



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

**INSTRUCTIONAL  
RESOURCE GUIDE**

FOR  
FACULTY/STAFFWORKING  
WITH STUDENTS WITH  
DISABILITIES



**Disability Services**

**Rev. 2022**

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### Preface

The functional impact of an invisible disability may be just as significant in an academic setting as that of a more visible disability. All students who provide you with a letter verifying a disability and requesting accommodations are registered with DS. They have been instructed to advocate for themselves and make requests for accommodations, but they are NOT required to tell you the nature of their disability. Some will choose to tell you, but many may choose not to discuss the specifics of their disability. Others will want to discuss their disability, but may not request accommodations. Not every student needs accommodations for every class. Whether or not to use an approved accommodation is the student's choice. At any time, student may waive a specific accommodation using a Waiver Form that is included this handbook.

### Mission Statement

The mission of Disability Services (DS) is to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities to the University environment and act to provide appropriate accommodations for each students' special needs in order to ensure equal access to all programs, activities and services at USC Aiken.

DS works diligently to ensure that individuals with disabilities are provided equal access at USCA by promoting disability awareness, advancing concepts of universal design, removing barriers to provide an inclusive environment, as well as, providing reasonable accommodations and support services.

### Policy of Nondiscrimination against Persons with Disabilities

It is the policy of University of South Carolina Aiken that no qualified person may be discriminated against based on his or her disability. Qualified applicants with disabilities are encouraged to seek admission to the University as students, and qualified applicants with disabilities are actively recruited for employment. The University is making affirmative efforts to accommodate students and employees with disabilities. Consistent with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, accommodations of persons with disabilities extend to student programs and employment practices, to the elimination of physical barriers, and to the provision of necessary special assistance to students and employees with disabilities within the University.

# Welcome Letter



Dear Faculty:

Welcome to the Office of Disability Services (DS). As a USC Aiken faculty member, you play a very important role in promoting access for students with disabilities. Students connected with DS are encouraged to work together with their professors to ensure that they have the accommodations they need to provide them with equal access to their education.

We hope that you will use this handbook as a helpful resource when working with students. It includes our policies and procedures, information about specific disabilities, instructional strategies, and emergency procedures. You may also visit the Disability Services website <https://www.usca.edu/disability-services> for more information on our services and activities.

Thank you for your cooperation! We appreciate your assistance in this collaborative effort to ensure that our students receive appropriate accommodations. If you have any questions about how to best serve our students, please feel free to contact me at 803-643-6815 or via email at [sandrar@usca.edu](mailto:sandrar@usca.edu).

Best Wishes,

Sandra Robinson, M.C.C.  
Disability Services Coordinator

# Our Philosophy

Working with students with disabilities can seem challenging, but it can actually create new and rewarding experiences for you. Students may experience a range of disabilities, conditions, and impairments that may affect them on varying levels. Their attention, concentration, focus, processing of information (including input and output of information), movement, mobility, writing, vision, hearing, and dexterity may be affected. They may also have difficulty communicating and/ or presenting information to you or others in the class and may have difficulty seeking appropriate resources available. Others experience symptoms in relation as secondary disability or even as a side effect of medications or other treatments.

Regardless of how they are affected, each student will be impacted differently and have a different disability related experience; therefore, you too will have a different experience with each student you work with. This means they may approach you with a different set of descriptions (including terminology), questions about how they can access class information, and requests for accommodations- based on their individual needs. It is okay if you provide assistance above and beyond the mandated accommodations. It is okay if you want to be flexible with your class requirements. It is okay if you have to remain rigid with the goals and expectations of the class you or your department have designed. It is also okay if you do not know the answer of how the student may best be served. Either way, that is why we are here... to assist you.

This Instructional Resource Guide will provide you with information about the laws that govern and mandate disability services and accommodations, provide you with information of the operations of USC Aiken's Disability Services, and will provide you with tools and information to help you best serve students with and without disabilities.

USC Aiken takes pride in its diverse student population. Access is a vital feature of the USC Aiken community; virtually the entire campus is accessible. We believe that a student's college education is an opportunity to develop academically, vocationally, and personally. Students with disabilities are encouraged to develop independence to the fullest extent possible and Disability Services are available to guide them on that journey.

We strive to teach students skills that will assist them as they transition into the professional world. Our focus on independence is the reason that we are ranked as a national leader in accommodating students with disabilities. Approximately 200 students with physical, learning, and/or psychological disabilities participate in our programs each year.

## First Day of Class

At some point during your opening remarks on the first day, you should say something like this:

“Any student who has a physical, psychological, and/or learning disability which might affect your performance in this class should contact the Office of Disability Services, as stated on your syllabus. If you are registered with Disability Services and have an accommodation sheet, please see me after class today or phone me **(insert your phone number)** today to set up an appointment as soon as possible.”

**ALWAYS** keep in mind that this information is confidential. **Never** ask disability students to raise their hands; never identify them in class (i.e. “John you need extra time for your test, don’t you”, “Will anyone volunteer to take notes for Lisa to use?” or “Bill, did you take your meds?”).

If a student says, he/she has a disability but does not have an accommodation sheet, refer them to the DS office. Do NOT take their word for it. Do NOT provide accommodations without this accommodation sheet, even if the disability is an obvious one. Over accommodating, a student puts us at legal risk, because it discriminates against students without disabilities.

You may tell students some of the services we offer but always make it clear that accommodations are based on a review of their medical documentation. Do not promise anything.

If you need assistance or advice to provide the accommodations on the sheet, contact the DS office. Students must be allowed to participate in all class activities, including field trips. The Coordinator of Disability Services and the student **MUST** approve modifications to the accommodation sheet.

Accommodation sheets are provided to assure our compliance with federal law. Failure to provide the accommodations listed is considered a violation of that student’s civil rights and grounds for legal action against the university.

If you feel the accommodation interferes with academic or professional integrity, please discuss this with your Department Head and the Coordinator of Disability Services, **NOT** the student.

## Legal Mandates

Two legal mandates protect students with disabilities from discrimination, and ensure that they have equal access to all aspects of college programs and services. These laws include, but are not limited to:

### [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#)

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act states: “No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States...shall, solely by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

### [The Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\) of 1990 as Amended.](#)

Title II of the ADA states: “A public entity shall make reasonable modifications in policies or procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability, unless the public entity can demonstrate that making the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity.” In our efforts to provide appropriate services, DS works to make sure services comply with the law. At the same time, we are available to assist you in making sure that your efforts as instructors of students with disabilities are also consistent and in compliance with the law.

Disability Services works diligently to ensure its operations are legally compliant. At the same time, its staff is also available to help instructors of students with disabilities to understand and to be consistent with the law.

The University of South Carolina Aiken is committed to equality of educational opportunity and does not discriminate against applicants, students, or employees based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, or sexual orientation.

### **What is the legal definition of a “Disability?”**

According to the ADA, as amended, the term "disability" means, with respect to an individual:

(A) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of such individual. Major life activities include, but are not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working

(B) a record of such an impairment. This means a person has a history of, or has been classified as having, a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Being regarded as having an impairment means:

- having a physical or mental impairment that does not substantially limit major life activities but being treated by a public entity as constituting such a limitation; having a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits major life activities only as a result of the attitudes of others toward such impairment; or
- having none of the impairments defined above but being treated by a public entity (any state or local government; any department, agency, or other organization of such government) as having such an impairment.

(C) being regarded as having such an impairment. An individual meets the requirement of "being regarded as having such an impairment" if the individual establishes that he or she has been subjected to an action prohibited under this chapter because of an actual or perceived physical or mental impairment whether or not the impairment limits or is perceived to limit a major life activity.

### **What is an "accommodation," and what makes it "reasonable?"**

An accommodation is an adjustment that allows someone to complete tasks or duties, which they are unable to complete due to an impacting disability or symptom of a disability. In higher education contexts, this change is usually made to instructional approaches or to methods of expressing academic knowledge or skills. Changes can also be made to the physical or virtual (electronic) environment. Thus, this type of accommodation mitigates the impact of a person's disability on their access to academic content and means of demonstrating their mastery of that content. Federal law expects that such accommodations be offered at USC Aiken, as long as they are "reasonable."

An accommodation is generally considered reasonable unless it:

- would "fundamentally alter" an academic requirement. This means that a reasonable accommodation does not entail changes to learning objectives, course expectations, performance requirements, or educational goals.
- would cause undue hardship to the university.
- would pose a direct threat to health or safety.

Apart from these exceptions, the university is generally required to provide accommodations. Instructors should contact the Disability Services Coordinator if they suspect an accommodation is unreasonable. Note academic accommodations are provided to level the academic playing field. They do not give the student an advantage and are approved only by supportive documentation of the disability.



## **Student, Instructor, and DS Staff Roles**

The Office of Disability Services, students with disabilities, and instructors must work together as a team to provide reasonable accommodations based on disability documentation, functional limitations, and the needs of the class. Each member of this team shoulders different responsibilities:

**Disability Services Staff** is expected to:

- authorize students' accommodations and services
- empower and train students to advocate for themselves and their personal preferences when requesting approved academic accommodations
- train and assist students in requesting and accessing accommodations in a timely manner
- provide specific appropriate accommodations to students as necessary and to honor student preferences for those accommodations whenever possible
- train and assist faculty in providing accommodations and increasing awareness of student access needs
- address instructors' questions and concerns.

**Students are expected to:**

- register with Disability Services
- determine the accommodations needed for each class
- request accommodations promptly from their instructors with accommodation requests
- complete the same class requirements as all other students.

**Instructors are expected to:**

- provide appropriate accommodations to their students in collaboration with Disability Services, consulting with Disability Services staff as needed.
- assist student in arranging for note takers
- help to facilitate the exam accommodation process
- deliver materials to DS in a timely manner for student access
- collaborate with students and Disability Services staff to make sure course materials are accessible.

By embracing their responsibilities to foster access together, students, instructors and Disability Services staff can best effect the accommodations required by federal law.

## Best Practices for Instructors

### Supporting Students with Disabilities

Disability Services is designated to provide appropriate accommodations, services, and auxiliary aids for students with disabilities. To implement most accommodations, students and instructors must collaborate and communicate with Disability Services staff and follow through on commitments in a timely fashion. Instructors can follow the best practices below to help make sure this collaboration is successful:

- **Include a statement about receiving accommodations for a disability in the course syllabi:** *“The Disability Services Office provides accommodations to ensure that educational programming and services are accessible to students with disabilities. If you have a physical, psychological, and/or learning disability that might affect your performance in this class, please contact the Disability Services Office, Student and Educational Support Building, Room 104, (803) 643-6815, as soon as possible, if you believe you are eligible for accommodations. The Disability Services Office will require appropriate documentation to determine accommodations.”*
- **Maintain students' confidentiality (and anonymity) about their disability, and respect their choices to disclose or withhold the nature of their disability:** Disability information is confidential. When students request accommodations in the classroom, they must disclose to their instructors their registration with Disability Services. At the start of the semester, students should present to the instructor an Accommodation Request Form. This letter documents that the student is registered with the Office of Disability Services AND provides the accommodations they have been approved for (Note- The student may not need all the accommodations listed for the class, but should request specific ones for the class to which the letter is presented). Students are NOT obligated to reveal their disabilities nor the nature of their limitations to their instructors, NOR should the instructor ask for such details. This information is confidential. Although some students may choose to tell their instructors, many may not wish to discuss the specifics. *Disability Services staff will not disclose any student's disability unless that student has granted written permission. Therefore, Instructors should conduct accommodation and disability-related discussions in a private location. This would include discussions regarding accommodations such as locating note takers, the use of assistive technology, testing with accommodations (at Disability Services or in the classroom), or to discuss any other accommodations. Instructors also should not identify the student as a student with a disability, under general announcement to the class or department, without the student's consent*

- **Provide accommodations only to students who are registered with Disability Services:** Not all students with disabilities are registered with Disability Services. If students have not registered, you are not obligated to provide accommodations, as they would be deemed ineligible to receive services at that time. Instructors are always free to confirm a student's registration with Disability Services, who can provide a letter of verification when required.
- **Supply accommodations as requested, only when requested:** Most students' accommodations are administered through Disability Services; however, an instructor may provide approved accommodations themselves. If the instructor provides the accommodations, they must implement the appropriate accommodations correctly. Instructors should not predetermine or guess what students may need without a specific request for accommodations. In addition, students with disabilities have the right to choose NOT to use accommodations. By exercising that right, they accept the resulting outcomes and consequences. This means that instructors are under no obligation to retroactively fix any problem arising from students' preferences to forgo accommodations. Instructors may always consult with Disability Services staff for further guidance on the reasonableness, parameters, or adequacy of authorized accommodations.
- **Understand that students with disabilities vary in their academic success:** It is expected that all students perform to the best of their abilities. Students with disabilities must meet the expectations of the class (as determined by the instructor), and perform the essential functions of the class. The expectations are the same for all students- they work to meet the goals of the class. As academic performance varies among students without disabilities, students with disabilities will display a wide range of academic abilities as well.
- **Remember that the student is the expert on strategies that may and may not help:** Many students registered with the Office of Disability Services are very knowledgeable about their disability and have experience advocating for their needs and requesting services and accommodations. Most are familiar with the strategies, accommodations, and assistive technology that work for them, and those that are not as effective. Meeting with students individually can provide instructors with additional suggestions and insights to assist students in accessing class information and materials.

## Supporting all USC Aiken Students

Disability Services suggests the following practices may be helpful to all students in class, potentially averting the need for many student-specific accommodations and services:

- **Practicing Universal Design for Learning:** Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is an approach to designing course instruction, materials, evaluation, activities, and content in such a way that all persons can participate in the educational process without adaptation or retrofitting. When using this concept, accommodations would likely not be necessary because options for learning and evaluation are available to anyone participating in a class. Incorporating these ideals, in whole or in part, is both feasible and helpful to students. More information on UDL is available through the University of Washington's [DO-IT \(Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology\) Center](#).
- **Ensuring all media—especially Blackboard and other USCA website content—is accessible:** All course content loaded into Blackboard is the instructor's responsibility. As many online materials are inaccessible to students with disabilities, following [Web Content Accessibility Principles and Standards](#) can help instructors ensure that content can be accessed by all students. For example, utilizing captioned videos aids students who are Deaf/Hard of hearing- but also aids students who speak English as a second language, those who have difficulty with listening, attention and focus, and for all students when the video dialogue is spoken softly, quickly, or mumbling and/ or has background noise or is of poor audio content.

### Effective Teaching Strategies for Students with Disabilities

Most students who come to you to request accommodations will have invisible disabilities. These include, but are not limited to, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD, ADHD), Learning Disabilities, Psychiatric conditions, General Medical conditions, mobility impairments, hearing impairments and low-vision difficulties. Although other students may have Visible Disabilities, be aware that they may not request or receive accommodations.

The abilities of students with and without disabilities varies considerably, even those with the same disability. The students may also choose to utilize different accommodations and strategies for the same class. Some examples are:

- A student with ADD may choose to utilize preferential seating and sit at the front of the class, where another student may choose to sit at any open seat but use a digital tape recorder to record the lectures.
- A student may have no vision and has to utilize audio textbooks and class materials, and another student's vision allows them to see large printed class materials.
- A student who is approved for frequent breaks may take exams with the class due to the need to utilize service during an exacerbation of the medical condition, where another student may need to take their exams at Disability Services due to the frequency of breaks needed (to minimize distraction to other students and to allow the student to continue testing) due to the condition.

When discussing accommodations with students, you may also enter a discussion of instructional strategies that would be most helpful to them as an individual. These can include examples such as:

Being responsive to the needs of students with specific disabilities.

For example, when teaching, do not turn your back to a student who is deaf or hard of hearing. The student may be reading your lips. Alternatively, if you have a student who is blind, refrain from vague language such as "Look at this" and "Examine that." Use words to describe what you and others see. Or if you have a student

- Assist with preferential seating when necessary, and provide students who are blind with orientation to the classroom by describing the physical layout of the room including any obstacles, furniture, lecture position, location of steps, or any low- hanging objects.
- Assist with arranging for a room change if the room is inaccessible and you have a student who needs an elevator in order to gain access to the classroom.
- Ask the student for ideas. Most are knowledgeable about their disability, the strategies and accommodations that work for them, and the assistive technology that they use.

Being aware of the rights of students with specific disabilities.

- Do not suggest to the student to drop the class simply because they have a disability. Students must have access to all classes.
- Some students who use accommodations will do very well. However, just because a student gets A's doesn't mean that they do not need accommodations

- Some students who use accommodations may not do very well. You are not required to alter course requirements or expectations for them.
- Some students who are approved for accommodations may never request or use the accommodations they have been approved for. Not every student needs accommodations for every class.

Nothing about having a disability should automatically prevent a student from failing a course if they do badly. Any student who meets the prerequisites for your class has the same right as all USC Aiken students to enroll and put forth effort to succeed.

You should grade students with disabilities using the same measures you use for all other students. Students with disabilities should be held to the same standards of behavior, attendance, participation and honor as other students, even if their condition interacts with those things.

The exception to this is when a specific-disability accommodation directly requires modification in something like attendance. Even in these cases, accommodations should not interfere with the most important requirements of the course, or excuse students from any coursework.

### Instructional Strategies

1. Include a disability access statement in the course syllabus.
2. Keep instructions as brief and uncomplicated as possible. Repeat exactly.
3. Clearly define course requirements, the dates of exams, and when assignments are due. Provide advance notice of any changes.
4. Present lecture information in visual formats (e.g. PowerPoint, handouts, etc.)
5. Use more than one way to demonstrate or explain information.
6. When teaching, state objectives, review previous lessons and summarize periodically.
7. Allow time for clarification of directions and essential information.
8. Provide study guides or review sheets for exams.
9. Provide alternative ways for the students to do tasks (e.g., substitute oral for written work).
10. Stress organization and ideas rather than mechanics when grading in-class writing assignments.

## Person First Language

Students with Disabilities are students, first, with individual strengths, abilities, needs, interests. They are ordinary people who are seeking to live an ordinary college lifestyle, and are preparing for a lifetime of familial, community, and societal enrichment. Therefore, you should talk about them in ordinary terms. When speaking of students with disabilities, you should emphasize abilities and not the limitations. You should not equate a person with a disability, and should use Person First Language to tell what a person HAS, not what a person IS.

When you use person first language, you are putting the person before the disability. This demonstrates respect, proper manners, and can change the way we see and acknowledge the person. Below are ways to use more respectful language when addressing students:

### Example of Person First Language

SAY THIS...	NOT THIS...
“Students with disabilities”	“Handicapped or disabled student”
“Students without disabilities”	“Normal students/ healthy students/ typical students”
“Student uses a wheelchair”	“Student is confined to a wheelchair/ Wheelchair Bound/ Crippled”
“Student has a learning disability”	“student is learning disabled”
“Student has ADHD”	“He’s / She’s ADHD”
“Student who is deaf/Hard of Hearing”	“The Deaf/ Deaf and dumb, Deaf mute”
“Student who is blind/ has a visual impairment”	“The Blind”
“Student has autism/ has a diagnosis of”	“Student is autistic”
“Student with paraplegia”	“Student is a paraplegic”
“Student diagnosed with a mental health condition”	“is mentally ill/ emotionally disturbed”
“Accessible parking, restrooms, etc.”	“Handicapped parking, bathrooms, etc.”
“Student who is registered with Disability Services”	“...is a Disability Services Student”
“A USC Aiken Student”	“... is a Disability Services Student”

Occasionally there is some apprehension by instructors about teaching or working with students with disabilities. Stereotypes may exist which will limit the disabled student from achieving his or her potential. The student with a disability is a student first and disabled second. It is important to address the person not the disability.

Some language hints are:

*Person with a disability* not *disabled or handicapped person*

*Person who is visually impaired* not *blind person or deaf person*

*Or hearing impaired*

*Person who is paraplegic or* not *paralyzed person*

*Mobility impaired*

*Person with a learning disability* not *slow learner or retarded*

### **Visually Impaired**

1. If you make seating assignments, allow the student to have a front row seat.
2. If the student uses a guide dog, remember that they are highly trained and will be very unobtrusive. There should be no disruption to class if a guide dog is present.
3. The student may need to be oriented to the classroom, particularly if there are any obstacles or low-hanging equipment.
4. Students who are visually impaired may need to tape-record lectures, have enlarged print materials or a reader and scribe for exams.
5. When a student who is visually impaired is in class, be sure that instructions, descriptions, etc. are precise and clear.
6. Talk to the student about what accommodations will be most helpful to him or her.

### **Students with Hearing Impairments**

1. Speak clearly and audibly and face the class so the student can read your lips.
2. Work with the student and his or her interpreter, if one is used, for the best place to stand or sit so that the student can participate fully.
3. Assist the student who is hearing-impaired in finding a good note taker.
4. For the student who is hearing impaired and has problems with speech, consider alternatives to oral presentations.
5. Use the chalkboard to present terminology and key points.
6. When using audio-visual aids, closed captioning should be used whenever possible.



## Frequently Used Accommodations

### **Use of the Disability Services Center:**

In addition to the many accommodations taking place daily in classrooms across the campus, the University provides an Disability Services Center equipped with computer access for students registered with the disability services office, electronic readers, alternative media formats, and, accessible seating. Qualified students may be eligible to borrow equipment such as digital tape recorders, Livescribe pens, and carbon copy notebooks from the DSO each semester. The Center also provides a quiet, distraction reduced study and testing environment for all students who are registered with the DSO.

This is a partial listing of what is available:

- Alternative formats of printed materials
  - PDF files
  - MS Word files
- Testing alternatives
- Voice-recognition software (Dragon Naturally Speaking)
- Screen-reading software (JAWS)
- Touch-screen and large- screen monitors

Students can use the Center to study and complete homework assignments, and as a testing center, which provides a distraction reduced examination space.

### **Testing Accommodations**

Students approved for testing accommodations have three options. They can:

- Take their exams in class without accommodations
- Take their exams in class with accommodations- as long as the instructor is able to provide the full accommodations needed by the student
- Take their exams with accommodations in the Disability Services Testing Center.

## **Providing Testing accommodations in the class**

If the instructor is able to provide the accommodations in the class, the instructor and student should meet to discuss the accommodations needed and to ensure that the environment is a suitable place for the student and ensure the accommodations do not impact other students. For example, a student who needs to sound out answers or needs to stand during an exam may be distracting to others. If it is agreed that a distraction reduced exam space is needed, please be aware that the environment is not distracting for the student. For example, an instructor who shares an office or has heavy traffic should not use their office as a distraction reduced exam space.

The process for taking exams at the ATC is outlined below:

1. Student schedules exam with DS (at least 48 hours in advance) and receives a receipt of the scheduling
2. Student picks up an Exam Proctoring Form to take to their Professor. An exam proctoring form must accompany any exam, test or written assignment to be given in the Disability Services Office.
3. Instructor completes the Exam Proctoring Form and submits it with the exam at least 24 hours in advance of the exam. It is the student's responsibility to remind their instructor to have the exam in the DSO 24 hours in advance. If the DSO does not receive a completed exam proctoring form, an attempt will be made to contact the instructor for the information needed to proctor the exam. This will cause a delay in the test proctoring or may result in the test, quiz or assignment being rescheduled.
4. Student enters DSO to take exam. Students should come prepared to the DSO with allowable materials for the test, such as scantrons, bluebooks, etc...
5. The Instructor will then pick up the exam or have it delivered to the instructor by the student.

Proctoring Exams: Students are eligible to request accommodations for taking exams only if approved by the Disability Services office. A student receives letters of accommodations from this office and hand delivers these letters to his/her instructors. Faculty members have the option of making arrangements to proctor exams themselves or to utilize the Assistive Technology Center. It is critical that the faculty member and the student discuss the contents of the accommodation letter and determine how exam accommodations will be implemented.

1. At the beginning of the semester, the faculty member informs the student of the exam schedule for his/her course. The student is responsible for scheduling his/her exams with the Assistive Technology Center. (In order to ensure that adequate accommodations can be guaranteed, the student must schedule his/her exams a minimum of two business days in advance, with one week in advance preferred.)
2. The student is responsible for contacting the faculty member regarding the method of transportation of exams to and from the Testing Center.

Faculty members decide from among the following:

- Exams can be delivered and/or picked up personally by the faculty member/designee.
- The student transports his/her own exam. If this method is chosen, the exam must be in a sealed envelope with a signature over the seal.
- Courier service is not available. Exams cannot be sent through campus mail.

An “Exam Proctoring Form” must be filled out completely and included with every exam given in the ATC. This form is available from the Disability Services website. It is also available upon request through email.

1. Exams will be administered according to the specified accommodations. During the exam, the student will have access only to those items noted by the instructor on the form. Once an exam has begun, a student may not leave and then finish taking the exam later without prior approval by the instructor.
2. All exam materials will be returned to the instructor.

## Note Taking Assistance

Students may need assistance taking notes due to the functional limitations and impact of their disability. All students who have provided you with a letter from DS confirming their need for note taking assistance have a right, as mandated by the ADA, to this service. Note-taking assistance is not a substitute for attending class. When students miss class for a non-disability-related reason, they must make alternative arrangements for obtaining missed notes.

The options to assist the student with access to class notes include but are not limited to:

### Instructor provides notes

Instructors may be willing to provide a copy of notes, overheads, or PowerPoints (if available and comprehensive) directly to student. Many instructors and departments have developed online guided notes. This method has been very helpful to many students who have difficulty keeping up with the pace of lecture when trying to take thorough notes.

### Peer, in-class note taker

If the student is approved for the accommodation “Carbonless Notebook,” he/ she may pick up the notebook from the DSO. The Carbonless Notebook is a carbonized notebook, which enables a person to take notes to keep the original of the notes, and give the copy to the student. The professor usually assists the student in identifying a fellow student to take notes- while respecting confidentiality and their anonymity. If you have difficulty finding a note taker, please contact DSO staff for assistance. If the student needs more assistance in identifying a note taker, the DSO may contact the instructor to work out how the student can get sufficient and equal notes.

## Audio recording lectures and/or Livescribe Smartpen

Students approved for this accommodation utilize many devices for the recording of classroom lecture. These include, but are not limited to : digital tape recorders, tape recorders, phones, tablets, video recorder, braille note/ recorder, portable CCTV (also used to take photo images of the board during lecture), etc.

Student must ask the instructor for permission. To record the lecture and permission of the device they want to utilize. If for example, phones are not allowed in class, the student may need to use a digital tape recorder. Consideration of the disability and approved device may need to be taken into consideration before disallowing a specific type of equipment. For assistance with assessing the appropriateness of the equipment, you may consult with DSO staff.

The student will need to place the recording device close to the instructor. Student may need to sit in the front of the classroom.

## Course Substitutions

Students with documented disabilities may be eligible for a course substitution.

Based on appropriate documentation, the Coordinator of Disability Services determines whether a course substitution should be recommended. Students should be aware that a disability will be revealed to faculty and staff involved in evaluating a recommendation for a course substitution.

If the recommendation for a substitution applies to a course in the major, the student will follow the [procedure for course substitutions outlined in the Program Bulletin](#).

If the recommendation for a substitution applies to a general education requirement, the student will submit an Academic Petition to the department chair/dean of the student's major along with a memo from the Coordinator of Disability Services stating that a substitution is recommended. The department chair/dean will decide whether the course in question is "essential" to the major. If the course is deemed essential, the petition is disapproved at this point. If the course is not determined to be essential, the department chair/dean of the student's major in consultation with the department chair/dean of the unit offering the course will determine which course(s) may be used as a substitute. The Academic Petition will be returned to the Registrar and forwarded to the Scholastic Standing and Petitions Committee for approval/disapproval as described in the Course Substitutions policy above.

## Classroom Accommodations

Note-Taker Notebook: This is a carbon-copy notepad, provided to the student by DS. It is designed to provide a duplicate copy of pages of classroom notes. The student may ask you for your assistance in locating someone in class to take notes on the notebook.

Audio Recording Device in Class: The student may approach you to audio record your lectures with some kind of recording device (e.g. digital recorder, phone, tablet, laptop or notebook computer) in order to supplement their classroom notes.

Use of Electronic Device for Note Taking: The student is approved to utilize a device that is not only a pen/ pencil, but is also a recording device. This assists in note taking for a variety of disability-related reasons.

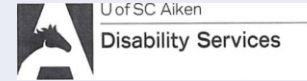
Instructor Notes for Study Purposes: The student may approach you to request copies of your class lecture notes, overheads, power point presentations, etc. in order to supplement their classroom notes.

Note: Note-taking assistance is not a substitute for attending class. If a student missed class for a non-disability-related reason, they should make alternative arrangements to obtain missed notes.

Sign Language Interpreting: The student is approved to be joined in class by a Sign Language Interpreter who will interpret all spoken information in the class and communicate it to the student via sign language. Please ensure that in class videos and audio files are closed captioned or subtitled. Also, be sure to address any communication to the student – not to the Sign Language Interpreter.

Proof of Registration:  
Accommodation Request Form

Students who are approved for testing accommodations will receive an Accommodation Request Form that they will present several copies, for you to sign. One copy will be for your records, one copy will be for the student's record, one copy will go to the academic advisor, and one copy will return to Disability Services, to be kept in the students documentation file. This form will list the accommodations the student has been approved for, based upon their disability documentation. Here is a sample of the Accommodation Request Form:



471 University Parkway, Box 15  
Aiken, SC 29803  
(803) 641-3609 / (803) 641-3677 fax

Accommodation Request Form - Academic Term: Fall 2022

Date:

This form certifies that the following student has presented the necessary documentation to authenticate their disability.

The information contained in this document is CONFIDENTIAL and should not be disclosed to a third party without the express permission of the student (see ADA Title 1 at 42 USC ss12112(d)(3) & (4); 29 cfr ss 1630.14-1630.16). Any questions should be referred to the Office of Disability Services.

Student Name:

Student ID:

To equalize this student's chances for academic success, the following accommodations are necessary:

Extended time on tests, quizzes and in-class graded assignments (time and 1/2) Low distraction testing location when applicable

Student Print: Signature: Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff Print: Signature: Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor Print: Signature: Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor Print: Signature: Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Accommodation Descriptions

Below is a list of the most frequently requested and utilized accommodations, and their descriptions:

### Exam Accommodations

**Time and a Half for Quizzes/ Exams:** The student is approved to have extended time, the time the class receives and an additional half of the allotted time, to complete in-class quizzes and exams for a variety of access needs. If you are unable to provide additional time in the classroom, the student may ask you to deliver specific quizzes/exams to the Office of Disability Services Assistive Technology Center. An [Exam Proctoring Form](#) should be attached to each quiz or test submitted.

**Double Time for Quizzes/Exams:** The student is approved to have double the class time to complete in-class quizzes and exams for a variety of access needs. If you are unable to provide additional time in the classroom, the student may ask you to deliver specific quizzes/exams to the Office of Disability Services. An [Exam Proctoring Form](#) should be attached to each quiz or test submitted.

#### EXAM PROCTORING FORM

For Office Use Only	
Received By	_____
Time began	_____
Time finished	_____
Proctor(s) initials	_____

#### FACULTY:

- Exam and proctoring form should be in the Disability Services Center Student Educational and Support Building (SES 104) at least one day before exam is to be taken. If the Center is closed, delivery should be made to the Counseling Center (SES 107).
- Exam should be delivered in a sealed envelope with this form taped to the outside OR emailed with this form to [DisabilityServices@usca.edu](mailto:DisabilityServices@usca.edu).

DO NOT SEND THROUGH CAMPUS MAIL!

Exam day/date	Time
Student Name	Phone #
Professor Name	Phone #

#### *How much time does the student have to complete the exam?*

Calculate the length of time based on the time your class is being given to take the exam and the amount of time this student has for an accommodation.

*Student can use the following items during the exam:*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blank paper for working problems   | <input type="checkbox"/> CDs/tapes supplied by professor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Calculator                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Scantron                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computer for spell check only      | <input type="checkbox"/> Notes                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computer with spell check disabled | <input type="checkbox"/> Scribe                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reader                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Textbook                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other - please specify:            |  |

*Is student allowed an emergency restroom break?*       Yes       No

*How should the exam be returned?*

- Professor or designee will pick up exam from the Disability Services Office (SES 104)  
 Testing student will return exam in sealed envelope

*If the testing student is returning the exam, it should be returned to:*

Name of Person \_\_\_\_\_ Building/Room # \_\_\_\_\_

*If this person is not there, where should the student deliver the exam?*

Professor signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Double Time for Quizzes/Exams:** The student is approved to have double the class time to complete in-class quizzes and exams for a variety of access needs. If you are unable to provide additional time in the classroom, the student may ask you to deliver specific quizzes/exams to the Office of Disability Services Assistive Technology Center. An [Exam Proctoring Form](#) should be attached to each quiz or test submitted.

**Testing/ Private Room:** The student is approved to take quizzes and exams in a distraction-reduced space due to a disability that may affect their ability to minimize external distractions that affect their attention, focus, and concentration. They may also use this space for the use of assistive technology, readers, scribes, etc...

**Calculator:** The use of a calculator assists students who may make mistakes such as reversing or skipping numbers, keeping place in a long equation, or even severe skill deficits. If a quiz/test is designed to measure the student's ability to perform functions that a calculator would perform, this accommodation may be unreasonable. However, if an accommodation for a calculator is approved then it is reasonable.

**Use of Computer (with spell, grammar check):** The student is approved to use a computer to record their answers on quizzes/exams. If the function of the quiz or exam includes measuring spelling/grammar ability, this accommodation may be unreasonable. However, if an accommodation for a computer is approved then it is reasonable.

**Scribe/ Scribe for Scantron Sheets:** The student is approved to be assisted by a DS staff person to scribe, i.e. to write down verbatim, answers provided ONLY by the student for quizzes/exams. Students with mobility needs, visual impairments, and written language disabilities tend to use this accommodation.

**Assistive Technology:** A student may need to use adaptive software (e.g. text to speech functions, voice to text functions, screen magnification) and hardware (FM system, adapted keyboards and mice, CCTV) to access information provided in class and/or on quizzes/exams. Some may be stand-alone devices or they may need to have access to the ATC testing center computers or their personal computer (upon your approval for quizzes/exams)

**Accommodation Waiver Form:** A student may choose to take his or her exam in the classroom instead of in the Office of Disability Services. In this case, the Accommodation Waiver Form must be completed and submitted to DS. Please find an example of this form below.

Office of Disability Services



Accommodations Waiver

I, \_\_\_\_\_, am choosing to waive one or more of my approved academic accommodations as described in the table below:

Date	Name of Exam/Assignment	Waived Accommodation(s)

I hereby certify that it was by my choice not to use the above-described accommodations. I understand that the grade I earn will stand.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Faculty/Staff member:** Please return this completed form to the DS Coordinator (SES Bldg 104) to be kept in the student's file.



## Frequently Asked Questions

Although enrollment rates of students with disabilities in higher education are increasing, some faculty and teaching staff may not be aware of the many services and supports available to students with disabilities. In particular, instructional staff members may not always be aware of the types of accommodations available or what steps are involved in the accommodations process. The following is a list of frequently asked questions regarding the roles and responsibilities of faculty and teaching associates in providing accessible learning for students with disabilities. Although these questions address the most common of concerns, the issue of faculty responsibility is situation-specific and as such can be difficult to define. As you are confronted with some of your concerns, keep in mind that the Disability Services Office (DSO) is the office on campus that determines appropriate accommodations. We hope that you find the following questions to be a quick and useful resource guide, but we encourage you to contact the Disability Services Office (DSO) at (803)643-6815, Rm 134, Business & Education Bldg., when you are in doubt about how best to meet the needs of a student with a disability.

**Q: Who is responsible for determining appropriate accommodations?**

**A:** The DSO is the office on campus that determines appropriate accommodations. The office bases their decision upon documentation collected from the student with a disability and the student's functional limitations (the degree to which the disability or condition limits one or more major life activity, such as seeing, hearing, learning, etc...., has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment).

**Q: Are all students with disabilities registered with the DSO?**

**A:** No, it is likely that many students with disabilities have chosen not to be registered with the DSO or they may not have met the eligibility criteria for services. In either instance, faculty do not need to provide these students with accommodations.

**Q: What would be the best way to inform students in the class that I would like to help in facilitating exam accommodations or any classroom accommodations?**

**A:** It is important that all faculty put a statement about accommodations in their syllabus. It should go something like this:

“It is the University of South Carolina Aiken policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities as stated in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you would like to request such accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services at (803) 643-6815 in room 129/130 B&E to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.”

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

A: Yes you are. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, protects students with disabilities. This law requires that qualified students with disabilities get equal access to an education, and this includes exam accommodations.

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

A: You may ask the student to provide you with a letter verifying that s/he has a disability. The student, if registered with the DSO, will be given an Accommodation Request Form at the start of each semester. This letter will state the accommodations approved by the DSO based on the documentation provided by the student. The specifics of the disability cannot be disclosed due to confidentiality.

**Q: I have a student in class who told me that s/he has a disability, but since that, time has never requested any accommodations. Am I still responsible for accommodations?**

A: No, you are only responsible for reasonable accommodations if requested. In these types of situations, however, it would be appropriate to speak to the student privately to let the student know that you welcome the opportunity to discuss reasonable accommodations if the student is interested.

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

A: DSO staff have developed very systematic, rigid and secure checking in and checking out procedures for exams, and no student is able to take an exam with accommodations without authorization. While exams are at the DSO, they are kept in a locked file during the night. While students are taking the exam, they are monitored at all times by DSO staff. If an issue should arise, the DSO works diligently to rectify any problems.

**Q: Students with disabilities ask me to fill out the “Exam Proctoring Form.” I have a million things to do. I don’t mind if they use exam accommodations, but do I have to fill out that form?**

A: Yes you do! In order for the DSO to administer your exam to your student you must quickly and completely fill out the Exam Proctoring Form. It is often very helpful to meet with the student so that you and the person requesting accommodations can fill the sheet out together and are on the same wavelength. Not only does the Exam Proctoring Form help facilitate the exam accommodation process, but it also helps the DSO administer the exams using your specific requirements for the administration of the exam. You may, however, opt to administer the exam yourself to the student, but appropriate exam accommodations must be provided. This includes adaptive technology, a distraction-reduced space, reader/scribes, etc. if needed. If you unable to provide appropriate accommodations or are unsure about what is appropriate, please work with the DSO to ensure that the student’s accommodation needs are met.

**Q: What are some of the types of exam accommodations available to students with disabilities?**

A: First, the exam accommodations are based upon the student's functional limitations and the documentation of disability that the student has provided the DSO. Some of these accommodations include but are not limited to: extra time for exams (usually 50% extra time but in some cases as much as double time), a reader or scribe (a person who writes answers verbatim), an enlarged print exam, or use of computer (for voice to text or text to speech programs, enlargement options, or spelling/grammar check), a distraction-reduced testing space, image enhancements (converting graphs, charts, and other types of images converted into raised-line format), or the use of a closed circuit TV to enlarge print.

**Q: A student with a disability has asked me for a copy of my notes and overheads. Do I have to give this to the student?**

A: Some students with disabilities have difficulty taking notes. Sometimes instructor notes are only a brief outline of the actual lecture given. These notes may not be too helpful. It is important that you assist the student in getting access to class notes. You may want to help the student find a volunteer note taker in class by making an announcement in class without revealing the student's name. If you feel your notes are good, sharing your notes would be a helpful option. It may also be appropriate for some students to digitally record the audio of a class or to take snapshots of the blackboard or overheads.

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

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

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

A: Talk privately with the student to discuss your observations. The student may reveal s/he has a disability. If this is the case and the student is registered with the DSO, suggest that the student talk to staff in this office. If the student is not registered, DSO staff can explore and discuss options for the student including outside referral sources for assessment and evaluation. You may always suggest that the student call the DSO at (803) 643-6815 for further information.

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

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

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

A: Yes you are. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, protects students with disabilities. This law requires that qualified students with disabilities get equal access to an education, and this includes exam accommodations.

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

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## Disability Services Contacts/Hours of Operation

**DS Program Coordinator:** Sandra Robinson, M.C.C.

**Phone:** (803) 643-6815

**Email:** [SandraR@usca.edu](mailto:SandraR@usca.edu)

**DS Specialist:** Ben Dugan

**Phone:** (803) 643-6816

**Email:** [Ben.Dugan@usca.edu](mailto:Ben.Dugan@usca.edu)

Campus Address: 432 Scholar Loop

Room 104/105, Student and Educational Support Services Building

Phone: (803) 643-6815

Fax: 803-641-3677

Email: [disabilityservices@usca.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@usca.edu)

Mailing Address:

471 University Parkway Box 15

Aiken, SC 29801

### Hours of Operation

Monday 8:30am- 5:00pm

Tuesday 8:30am- 5:00pm

Wednesday 8:30am- 5:00pm

Thursday 8:30am- 5:00pm

Friday 8:30am- 5:00pm

- To ensure adequate time for testing, tests should be taken and administered with significant time for testing. All tests must be completed by 5:00pm.
- Walk-in and scheduled appointments for faculty and students are available.