



An Introduction to Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD)

SSD's primary role is to ensure students with disabilities have equal access to their academic experience at The University of Texas at Austin. SSD also consults with other campus offices and departments to facilitate access and inclusion in all aspects of campus life.

SSD works with students with a broad range of disabilities including:

- AD/HD
- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- Learning Disabilities
- Medical Conditions (diabetes, migraines, epilepsy, etc.)
- Mobility Disabilities
- Psychological/ Mental Health Conditions
- Temporary (broken bones, concussion, etc)
- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
- Visual Disabilities

Students who have questions about whether their condition qualifies as a disability are encouraged to contact SSD. Details of a student's disability are kept confidential within the SSD office.

SSD determines eligibility and approves academic accommodations that may include:

- Extended time on exams
- Reduced distraction testing environment
- Copy of notes and/or slides
- Permission to arrive late/leave early
- Permission to step out of class
- Flexible attendance
- Flexible deadlines
- Preferential seating

Accommodations cannot change the essential requirements of a course, program or degree. SSD staff are available to address questions or concerns regarding accommodations.

Students should notify instructors of their need for accommodations via an Accommodation Letter, provided by SSD. Students and instructors should meet to discuss the approved accommodations and coordinate how they will be provided within the context of each course.

SSD also offers the following supports and services to students:

- Course load reduction (non-academic drop, no 'F,' no 'Q' penalty) and maintain full-time status
- Computer lab with assistive technology (Kurzweil, ZoomText, Dragon)
- Walk-in hours for consultation/problem-solving (Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.)
- Referrals and potential funding for disability evaluation/testing

The University of Texas at Austin is required to provide equal access by three federal laws:

- The Rehabilitation Act of 1973,
- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008

Faculty and staff play a vital role in ensuring compliance by accommodating students with disabilities. SSD is available to consult with faculty or staff who have questions about how to accommodate or work with a student with a disability.

Additional resources are also available on the faculty/staff section of the SSD website:

<http://ddce.utexas.edu/disability/facultystaff/>

For more information:

Services for Students with Disabilities

PHONE: (512) 471-6259

EMAIL: ssd@austin.utexas.edu

WEB: <http://ddce.utexas.edu/disability/>

ON CAMPUS: Student Services Building (SSB) 4.206





For Instructors Providing Accommodations to Students with Disabilities

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confer with the student about how the approved accommodations will work within the structure of the given course. Ideally this conversation will be started by the student but instructors are encouraged to provide a safe and supportive space for discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make assumptions about a student's ability to work in a particular field. Concerns that students may not be able to succeed are often based on fears and assumptions, not facts. Remember too, that employers are also required to comply with the ADA.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treat students with disabilities with the same courtesy you would afford to other students and hold them to the same academic standards and expectations as any other student. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in philosophical debates about "fairness" to other, nondisabled students, or whether providing accommodations somehow violates your academic freedom. Congress has determined how society should address equal access to education by passing federal civil rights statutes protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, without adversely impacting those without disabilities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect the privacy of students with disabilities. While they must disclose disability to a designated official at your college in order to access accommodations, this does not require disclosure to everyone. Treat disability information which has been disclosed to you as confidential. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide not to provide reasonable accommodations, or the academic adjustments which have been approved by the institution's designee. You may subject your institution or yourself to lawsuits for non-compliance with state and federal laws. Refuse to provide accommodations until you have personally evaluated a student's documentation of disability. Eligibility for services under the ADA is the job of the SSD staff, not the instructor.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist students in following the university's policies, such as requirements that all requests for accommodation be lodged with the SSD office and not individual faculty members alone. This protects students, faculty and the institution by ensuring consistency and takes much of the burden off individual faculty members, who are often ill-equipped to determine whether an accommodation is appropriate or how to provide it. Violations have been found in cases where faculty members have not followed institutional policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refuse to permit students to tape record lectures as an accommodation. Policies which permit instructors to refuse the use of tape recorders, without providing for their use by students with disabilities, are legally insufficient. Refuse to provide copies of handouts if these accommodations have been determined to be appropriate for a student. Refuse to provide extended time for tests on the mistaken assumption that doing so would require that all students be given additional time.

Chart adapted from the American Psychological Association's DisAbility Resource Toolbox (DART) and can be found under DART Toolkit: Legal Issues-ADA Basics at <http://www.apa.org/pi/disability/dart/legal/ada-basics.aspx>

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