



The Instructor Series:
Accommodating Students with Disabilities
in Post-Secondary Environments

Accommodating for Disabilities Outside the Classroom



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This booklet is part of a three-part series designed to help college faculty and instructors understand their role in the educational accommodation process. Other booklets in this series include:

- **Accommodating Students with Disabilities in the Classroom**
- **Facts on the ADA, Accommodations and Disability**

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**This document is available in alternate formats upon request. Please contact the
Division of Adult Studies for more information.**



Notice: This document was created using the definitions and regulations from the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The ADA Amendments Act was passed in 2008 to address different interpretations of what constitutes a disability under the original act, stressing a broad scope of protection under the law. See <http://www.jan.wvu.edu/bulletins/adaaal.htm> for more information.

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“She (the instructor) knows your name and she cares... and I think that matters when you have a disability.”

Student with a learning disability

Accommodating Students Outside the Classroom

The obligation to provide accommodations and ensure equal access for students with disabilities does not end at the threshold of the classroom. This obligation applies equally to student activities within and outside the classroom, both academic and non-academically focused.

Field Trips

If your class, for example, is going on a field trip to a national park to look at rock formations or to a local business to learn about a manufacturing process, the obligation to accommodate students' disabilities continues. If students need an interpreter in the classroom, they will likely need an interpreter to participate in the field trip.

However, some students who did not need accommodations in the classroom may need accommodations to participate in a field trip. For example, a student who uses a wheel chair may not have needed any accommodations in the classroom environment, but may need accessible transportation, access to accessible rest rooms, and basic access to the main activities or sites on the trip. While most private and public entities are covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act, accessibility is not yet universal. Therefore planning ahead is important.

- 1) Give your students detailed information about the field trip in advance.
- 2) Request that students who may need disability-related accommodations contact you outside of class to discuss their needs.
- 3) Call ahead. Talk with the transportation company and people at the site where you will be going. Inform them of any disability-related needs your students have such as accessibility concerns, dietary restrictions, etc.

Traveling Abroad

As a college, you are not responsible for making foreign countries accessible. You can make sure that facilities you rent are accessible for your students. You can also make sure you understand about accessible transportation and limitations, as well as barriers a student may encounter in studying in a particular location (e.g., college, museum, government buildings). A college should pay attention to and arrange for the most accessible facilities so that you are showing a good faith effort towards your students with disabilities.

Certainly, a college should be able to provide an interpreter for a student who uses one. Not providing an interpreter could cause a college to have to open its books to the Department of Justice to prove it cannot pay for communications access for its students.

Program staff would be wise to devise a plan for how they would accommodate the needs of students in overseas programs. A college could also inform prospective students of things beyond the control of the college.

Practica, Internships, Externships

Many schools provide learning opportunities for students outside the classroom. These types of activities take many forms and often include significant collaboration with outside organizations. If your school or academic department provides students with these types of opportunities, the program must be administered in a non-discriminatory manner and provide equal opportunity to students who have a disability.

Whether the school or the outside organization is responsible for providing accommodations during an outside work experience depends upon the specific facts of the situation. In situations in which a student seeks out an internship independently, gets paid by the outside organization, and the school has little or no involvement, the obligation most likely belongs to the outside organization. If, however, the student is not getting paid, is doing the outside work as credit for a class, and the school is involved in placement and supervision of the student, the school may be responsible for the accommodations.

Extra-curricular Activities

If your school offers students the opportunity to participate in extra-curricular activities, these types of activities must be administered in a non-discriminatory manner and provide equal opportunity to students who have a disability.

Other Student Activities & Services

Programs such as student housing, health services, financial aid, are also subject to the non-discrimination mandate of the ADA. For example, if housing is provided for students, the housing must also be available to students with disabilities.

Numerous federal and state regulations govern program and architectural accessibility, however, they are outside the scope of this bulletin. For more information about these standards or to find appropriate technical assistance, please see the document, "Facts on ADA, Disability, and Accommodations."

Accommodating the Needs of Non-Student Participants

As discussed in Facts on ADA, Disability and Accommodations (another bulletin in this series), a school is required to provide accommodations for people who are eligible to attend, enroll or benefit from a school's programs, services and activities. This obligation includes both students and non-students. For example, if a school or academic department sponsors a forum or symposium, appropriate accommodations must be provided for participants with disabilities.

While the Disability Support Services office typically plays a lead role in providing academic accommodations for student, they may or may not have the resources to assist departments with non-student centered activities.

Getting An Interpreter

If you need to arrange an interpreter for a meeting, symposium or college sponsored activity contact:

Interpreters often need to be reserved weeks in advance, so make arrangements as far in advance as is feasible. If you have an event that is open to the public or will have participants that you do not know, you can ask that participants inform you of any accommodation needs in advance via a registration form or RSVP process. Scheduling an interpreter in advance is always better. Scrambling to find one at the last minute can be very difficult. Many interpreters will allow you to cancel with appropriate notice.

Hosting Symposiums, Luncheons, Conferences

When arranging these types of events, keep in mind the college's obligation to accommodate participants with disabilities. Events should be held in facilities that are architecturally accessible. To verify the accessibility of an on-campus location contact the Disability Support Services office. When making arrangements at off campus locations, be sure to tell the hotel or conference center that you need a facility that is accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities.

In addition to physical access, remember that participants may need other disability-related accommodations or materials in alternative formats. If you or your department are sponsoring

an event which is open to students, professionals or the community at large, please consider using one of the following accommodation statements on the flyer or registration materials. These samples were designed for general use. Your state or setting may have other requirements.

Sample Notices

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, accommodations are provided for people with disabilities. Accommodations can be requested by contacting

Accommodation requests should be made as far in advance as possible, but not later than 72 hours before the event.

Or

If you will need an accommodation to participate please contact _____ at least 72 hours prior to the event.

Or, (*best for registration forms*)

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, accommodations are provided for people with disabilities. Will you need any type of accommodation to participate?

___ Yes ___ No

If yes, please check the appropriate accommodation or explain below (see next page).

_____ Sign Language Interpreter

_____ Assistive Listening Device

_____ Dietary Restrictions
specify _____

_____ Materials in Alternative
Format, specify type

_____ Other, please explain

For more information Contact:
_____.

Providing Materials in Alternative Formats

The college has a responsibility to ensure that printed materials are available in alternative formats such as large print, Braille, audio tape, and computer disk for program participants that need them.

Converting materials to alternative formats is permitted by copyright law and must be provided at no cost to the student or recipient. Typically, materials do not need to be converted into alternative formats until requested. However, if you know in advance that a student or participant in an activity will require materials in alternative

format, make arrangements to have the materials converted in advance. Also, consider having frequently used materials converted in advance.

If you provide handouts, packets, flyers, or other written material for classes, conferences, symposiums, open meetings, etc., please include a statement similar to the one below on your materials. Along with this statement, you should make sure the items can and will be made into alternative formats if requested.

Sample Notice for Printed Materials

These materials are available in alternative formats upon request by contacting _____.

