Faculty Guide for Implementing Academic Accommodations
Introduction

This guide provides faculty with more detailed information regarding the implementation of accommodations at the University of Northern Iowa. This is not an exhaustive guide so faculty should contact Student Accessibility Services with any additional questions or concerns.

Student Accessibility Services and the University of Northern Iowa believe that disability is a naturally occurring aspect of humanity's diversity and is an integral part of society and this University.

We believe in working collaboratively with students, faculty, and staff to provide accessible and equitable opportunities for all students.

Contact Information

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Disability Law & Higher Education

The following items summarize key features or components of ADAAA/504 Requirements of postsecondary institutions as well as outlining the general process for determining eligibility for accommodations.

**Purpose of the Law**
The purpose of the law is to provide an alternative way to accomplish the course requirements by eliminating or reducing disability-related barriers.

“Reasonable accommodations” are not intended to lower course standards or alter degree requirements; provide equal access and opportunity “level the playing field”; and cannot place an undue burden on institutions.

The term “reasonable accommodations” refers to the aids, benefits, and services that afford persons with disabilities the opportunity to obtain the same result, gain the same benefit, or reach the same level of achievement in the most integrated setting appropriate to the person’s needs. (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, [https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/auxaids.html](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/auxaids.html))

**Scope of Responsibility**
ADAAA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act are civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in college recruitment, admission, or treatment of students with disabilities. Programs, courses, field trips, internships, practicum sites, as well as services, activities, and facilities must be accessible to people with disabilities.

**Coordination of Services**
Each University must designate a person/department responsible for the coordination and provision of disability-related services.

**Interactive Process**
The institution and the student have a shared responsibility for the provision of accommodations. The college and its staff must provide accommodations in a timely, effective manner at no cost to the student. The student must notify the appropriate university staff of a disability if accommodations are needed. An interactive, coordinated approach between the student and university staff is vital.

**Confidentiality**
The University cannot make pre-admission inquiries regarding an applicant’s disability status. Students have privacy and confidentiality protections. Disability-related information should be maintained separate from the student’s official file. In accordance with FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) regulations, disability information is protected and access should be limited.

**Documentation of Disability**
The University can require appropriate documentation of a disability if a student requests disability-related accommodations. The student has responsibility for disclosing and providing documentation of the disability.

**Determination of Disability**
Any student who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity (when in comparison with their peer group) is considered disabled and therefore eligible for accommodations.
**Determination of Accommodations**

Determination of appropriate accommodations (type and level) for a qualified person with a disability is a primary responsibility of Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Students with disabilities are encouraged to connect with SAS to begin the individualized process of determining reasonable accommodations, based on the nature of the disability and the academic environment. The student’s past accommodations history, and supporting documentation related to their disability are taken into consideration when making accommodation determinations. Students might request accommodations directly from an instructor. In this case, the student should be given the contact information or directly referred to Student Accessibility Services.

Instructors are encouraged, when in doubt, to contact the Student Accessibility Services Office to clarify any questions related to the student’s accommodation requests. We encourage strong communication among instructor, student, and Student Accessibility Services staff.

**Implementation of Accommodations**

Individualized accommodation plans are shared with appropriate faculty and staff for facilitating equitable access; specific disability information is not shared without expressed permission. Faculty are required to implement the accommodations outlined in the Course Accessibility Letter, effective upon email notification of the Accommodations Letter. Faculty can access Course Accessibility Letters via the Faculty Interface of Accommodate.

Reasonable accommodations provide equitable access to educational programs and activities; they do not lower course standards, provide an unfair advantage, or fundamentally alter program requirements. If you feel that a specific accommodation fundamentally alters your course requirements, contact the Assistant Dean of Students - Student Accessibility Services, Tiffany Dodd.
Guidelines for Implementing Accommodations

Once a faculty member receives the accommodation letter notification for a student, the accommodations are considered effective and need to be implemented by the faculty member. Students are encouraged to meet with faculty to discuss accommodation implementation specifics but they are not required to. Faculty should provide all accommodations as stated in the letter unless a student emails both the instructor and Student Accessibility Services to indicate that they will not be using a particular accommodation. Due to changes in accommodation language and/or complexity of implementation, SAS has outlined several accommodations in more detail than what is found in the accommodations letter. This document will serve as a centralized location for answers to frequently asked questions and will be updated each semester.

Implementation of Specific Accommodations

Exam Related Accommodations Guidelines
Some students require a testing environment with few or negligible sensory distractions and all students with extended testing time accommodations are required to test in a separate testing environment from the classroom.

**Distraction Reduced Exam Setting Environment:**

- May include other students testing at the same time.
- Should have few to no windows that could lead to distractions.
- Should be relatively soundproof i.e. the door cannot be left open to the hallway.
- Must have access to a chair with and without arms as well as a chair that is not on wheels.
- Requires access to a **sound machine** and **sound-proofing headphones**.

**Individual Distraction Reduced Exam Setting:**

- Must be a separate space, free of distractions and other individuals.
- Other individuals should not have access to come and go from the same space during the exam.
- Should have few to no windows that could lead to distractions.
- Should be relatively soundproof i.e. the door cannot be left open to the hallway.
- Must have access to a chair with and without arms as well as a chair that is not on wheels.
- Requires access to a **sound machine** and **sound-proofing headphones**.

If you do not feel you can provide access to an environment meeting these guidelines, students should test with **Exam Services**. All students with exam accommodations for a test reader or test scribe are required to test in Exam Services as well.

Attendance Accommodations Guidelines

Some disabilities may impact a student’s ability to attend class in-person.

**Occasional Virtual Attendance**

- Some disabilities may impact a student’s ability to attend class in-person during inclement weather.
- Inclement weather includes heavy snowfall, ice, and below 0°F temperatures.
• Faculty member should be prepared with a zoom link for class, particularly during inclement weather.
• Student needs access to the lecture and/or presentation. This does not mean a faculty member needs to be on screen the entire time.
• If there is concern regarding a particular activity for the day, the faculty member and student should develop an alternative assignment.
• Student should communicate with faculty member as soon as they are aware they will need to miss class due to weather.
• If the faculty member has concerns at any point, please connect with Student Accessibility Services.

Virtual Attendance

• A student may require virtual access to a course due to their disability.
• Student Accessibility Services will be in contact with the faculty member to discuss course specifics to determine whether this is a reasonable accommodation.
• Based on that conversation, an accommodation will be determined.
• The specifics of that conversation will be summarized in an email and provided to the student and faculty to ensure all parties are aware of the expectations.

Extended Absences

• SAS encourages students to connect with us early in the semester to best apply this accommodation.
• Students are encouraged to use this responsibly and in a manner that does not put them behind in coursework.
• This accommodation applies to in-person courses and synchronous online courses.
• Absences are provided based on the number of times the course meets per week.
  ○ 1 class/wk = 1 additional absence
  ○ 2 classes/wk = 2 additional absences
  ○ 3 classes/wk = 2 additional absences
• This accommodation is applied from the date the faculty receives the letter, forward. It is not retroactive.
  ○ For example, if a student receives this accommodation in August, the accommodation is applied to the whole semester. If a student receives this accommodation in November, the accommodation is applied from that date forward. Any previous absences remain and this accommodation is not applied to them.
• Students are encouraged to connect with Student Accessibility Services with any additional attendance concerns.

Note Taking Accommodations

• Many of the note taking accommodations center around the option to audio record lectures. Students are aware these recordings are for personal use and are not to be distributed or posted online.
• Students with access to Presentation slides should be provided them prior to the course meeting time so they can be printed off or downloaded to their personal electronic devices.
○ These can be posted to Blackboard or emailed to the students.
○ Please discuss the method you will use for the semester with the student.

FAQ’s for Faculty

A student disclosed they have a disability to me, but I don’t have a letter; do I need to provide accommodations to them?

No. Accommodations are only provided once the student has registered with Student Accessibility Services and a letter has been provided to the instructor. Double check Accommodate to make sure you don’t have the student’s letter in there. If you don’t have the letter, encourage the student to connect with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). If you have additional questions, connect with SAS.

I think a student in my class has a disability. Should I refer the student to Student Accessibility Services?

No. It is up to a student to self-disclose to Student Accessibility Services; however, if the student discloses a disability, please refer them to Student Accessibility Services. **It is ok to talk about Student Accessibility Services in general terms to the entire class.

Do all students get the same accommodations?

No. Accommodations are individually based and will reflect the individual student’s needs.

I’ve never seen this accommodation before and I’m not sure how to implement it. What is my next step?

Read through the accommodations description on the accommodations letter, if you still are unsure, reach out to Student Accessibility Services to discuss implementation.

I think this accommodation fundamentally alters my curriculum or program. What should I do now?

Direct your questions to the Assistant Dean of Students - Student Accessibility Services to discuss concerns.

I don’t think any of these accommodations pertain to my class. Should I just ignore the letter?

No. Connect with Student Accessibility Services as soon as possible to discuss how the accommodations might be related to your course.

I think a student in my class is misusing their accommodations. What should I do?

Connect with Student Accessibility Services regarding the student and their misuse of accommodations. Faculty should have examples ready to share to help explain the concern.

A student gave me their letter but doesn’t want to use all their accommodations. What should I do now?

Students are entitled to use any or all of their accommodations at their discretion. However, students need to notify their instructors and Student Accessibility Services of any modifications
surrounding the usage of accommodations via email. Contact Student Accessibility Services with any questions or concerns.

**My syllabus clearly conflicts with the student’s accommodations letter, do I still need to follow their accommodations?**

Accommodations are legal requirements and supersede syllabus statements; continue to provide all accommodations as written but connect with Student Accessibility Services with any questions.

**A student takes their tests in Exam Services with accommodations but I lecture before the exam. What should I do now?**

Students should be allowed discretion in receiving their accommodations. Work with Student Accessibility Services to determine alternative ways to set up testing and lectures.

**A student gave me their letter but I think the accommodations are unrealistic due to their chosen career path. What should I do now?**

As an educational institution, it is our job to accommodate students based on the specific course and its learning outcomes. The University does not provide accommodations based on potential career paths; however, it is good to discuss any concerns with Student Accessibility Services.
**Accessing Student Accommodations Letters**

**Step 1:** Log into the [Faculty Interface of Accommodate](#) by utilizing your UNI CatID. Once you log-in, you should be on the Getting Started screen.

**Step 2:** Select “Accommodation Letters” by clicking on the link located on the left side of your screen. You will be directed to a screen with a search bar located at the top of the page. You will also see a list of “Course Accessibility Letters” toward the bottom of the screen.

*Unfortunately, Accommodate catalogs all of the course accessibility letters you have received over time.*
Step 3: Locate the current semester’s letters by browsing through the list. Alternatively, you can click the “more filters” link underneath the search bar and sort by semester. Begin typing the current semester into the “Semester” search bar.
Step 4: Select the letter you wish to review by clicking on the “Course Accessibility Letter” link. Once you have reviewed and signed the letter you can print it through this screen. Signing the letter identifies that you have read the letter and understand the faculty role (if you have questions, connect with Student Accessibility Services as soon as possible). The accommodations are to be provided regardless of your signature.

Step 5: Connect with Student Accessibility Services with any questions or concerns.

Step 6: Implement the Accommodations.