** with the student and not before/after class in front of everyone else.

## When do I have to comply with a student's request for accommodations?

The law provides the student with a disability the right to request accommodations from the university once he or she has provided the university with appropriate documentation. In some cases, William Woods allows for temporary services while a student is in the process of obtaining documentation of a disability. The documentation is kept by SDS, and is held in a confidential

manner. The university asks that the student discuss their disability with SDS and follow the office's process for communicating with the faculty. When you receive the request for accommodations, you should honor it, **no matter when in the semester** the student comes to you.

## What happens if I do not provide the formally requested accommodation?

The student can take **legal action** against you and/or the institution. Denial of accommodations could be considered a violation of a student's civil rights. Colleges and universities cannot discriminate against qualified people with disabilities in recruitment, admission, or treatment after admission. If you have concerns about a particular accommodation request you should discuss it with SDS staff.

## How do I know if a student is “faking” a disability?

SDS has policies and procedures for the documentation needed for each disability. It is the job of those offices to determine eligibility for accommodations. Faculty members should not expect to see diagnostic information. A student **does not** have to discuss details of their disability, or be asked what their specific disability is.

## A student came to me in the middle of the semester and said she or he has a disability, but I never knew that. What should I do?

In the university setting, the student with a disability is responsible for requesting and initiating all disability-related services and accommodations. An instructor should immediately refer the student to the SDS office. An instructor should not provide accommodations on their own unless comfortable doing so.

## How can I encourage the student to talk to me about a disability?

Each student has the right to determine when, and if to disclose the nature of a disability to the faculty. We know that communication is important and we encourage students to discuss their learning needs, as well as their strengths and weaknesses. Some students, especially those with hidden disabilities, such as psychological or learning disabilities, may need time to feel comfortable to discuss their disability. Some students may never choose or need to discuss their disability. Having open communication to everyone in class and creating an inclusive space will allow students to feel that their concerns can be heard.

## Why does SDS keep asking me to choose a textbook for my class in the fall? It's two months away, and I can't decide right now.

Students whose disability impacts their reading may receive an accommodation for their course reading materials (textbooks, handouts, syllabi, lab manuals) to be in an accessible format. Formats include cassette tape, Braille, large print, e-text, or scan and read access. Advanced planning is essential in the provision of alternate format print materials. Depending upon the particular format, it can take up to 8 weeks for a taped text and 3 or more months for a Brailled document.

I have a student with a disability who is behind in the assignments. This student has not done well on the exams. May I fail the student if she or he does not earn the required points to pass the class?

A student with a disability **should be held** to the **same standards** as any other student in the class. You may wish to contact SDS and discuss your concerns, and you would certainly want to talk to the student just as you would with any other student. Having a disability does not mean you cannot fail them. ***Equitable education does not equal success.*** Please treat all students equally, regardless of their accommodations.

Feel free to contact SDS for more information about these disabilities:

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Autism Spectrum Disorders

Communication Disorders

Learning Disabilities (dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia)

Psychological Disabilities

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Concussions (Concussion protocol is on our website)

Any others

## COMMON ACCOMMODATIONS AND SERVICES

Accommodations may include:

- Extended time on exams
- Readers for exams
- Scribes for exams
- Note takers in class
- Recorded or electronic textbooks
- Having a laptop in class
- Having a service animal with them in class
- Access to assistive technology (such as speech recognition software and scanner/screen readers)

# HOW TO SET UP EXTENDED TIME

Students with **approved** extended time on their Blue Cards are free to use extended time on all tests/quizzes **as needed**. The student will need to discuss this with the instructor **in advance** and not on the first testing day. Faculty **must comply** with this accommodation by changing the original time of the test to match their prescribed accommodation. Students will either have **Time-and-a-half (1.5x)** listed on their Blue Card or **Double Time (2x)**.

Depending on which one they have, the faculty member will need to apply this time to the test in various ways. If the test is **online**, the instructor will go into **Owlnet/BrightSpace** and click on the **test settings** and **change the time** of the test for that particular student. (Please reach out to UIT, if you are having technology concerns). If the test is done on paper, the instructor will allow the student to get the time they need.

For example:

Student A has **Time-and-a-Half** on their Blue Card. Student A informs the instructor on Day 2 of class in advance before any tests occur. Student A tells the instructor that they will need this for every test/quiz. The instructor makes note of this accommodation and the name of the student. The instructor can **email SDS for a copy** of the student's Blue Card if needed, or can **scan** the student's copy after class, if desired.

Week 3 rolls around and the students have their first exam. The instructor remembers that Student A needs Time-and-a-Half and changes the time on the test through Owlnet/BrightSpace. The class received an hour on the test, so Student A receives an hour and a half (90 mins).

Another example (double time):

Student B **has not informed** the instructor about their accommodations yet, and their first exam is tomorrow. Student B rushes to the front of the room after class and decides to finally tell the faculty member that they need **double time** on all tests and to take it in the Student Disabilities office for their **out-of-classroom, reduced-distraction accommodation**. The instructor, albeit frustrated, knows that they need to comply. The faculty member can call SDS to inform their office that a student needs to take an exam tomorrow. SDS does **not** have to take this request, as it is a last minute request and the Director may be busy with other appointments.

If the SDS office **cannot proctor** the exam, the faculty **must find an alternate way** of providing the student with a quiet space and the time allotted.

Students with double time can get double the amount that the normal class receives. For example: the class receives a 2-hour final exam. The student can get 4 hours.

In the example above, Student B and the instructor work out a way to proctor the exam and receive all of their accommodations. The instructor discusses with the student on how to best accommodate them for the future so that everyone has a more advance notice next time.

## Out-of-Classroom Testing Form on Owlnet

There is an **Out-of-Classroom Testing Form on Owlnet**, that the student must fill out, at least **5 days prior** to the test. This form is first filled out by the student, is routed to the instructor virtually, and then sent to SDS for approval. This form goes over how long the student is allowed to take the test for, what materials they can have, and how to return the test once finished. Students with the Out-of-Classroom accommodation on their Blue Card, normally do not use it for every exam/quiz.

Many students may have this listed, but will only need it for finals. Students who wish to test in Academic Building, room 107 require this quiet and reduced distraction room due to their disability.

Additional information can be found at

[https://www.williamwoods.edu/student\\_experience/undergraduate\\_student\\_experience/student\\_services/disability\\_services.html](https://www.williamwoods.edu/student_experience/undergraduate_student_experience/student_services/disability_services.html) for information regarding note-taking, concussion protocol, seizure information, flexible attendance, extended time on assignments policy and our absence policy.

## RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY

### William Woods has the responsibility to:

- uphold and maintain the academic standards set forth by the institution.
- determine the appropriate standards in developing, constructing, remodeling, and maintaining facilities in accordance with the laws of the State of Missouri.
- evaluate students and applicants on their abilities and not on their disabilities.
- provide reasonable and appropriate academic accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or services for students with disabilities in a timely manner.
- maintain and uphold confidentiality of records and communication concerning individuals with disabilities, except where disclosure is required by law, authorized by the individual, or necessary in light of the accommodation required.
- ensure that courses, programs, services, activities, and facilities, when viewed in their entirety, are available and usable in the most integrated and appropriate settings.

### William Woods has the right to:

- identify and establish essential elements and technical standards, abilities, skills, knowledge, and standards for courses, programs, services, activities, and to evaluate individuals with disabilities on this basis.
- request and receive recent and appropriate documentation from a qualified professional through SDS that verifies and supports requests for accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services.
- consult with the student in making the final determination regarding the selection of effective, appropriate, and reasonable academic accommodations, adjustments, and/or services. William Woods University reserves the right to make the final decision regarding which accommodations will be provided.
- deny a request for accommodations if the documentation does not identify a disability according to Section 504/ADA, fails to verify the need for the requested services, or is not provided in a timely manner.
- refuse to provide any accommodation that is inappropriate or unreasonable, including any that:
  - pose a direct threat to the health and safety of the individual requesting the accommodation or of others.
  - constitute a fundamental change or alteration of an essential element of a course or program.
  - pose undue financial or administrative burden on the institution.